

Minutes of the How do we make Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Lives Matter in Torbay? - Review Panel

25 November 2020

-: Present :-

Councillor Jermaine Atiya-Alla (Chairman), Councillor John Thomas (Vice-Chair), Councillor Andrew Barrand, Councillor Steve Darling, Councillor Robert Loxton, Kevin Dixon, Maia Thomas and Kofi Yeboah-Aidoo

(Also in attendance: Councillor Nick Bye, Councillor Anne Brooks, Councillor Ray Hill, Councillor Karen Kennedy, Councillor Barbara Lewis, Councillor Chris Lewis, Councillor Terry Manning, Councillor David Thomas and Councillor Jacqueline Thomas)

14. Action Notes from the last meeting

Notes of the meeting held by the panel on 15 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

15. How do we make Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic lives matter at Torbay's public organisations?

The chair welcomed the representatives of Devon and Cornwall Police and explained that he had invited the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall Police to the meeting but that due to a clash of meetings she was unable to attend but this should not be interpreted as a reflection of her lack of interest and commitment to the issue. However, the Police and Crime Commissioner had provided the panel with a written submission and the panel will review this and consider whether they wish to invite the commissioner to a future meeting of the panel.

Chief Superintendent Nikki Leaper presented data on proportionality in Torbay and South Devon and then the panel member and other councillors present directed a number of questions to her and other police representatives based around the key question of how do we make Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) lives matter at Torbay's public organisations?

The key responses from the police representatives are detailed below:

- There was a clear admission that the data collected by the police was incomplete especially around ethnicity and that this made it difficult to accurately understand the extent as to how police activities impacted on Torbay's BAME community

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- It was identified that there were many barriers to accurately collecting this data and that language barriers in Torbay may be more widespread than first understood
- The data collected also faces other challenges in how a distinction is made between Torbay residents vs Torbay visitors as well as the need to ensure that the data on ethnicity was collected consistently across the force area so like for like comparisons could be made
- A particular issue with the ethnicity data was that county lines activity could distort the local figures
- The police recognise that to place the data in context they require the BAME data from the 2021 census and also need to work with other partner organisations to share data where appropriate
- That the police recognise that they need to build trust with communities over the use of stop and search and are currently working with independent advisors from the community to shape this and other policy approaches
- The police recognise they need to do more to obtain the 'lived experiences' of the BAME community to shape their approach and policy towards policing in Torbay and are setting up a South Devon Reference Group to address this
- That the police are open to working with the local community of Torbay to find ways to build trust and confidence in the police – they see this as societal issue not just a police issue
- Admission from police that they could do more to address racism and trust and confidence in them via schools and colleges and also use this as an opportunity to recruit young people into the police especially from the BAME community
- In answer to challenge from the panel on why so many BAME people are subject to stop and search the police representatives stated that it was still not clear but that work was ongoing to look at this via an Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panel
- The police explained that officers do undertake unconscious bias training and also undertake an equality and diversity module
- Panel members asked for the Torbay figures on proportionality to be placed in context with those for Plymouth and Exeter and it was explained that Torbay's figures were similar to those for Cornwall but that Exeter's figures were a little higher and Plymouth's a little lower but that the figures were all quite similar
- It was explained that out of 244 senior police officers in the Devon and Cornwall Police there were 5 BAME inspectors and that the BAME workforce in the force was approximately 1.3% but that the police recognise that they need to do more to attract BAME people to work in police not just as officer but also in support roles

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- The police explained that they needed to really understand the barriers that were stopping the BAME community joining the police force but that these could be that they perceive the force as racist, they are concerned about their career prospects because they are BAME, a fear of facing racism from the public and the element of danger of being a front line police officer
- The police questioned whether they had BAME role models in the force for the BAME community to look up to and that it was intimidating to join an organisation where the majority of staff were white.

Members of the public then had the opportunity to ask questions and the key responses from the police representatives are detailed below:

- It was explained that the Devon and Cornwall Police were considering drafting an Anti-Racism Policy to specifically address racism both internally and externally
- There was a need to challenge and educate the older population in Torbay on race and ethnicity as well as the younger generation and that this could be achieved by a greater emphasis on diversity events and visibility of BAME culture in Torbay, particular reference was made to the Into the Mix Festival that previously took place in Torbay but that to be successful this festival and other events needed support from organisations such as the council
- There was a discussion around whether the term 'hate crime' was the best description of the activity that takes place against the BAME community and whether a more specific term or definition is required

The following actions were identified by the panel:

- Police presentation on proportionality to be sent to all panel members – Melissa Nicholson
- Panel requested data on % of stop and search activity that was justified in Torbay – Melissa Nicholson/Nikki Leaper
- Police to respond on whether stop and search figures included foot and vehicle stops - Melissa Nicholson/Nikki Leaper
- Police to provide Councillor Advocate details to panel members and Councillor MacGregor from Teignbridge District Council - Melissa Nicholson/Nikki Leaper