

<p align="center"><b>Health &amp; Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b></p> <p align="center">Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Sharon Godman, Divisional Director Strategy, Policy &amp; Performance</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p align="center"><b>Black, Asian &amp; Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Summary**

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission and provides details of some of the main findings and recommendations from the health theme of the Commission.

**Recommendations:**

The Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Comment on the findings and recommendations on the health theme of the Commission's report

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 This report provides recommendations to improve the inequalities of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities. The report highlights areas where the borough's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are experiencing poorer health outcomes.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Not consider the findings and recommendations from the Commission but this is not recommended as the Commission has been established by the council and provides an opportunity to address inequalities faced by our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The Commission has undertaken work over a four month period and has developed a solid evidence base to support the need for the recommendations put forward.

## **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The shocking and public killing of George Floyd, and subsequent Black Lives Matter demonstrations across the world has brought the subject of race inequality to the forefront of personal and political discussions. The council is committed to creating cohesive communities that are strong, fair and equal. We recognise that we can only do this by working in partnership with our communities to advance equality, promote good relations and tackle discrimination.
- 3.2 Equality is embedded in our partnership plans and addressing inequalities is a core part of our outlook and the way we deliver public services. Tower Hamlets is a place that has for generations welcomed people from all over the world, and has come together in solidarity to stand up to racism and fascism from those who wish to divide our community.
- 3.3 However, we understand that for all off our success and progress there remains much room for improvement to achieve greater equality in the borough. We know that racial discrimination means some people have neither had equal access to public services or employment, nor fair treatment and life chances.
- 3.4 In addition to the Black Lives Matter movement, the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population has served to expose the severe consequences of the structural disadvantages and discrimination faced by these communities. Public Health England's review of disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19 found that imbedded inequality means that the likelihood of testing positive and dying with Covid-19

is higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups.

3.5 In recognition of the high level of concern raised about the longstanding levels of racial inequality in the borough, the council established a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequality Commission. The Commission's areas of focus were influenced by an engagement event during the summer in which over 40 stakeholders attended. The Commission was tasked to deliver tangible and practical actions which will deliver real change to the lives of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and allow the council and its partners to champion the enormous impact these communities can contribute to the borough.

3.6 The key aims of the Commission were:

1. Engage and operate at the heart of Tower Hamlets' communities to hear about people's lived experience and solutions, specifically Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and young people who experience higher levels of inequality.
2. Work with institutions to advance and prioritise race equality to achieve an inclusive, cohesive, thriving and representative Tower Hamlets.
3. Influence local, sub-regional and regional leaders who have significant influence on Tower Hamlets, particularly in the development of policy and strategy practices and the allocation of resources.

3.7 The Commission focused on the following areas:

1. Community leadership
2. Health
3. Education
4. Employment

3.8 The Commission comprised of the following Commissioners:

- Cllr Asma Begum, Chair (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities)
- Cllr Mufedah Bustin (Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion)
- Lord Simon Woolley (Director of Operation Black Vote)
- Safia Jama (Director of Womens Inclusive Team)
- Dr Kambiz Boomla (Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Population Health Sciences at Queen Mary University of London)
- Ian Parkes (Chief Executive, East London Business Alliance)
- Vivian Akinremi (Deputy Young Mayor Tower Hamlets)
- Edwin Ndlovu (Director of Operations for East London NHS Foundation Trust)
- Pam Bhamra (Chair of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum)
- Graeme McDonald (Managing Director of Solace and Solace in Business)

3.9 The Commission undertook the following activities:

- Held 4 formal Commission meetings;
- Engagement with partner agencies through PEG, THHF, THT , Health & Wellbeing Board, Children’s and Families Partnership Board
- Engaged 27 witnesses
- Received 71 responses to call for evidence
- Captured 87 lived experiences through 6 focus groups with school governors, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, teachers, patients, public and private sector employees and young people
- Dedicated web pages for Commission and regular social media updates

### **Key Findings**

- 3.10 It was clear that there has been significant progress in the borough, most noticeably in educational attainment, and the Commission heard many examples of best practice. However, the pace of change has not been quick enough, nor has it been radical. Much of the evidence suggests that institutional and structural racism is a key barrier in accessing services and progression in life and employment. Many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents do not have access to same social capital as their White peers and the impact from this permeates into many areas of their life.
- 3.11 Tower Hamlets is a borough which celebrates its diverse communities, but it needs to do more to understand the nuanced and divergent experiences of different Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. This is particularly relevant when considering data, targets and representation which emerged as a reoccurring theme across the Commission’s areas of focus. Many organisations are not collecting comprehensive, disaggregated ethnicity data which would allow them to understand their progress and deliver services which accurately responds to the needs of those who use them. Furthermore, the lack of representation in many areas of public life, or ambitious targets to increase representation, has a profound impact on the way residents perceive, interact and experience services. Every organisation in the borough must engage in ethnic minority pay gap reporting and be transparent about the composition of their boards and structures to help drive targets.
- 3.12 It is clear there is real commitment and passion to improve outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Whilst the Commission makes many important recommendations, it is the intention to prioritise to **make Tower Hamlets an anti-racist place**, where there is a shared vision and delivery plan by all organisations to make changes at pace. In practice, this will be showcased by an anti-racist pledge which will include tangible actions to drive improvement through establishing a race equality network, setting challenging targets, collecting and publishing disaggregated ethnicity data, increasing representation and better utilisation of organisations buying and influencing powers.

### **Health**

- 3.14 The constraints of structural racism are most apparent when considering health outcomes of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents which are

worse than those of White residents in many areas, with many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents suffering from a higher burden of multimorbidity. A considerable emphasis needs to be placed on improving the partnership approach to tackle the wider determinants of health, with too many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents experiencing poorer employment and housing conditions. Furthermore, access to health services needs to be improved by ensuring services meet the cultural needs of our diverse communities and developing strong and effective relationships with these community. Digital exclusion is a prevalent access barrier, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside ineffective communication and inadequate translation services. The need to work with our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities should be at forefront of our recovery agenda ensuring we deliver real improvement in health outcomes.

3.7 Further details on findings on other areas of the Commission are set out in the Commission report.

#### **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 [The focus of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic inequalities Commission was to explore inequalities facing our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The findings and recommendations reflect this. The Commission noted the importance of intersectionality of inequalities facing different protected characteristics such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women, different groups within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and deprivation. The recommendations from this Commission if taken forward by the Tower Hamlets Partnership will help to address inequalities in Tower Hamlets and provide a platform to ensure equalities remains at the forefront of our collective work.

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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- List any linked reports
- State NONE if none.

#### **Appendices**

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Report

#### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

Or state N/A