

Notes of the Torbay Racism Review Panel

17 November 2021

-: Present :-

Councillor Jermaine Atiya-Alla (Chairman), Councillor John Thomas (Vice-Chair),
Councillor Andrew Barrand, Councillor Robert Loxton and Councillor Cordelia Law

(Also in attendance: Councillor Anne Brooks, Councillor Barbara Lewis and Councillor
Chris Lewis)

30. Apologies

Councillor Steve Darling, Kofi Yeboah-Aidoo, Rehan Uddin, Maia Thomas and
Kevin Dixon.

31. Action Notes from panel meetings on 18th August 2021 and 8th November 2021

The action notes from the meetings of the panel held on 18 August 2021 and 8
November 2021 were agreed as a correct record of the meetings.

32. Question and answer session with Andrew George and Yvan Clarke from the National Black Police Association.

The panel asked a range of questions to the representatives from the National
Black Police Association and the key points that came out of the questioning were:

- It was explained that the NBPA was founded in 1998 and had started as informal networks in the Metropolitan Police but that the association has now developed to be present in nearly all police forces in the UK
- It was explained that there is still a wide disparity in representation of BAME police officers in the UK, this roughly equates to 93% white officers to 7% BAME officers – the NBPA explained that the national recruitment drive to appoint 20,000 officers was helping to increase this number but that the increases were only minimal, and this was also being impacted on by BAME officers leaving the force (generally between their first to fourth year of employment) - the NBPA offers advice and support to senior officers leading the recruitment drive
- The NBPA explained that BAME officers often in their experience feel they need to fit into the white dominated forces they work for, rather than maintain their cultural identity and often poor retainment of BAME officers is down to them feeling isolated and unsupported by their force

- One issue highlighted on BAME officer recruitment was that of candidates needing a C grade at GCSE English and that this was a barrier to candidates who are educated overseas – the NPBA was currently in the process of lobbying the Home Office on this issue
- The NBPA also explained that another barrier to recruitment was that BAME candidates often do not come from social networks where entering the police force is accepted as a career option and thus at times they struggle at interviews and test centres
- The NBPA stated that BAME representation was still very low at senior officer grades
- It was explained that there was a perception that BAME officers recruited only got in the force as there is a need to increase BAME officer numbers rather than on the quality of candidates
- The NBPA explained that BAME officers are twice as likely to face misconduct charges than a white officer and that more independence in this process was required to manage this issue - however it was explained that this statistic was only based on new data and that more work had to be done to understand this issue
- One issue raised by the NBPA was that some police forces do not include the NBPA in the induction process for new officers and that this stops the NBPA supporting those officers
- The NBPA explained that to tackle racism in the police force we need to move away from the 'them and us' model and develop empathy for race as a protected characteristic rather than what normally emerges which is hostility, the police needs to recognise the concept of institutional racism and use it as a vehicle to discuss and take action – however the biggest thing that the police and society needs to do is bring people who are different together more often so that they communicate and socialise and understand each other more, this is especially needed in areas such as Devon where the BAME population is so small that local understanding of race is also low
- The NBPA stated that police forces needed to do more to engage and collaborate with the BAME community but that it was not good enough to parachute in and then parachute out – the engagement needed to be sustained and meaningful
- In terms of improving recruitment for BAME officers the NBPA stated that they wanted to see more sustained engagement with BAME communities to build trust in the police, so it was seen as a career option, they also want to see BAME officers more involved in designing recruitment processes as at present this design process is dominated by white officers
- The NBPA stated that at present no police force in the UK is representative of the community they serve
- When asked what the council could do to help the NBPA explained that it wanted to see the wider public sector come out of its silos and work together on the issues related to race such as joint recruitment events – they also wanted the council to hold the relevant Police and Crime Commissioners to account on this issue

- It was explained that in the Devon and Cornwall police force there was currently a BAME staff network that was seeking to link with the NBPA
- Devon and Cornwall Police are acting on race issues in the police and have 10 strategic objectives on race - it was explained that the force is seeking to increase cultural awareness in its senior officers and is also undertaking a Cultural Audit via an external body which is due to report in mid 2022 with recommendations
- The NBPA explained that it would like to see more engagement with BAME young people to break down the barriers of joining the police as at times this can go against the cultural values of some BAME communities
- When asked where racist incidents happen most for BAME officers it was explained that it was often alcohol related incidents or in custody suites, but that BAME police officers faced micro aggression daily from the public and from colleagues – it was explained that tackling racism from colleagues was particularly difficult as it made you stand out
- The NBPA stated that Devon and Cornwall Police is always an area of concern in relation to stop and search disparity figures when they are released each year