

Meeting of Council, Tuesday, 12th April, 2022 (Item COU121)

Extract from minutes of 12th April 2022:

Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14):

Anti-Racism - Councillor Gibbons (Agenda Item 6(2))

In introducing the Motion, Councillor Gibbons welcomed the good work carried out since 2020 and highlighted the measures that had already been taken to raise the profile of race equality in the workplace. However, there was more to be done and there was a commitment to take this forward.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gibbons and seconded by Councillor James

“The Black Lives Matter Movement was set up in 2013 after the death of Trayvon Martin and subsequent acquittal of his killer. Global protests increased following the killing of George Floyd in June 2020, for which Minneapolis police officers were charged with second-degree murder (and aiding and abetting second-degree murder).

In 2020 peaceful protests in support of Black Lives Matter were held across North Somerset and throughout the UK. The aim of the protests was to demand change, bringing an end to the racism, discrimination and inequality experienced by black people. The movement strives for dignity, justice, and freedom.

Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often denied or unseen problem in the UK.

We have recently heard from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people living and working in North Somerset who confirmed that they too experience racism in North Somerset. Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete. This Council, representing people in North Somerset has a duty as a public leader to actively lead work to drive anti-racism. Thus:

This Council resolves as follows:

1. To stand together unreservedly with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people in North Somerset.



2. To work to eradicate racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and discrimination which impact the entire community and blight our society.
3. To establish further initiatives to ensure North Somerset is actively inclusive and anti-racist.
4. To ensure Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members of our community are involved in any reviews of our processes, policies and organisational attitudes, hold listening and engagement events seeking their views on the issues they face in North Somerset, and work with and support Community groups, youth groups, and places of worship in engaging with these issues.
5. To evaluate our progress against the Equality Framework for Local Government, ensuring race equality is at the heart of the review and produce an action plan addressing improvements identified, and the matters raised through our engagement with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in North Somerset.
6. To provide training on race equality and what it means to be anti-racist, which will be mandatory for staff and expected for all councillors.
7. To recognise the rich cultural diversity of our employees and positively support their engagement in activity to address systemic racism wherever it occurs, and to make a commitment to work with organisations from the wider ethnic minority communities in North Somerset. (The recent Listening Event, was an example of a potential step in this direction.)

The council recognises that racial inequality exists, and we recognise our role in actively challenging it wherever it occurs in North Somerset. We make the commitment to implement these actions, through working with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members of our communities, and with organisations from the wider ethnic minority communities in North Somerset to effect meaningful change.”

Seven members signified their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Gibbons spoke in support of her Motion and Councillor James, as seconder, also spoke in support. Reference was made to the increase in hate crime, and in particular race crime, over the last two years and the importance of showing leadership in promoting equality and stamping out racial hatred. In debating the Motion members expressed support for this commitment and suggested it should be promoted across town and parish councils too. Members thanked those involved for the work undertaken and welcomed the collaboration and co-operation with the community and the inclusive approach that had been adopted. Reference was made to the benefits of the Listening Event and other initiatives in giving people the tools to challenge racism and make North Somerset a fully inclusive and anti-racist place to live and work.

Following further debate it was

Resolved: that the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

