

<p>Cabinet</p> <p>27 October 2021</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Sharon Godman, Director Strategy, Improvement and Transformation</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Action Plan</p>	

Lead Member	Cllr. Asma Begum Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities
Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy Daniel Kerr, Strategy & Policy Manager
Wards affected	All Wards
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
Forward Plan Notice Published	14 May 2021
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities; 2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in; 3. A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.

Executive Summary

Tower Hamlets has always been a borough committed to creating a cohesive, fair, and inclusive community. One of our biggest strengths is a proud history of fighting racism and fascism. The council is committed to developing Tower Hamlets as a place where people have equal access to opportunities and where inequality is actively tackled. We recognise that we can only do this by working with our partners to advance equality, promote good community relations and tackle discrimination.

This report presents our initial action plan in response to the Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission. This will be updated on an on-going basis through delivery and monitoring of the action plan. It sets an ambitious programme of activities which will have a real impact on outcomes for our residents

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

and provides the step change for addressing longer term systemic challenges highlighted by the Commission. The action plan is supported by funding of over £1.5m by the council which is one of the biggest investments and intervention by a local authority to address race inequality and the first borough in London to commit to such a comprehensive programme.

This plan enhances existing work the council and its partners have been undertaking to address inequality facing our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents. The action plan has been developed through significant engagement with the thematic partnership boards. In addition to setting out the steps the council will take to achieve its commitment to be an anti-racist organisation, it details the actions the council and partners will deliver to improve outcomes for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority residents in areas of community leadership, health, education and employment. Appendix 1 outlines some of the key outcomes and activities we will deliver to achieve the vision set out by the Commission.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the council's commitments to the anti-racist pledge. Note that the actions will be reviewed and updated through on-going appraisal of progress. (Appendix 2)
2. Agree the actions set out in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Action Plan. Note, that the actions will be reviewed and updated through on-going appraisal of progress. (Appendix 2)
3. Agree to create a £1m reserve to provide the funding needed to deliver the programme set out in the action plan. This will be in addition to the use of £595,000 from existing budgets, bringing the total for delivering the attached action plan to £1,582,691.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This report sets out an ambitious action plan to address the findings and recommendations of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission. It follows conversations with our partners and builds on our commitment to tackle inequalities faced by our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents. It includes investment of £1,582,691 to deliver the action plan.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet could choose not to agree the action plan, but this is not recommended. The actions address specific areas of need and inequalities faced by our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, and are supported by a robust evidence base.

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Background

- 3.1 The Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission completed its review in March 2021, making 23 recommendations across areas of community leadership, health, education, and employment.
- 3.2 The Commission heard many examples of best practice in the borough, and it was clear that there has been significant progress, most noticeably in educational attainment. However, the pace of change has not been quick enough, nor has it been radical enough. 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 the same social capital as their White peers and the impact from this permeates into many areas of their life.
- 3.3 It is clear there is real commitment and passion to improve outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. As the council turns to action to respond to the Commission's findings, a key priority is to make Tower Hamlets continue to work toward being an anti-racist place, where there is a shared vision and delivery plan by all organisations to make changes at pace.
- 3.4 That is why we would like all organisations working in Tower Hamlets to sign the Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Pledge as a public commitment to deliver tangible actions to drive improvement. This will involve setting challenging targets, collecting, and publishing disaggregated ethnicity data, increasing representation and better utilisation of organisations buying and influencing powers. There is senior leadership and commitment from the council and partners and working through the Tower Hamlets Race Equality Network, chaired by Cllr Asma Begum, we have developed the Anti-Racist Pledge. The Network will have ongoing oversight of the delivery of this action plan and hold partners to account. The aim is for all members of the Partnership Executive Group, chaired by the Mayor, to sign the Pledge by December 2021, with a longer-term aim to engage all statutory, voluntary, community and private sector organisations in the borough.

Action Plan Development

- 3.5 The action plan sets out short term and longer-term milestones to achieve the ambitions set out by the Tower Hamlets Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission. The council will work with partners to effectively deliver the recommendations with the Partnership Executive Group (PEG) having overall responsibility for delivery. The action plan has been developed through collaboration with the relevant thematic partnership board:
- Tower Hamlets Race Equality Network developed the anti-racist pledge and responded to the community leadership recommendations.
 - Health and Wellbeing Board and Tower Hamlets Together responded to the health recommendations.
 - Growth and Economic Development Board responded to the Employment recommendations.

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- Children’s and Families Partnership Executive Group responded to the education recommendations
- 3.6 The action plan is an ambitious programme of interventions which aims to provide the initial step change needed to deliver improved outcomes for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities. It brings tackling race inequality to the forefront of the partnership agenda and in delivering the plan it will demonstrate the social and economic value to our wider system. It uses the council’s platform as a community leader to lead by example through a range of actions supported by resources to deliver these. The aspiration is that this will enhance our existing service provision and activities to have a greater impact on our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic residents. Furthermore, it will create the momentum for systemic changes that are needed through regular robust stocktake of progress which identifies where further work is needed. The longer-term aspiration is that the interventions will be mainstreamed and addressing race inequality is a key part of our future strategies led by leaders across the borough.

Resources

- 3.7 This action plan is fully costed to ensure it can be delivered. It includes actions which will be delivered within existing resources and actions which need additional funding. Those activities that will be delivered within existing budget and can be clearly identified total to £595,000. There are a range of other activities that will be delivered within existing resources that cannot be accurately costed. This report also sets out a requirement for Cabinet to agree an additional £987,691. The total budget for delivery of the action plan will therefore be £1,582,691. The table below sets the resources allocations for the different areas of the Commission’s focus:

Intervention	New budget requirement	Delivered within existing budget
Delivering Pledge and Partnership working	£60,000	0
Community Leadership	£95,500	£75,000
Children & Young People	£298,000	£20,000
Employment	£200,000	0
Health	0	£500,000
LBTH Organisational Development	£334,191	0
Total	£987,691	£595,000

Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Pledge

- 3.8 As a place leader the Mayor established the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Commission which has enabled extensive discussions on race inequality amongst our staff, residents, and partners. Also, in 2020 we undertook a comprehensive review of diversity within public spaces and have taken several steps concerning legacies which are celebrated within local environment, for example removing the statue of Robert Milligan (former slave owner) from West India Dock. Alongside this, tackling hate crime continues to be a local priority and we pride ourselves in being an award-winning best practice borough through our No Place for Hate campaign.

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- 3.9 In taking forward the council's commitment on the anti-racist pledge, we will invest £334,191 on organisational development and culture which will achieve the following outcomes:
- Race inequality is discussed and addressed at all levels of the organisation and with our partners.
 - There is good understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist organisation at all levels of the council.
 - The council has more senior leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
 - Partners delivering services for the council are addressing race inequality in their organisation and service delivery.
- 3.10 We will deliver a cultural leadership programme from June 2022 which will equip our leaders and managers with a range of tools, skills and knowledge to ensure we are culturally competent. Alongside this, we will run an anti-racism education programme for all our staff which will educate, challenge, and grow inclusivity and recognise differences. We will aim to support 65 Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff to access a range of external development programmes which will enable the development of leadership skills and support staff to take-up senior roles within the organisation. By March 2022 we will establish a speaking up service which will create a 'safe space' for open, honest, and challenging conversations around race and experiences of racism. This will complement the work of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and will facilitate meaningful dialogue between staff and senior leadership and generate action focused and tailored outcomes.
- 3.11 Since 2018 we have been publishing high level information on ethnicity pay gap. To better understand why the gap exists and the areas in the organisation where the gap is most prominent, we will undertake a detailed analysis of ethnicity pay gap by December 2022. The development of this evidence base will inform a range of options on how to close the gap and the investment and time required to do so.
- 3.12 We have been working with our partners to support them to develop their anti-racist pledge and a range of partner pledges will be available on the council [website](#) as part of the publication of our pledge. The aim is by December 2021 all members of the Partnership Executive Group will sign the Pledge.

Community Leadership

- 3.13 We deliver a range of initiatives to support local people into leadership positions. We also have a diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector and award winning and high-profile local role models from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. We have recently established a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community network to enable residents to shape design and delivery of services and champion race inequality challenges. These provide a good foundation and going forward we will invest £170,000 to achieve the following outcomes:

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders from the voluntary and community sector are actively influencing local policy and service delivery.
- More residents from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are in community leadership roles.
- Greater awareness and access for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic residents to community leadership roles.
- Clear and visible role models that inspire more Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic residents to be active in their community.

3.14 We will work with residents and organisations to co-design and commission a tailored leadership programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents. Beginning in March 2022 it will develop the skills and confidence of residents to take up a range of leadership roles and help ensure local service provision better meet the needs of our diverse communities. In recognition of the achievements of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders and to celebrate work of local organisations on race equality the partnership will organise an event with the aim of leveraging support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and encourage local people to become allies and role models. This will build on the activities we delivered during Black History Month in October 2021. We will also develop leadership of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic voluntary organisations to ensure they have the skills, support and capacity to influence local services and deliver provision to meet local needs.

3.15 We will communicate opportunities for residents to be active in their community by using council and partner communication channels to promote these roles. This will be complemented by an ‘I can be’ communications campaign which will profile Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents who have made significant contributions and encourage others to do the same.

3.16 We provide a range of support to local people to become school governors including training and programmes to enable governors to be effective in their role. In response to feedback shared with the Commission by school governors it is clear more needs to be done to recruit Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents into school governor positions and in particular senior roles within governing bodies. We will work with local schools and Tower Hamlets Education Partnership to deliver events and activities to increase the number of school governors from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Strengthening diversity in school governing boards also means more robust debate, better decision making, improved educational outcomes for children and parental engagement.

Health

3.17 Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic has of course been a key focus for the health and care system over the last 18 months, and much of the work done to date to tackle Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic inequalities has been through this lens (for example, work to tackle disparities in Covid-19 vaccination take-up levels). In addition, the partnership has delivered several projects which have aimed to improve health outcomes for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities including:

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- The public health response to the pandemic adapted to consider digital exclusion. A Covid-19 helpline was set-up to resolve issues and book vaccines, with call handlers who speak community languages. Posters and signs in community languages were placed around the borough in relation to Covid-19. Somali and Bangladeshi community organisations delivered outreach and support and codesigned tailored prevention and protection messages to the life course groups within these communities.
- In Barts Health NHS Trust, work has been undertaken with renal medicine (the largest user of remote access), which included reviewing access to bilingual health advocacy, advocacy staff calling non-English patients prior to video consultations to assess their needs and any concerns. As a result, setting up setting up 3-way consultations when necessary.
- Covid-19 vaccine clinics for people who are undocumented or with no recourse to public funds have been organised, explicitly promoted to people who may be worried
- The Tower Hamlets Together (THT) Board has completed an anti-racism leadership development programme provided by the equality charity Brap. This has included a focus on systemic racism and systemic change.
- THT partners have agreed a joint Workforce and Occupational Development (OD) Strategy in March 2021 with commitments to tackle Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic inequality amongst staff.
- Barts Health NHS Trust has committed to 3% year on year growth of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff in senior positions. This has been achieved over the last year, maintaining this growth would allow the trust to achieve representative leadership by 2028.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board and Tower Hamlets Together partnership have gathered community insights to support better understanding of causes of health inequalities amongst Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities.
- The Board has used the insights to agree a Health & Wellbeing Strategy for 2021-2025 with key principle of addressing inequalities and being anti-racist in everything the partnership does.
- The council has developed anti-racism practice in adult social care including establishing a board which aims to ensure the social care workforce has substantial knowledge of anti-racism in practice and that social care has a diverse workforce reflective of the community, who are supported, included and have development opportunities.

3.18 In response to the Commission's findings, we will invest £500,000 to achieve the following outcomes on health:

- Improved access to health and care services for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents.
- Leaders in health and social care champion and actively address health inequalities faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents.
- Better representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff at all levels in health services.
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents are meaningfully involved and engaged in design and delivery of health services.
- Health and wellbeing key messages reach Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and deliver intended outcomes

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- 3.19 By March 2022 the partnership will gather and analyse data across the system, manage an audit of key public information in community languages and organise translations, coordinate ‘you said, we did’ work related to co-production. It will also arrange a ‘lessons learned’ exercise in relation to Covid-19 approaches by April 2022, targeted at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities that we may want to replicate in future for other health issues. The partnership has also developed a digital inclusion action plan with the aim of better coordinating digital inclusion activities across the borough to ensure residents have the tools and skills they need to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from a digital world.
- 3.20 The Health & Wellbeing Board has commenced work on developing a robust evidence base to form a better understanding of key health inequalities and the impact it has on our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. As part of this research there will be significant emphasis on engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to identify key issues and solutions. This will be supported by Healthwatch Tower Hamlets who will gather their own intelligence on the experience and issues for patients at the Royal London Hospital. Both workstreams are expected to be completed by December 2021 and will provide evidenced based solutions to address health inequalities and inform future activities of the partnership.
- 3.21 The Partnership will better recognise and meet the cultural needs of patients through the development of anti-racist practice. The success of the anti-racism leadership programme delivered by BRAP to the Tower Hamlets Together Executive Board, the partnership will invest in an anti-racism leadership programme beyond 2021. This will help to drive deep cultural change and tackle the pervasive racial microaggressions, bias and stereotypes that exist in society and service provision.
- 3.22 The partnership will continue to support the delivery of the Disparities project which aims to work with Black Asian and Minority Ethnic residents to amplify and sustain the impact and influence achieved during the response to the pandemic. The project will provide a locally driven, co-production support programme targeting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities with an emphasis on prioritising mental health. This will lead to improvement in access to services and better satisfaction amongst local people.
- 3.23 Through the insights on local inequality the partnership will work as one voice to influence and lobby for further resources for Tower Hamlets. The partnership will support local campaigns to improve access to health services by lobbying against the hostile environment polices and reduce the checking of immigration status of service users and patients.

Education & Employment

- 3.24 Tower Hamlets is nationally recognised for having some of the best schools in the country which has been built on excellent relationship between the council schools and parents. This has resulted in children achieving good academic success at key stages. We will continue working with the Tower Hamlets

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

Education partnership to ensure all children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes and flourish through an effective partnership. We will invest £318,000 to achieve the following outcomes:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people are more confident going into the job market and access jobs that meet their educational attainment.
- Schools' leadership includes more senior staff and governors from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

- 3.25 From January 2022, we will commence a mentoring programme which enables children and young people to raise their aspiration and develop their social capital, networks and enable them to secure better jobs that their educational attainment deserves. Furthermore, in partnership with local universities and schools we will develop a summer school from July 2022, which will enrich young people's aspirations and raise their awareness of the career pathways available to them. This will be piloted then implemented to harness their career resources for targeted delivery in local schools. From February 2022 we will also deliver targeted interventions to 800 children and young people at risk of being NEET (Not in employment, education and training) with a focus on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people. This will aim to increase these young people's awareness and support on routes into work, provide clear vision and pathway for their future and increase employability skills, motivation, and self-confidence.
- 3.26 From September 2021 work has begun with 20 schools on an anti-racist curriculum project. This innovative and powerful project aims to 'decolonise' the curriculum and establish the difference between non-racism and racism, and what that means in a school setting. It will also explore the pupil voice and will teach schools to use the lived experience of children and young people to create representative school cultures reflective of their communities. Additionally, it will hold a surgery with the Senior Leadership Team of each school to audit how the curriculum is being delivered and give practical advice around changes and reforms to embed broader perspectives.
- 3.27 To increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers we will work with Tower Hamlets Education Partnership to deliver a schools leadership programme. Having a more diverse schools leadership team will hugely benefit Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. They will act as role models to inspire children to aim high and to view schools as a place that welcomes them and where they could be successful as well as helping forge good relationships between students and staff. It also brings variation into the school, encouraging students to value diverse cultural traditions, creating a culture of tolerance and support. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leaders can draw on their own experiences to engage with students by challenging racial stereotypes and making changes throughout the school to address any issues of discrimination harming students – who in turn will feel that their school leaders are looking out for them.

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

- 3.28 Through our employment service WorkPath and grant and commissioned funded projects we already support large number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents into work. To deliver the employment recommendations the council will invest £200,00 to achieve the following outcomes:
- Increase employment rates amongst Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents.
 - Increase in number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in senior roles in organisations in Tower Hamlets.
- 3.29 We will focus on interventions which support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people to gain employment and will also target the structural barriers many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees encounter as they try to enter senior positions. We will harness the opportunities Canary Wharf and the City of London through assembling a leaders' forum which will have a brief to accelerate the pace of change and improve the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents in senior positions within their organisation. The forum will also have role in working with the council and schools to support young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students to be 'work ready' and prepared to enter the corporate world and become more familiar with testing, assessments and interviews.
- 3.30 The Race Equality Network will also look to utilise the resources of the Partnership to increase representation in organisations across the borough and improve the way data is universally collected and published. The Race Equality Network will facilitate partnership discussion to scope and develop a leadership programme which supports Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people across different sectors to move into senior positions. The Network will also work with Queen May university to engage partner agencies to develop a joint approach to publishing disaggregated data, including pay gap and ethnic profile of senior leadership, to be transparent about the progress and gaps, and help develop a better intelligence base to inform future decision making.

Next Steps

- 3.31 Openness, engagement and partnership has been key to the work of the Commission and development of this action plan. In taking forward the delivery of this action plan it will be crucial to continue with quality dialogue and co-production with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, internal and external networks and partnerships to ensure the interventions are meaningful, sustainable and effective.
- 3.32 Relevant lead officers, and boards are responsible for delivering the actions in the plan and reporting on progress, which will be overseen by the partnership Race Equality Network. They will report annually on progress and the actions will be refreshed as part of this stocktake to ensure this is having an impact and delivering tangible changes.

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

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, recommendations and actions which respond to them 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 actions provide a partnership response to the recommendations from this Commission will help to address inequalities in Tower Hamlets and provide a platform to ensure equalities remains at the forefront of our collective work

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 A £1m Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission reserve could be created from the remaining unallocated amount of the 2021-22 New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant of £7.7m, agreed in the 2021-22 budget to be initially transferred to increase the NHB reserve. The NHB reserve has funded the £3m Covid Recovery Fund reserve and the £6m Free School Meals reserve. Drawdown of funding from the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission reserve will be authorised by the S151 Officer following value for money assessments of the individual non-recurrent project funding requests, which will include consideration of the use of existing resources (including internal staffing resource) within the partnership and the availability of alternative funding sources. Projects which would create funding requirements in future years would require the permanent budget source to be identified before the project could be agreed.
- 6.2 The £595k to be delivered within existing budget will be funded as follows:
- £45k from 2021-22 budget on Community Grant
 - £350k from PH reserve for BAME Commission
 - £200k from Covid Outbreak funding

Appendix 1 – Key Deliverables

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to undertake the activities referred to in this report.
- 7.2 The report refers to the expenditure of various sums of money to achieve certain objectives. Where the identified sums are to be spent with external organisations then such expenditure will be subject to either an appropriate level of competition in line with the law or as grants (as the case may be) in accordance with the Council's constitution. In either case, such expenditure will be subject to appropriate checks and measures (such as comparison with similar spend elsewhere and contract monitoring) to ensure the expenditure represents statutory Best Value.
- 7.3 The expenditure via grant or services contract will also be subject to its own approval process in accordance with the Council's constitution.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1a – Key deliverables diagram
- Appendix 1b - Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission Key Deliverables and Action Plan

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

- None

Officer contact details for documents: