

Full Council

9th November 2021



Title: CoRE Annual Report 2020-2021

Report of: This report covers the main period in office of Professor Olivette Otele and is presented by her successor Museji Ahmed Takolia CBE who took up his appointment on 5th October 2021.

Ward: City-wide

Person Presenting Report: Museji Ahmed Takolia CBE, Independent Chair of CoRE. He is accompanied by Vice Chair, Margaret Simmons-Bird MBE, who was interim Chair from June 2021 to October 2021.

Recommendation

For Bristol City Council to:

- Note report and contribution to policy locally and nationally
- Continue supporting implementation of the strategic work and recommendations of the Commission on Race Equality

Summary

This Annual Report of CoRE summarises the activities of the Commission during the height of the pandemic when meetings were held virtually only. The first opportunity for many of the commissioners to meet together will only take place later this month.

More specifically it reports on:

- The activities undertaken between October 2020 and September 2021 by CoRE Independent Chair and BSWN, the Secretariat

The significant issues in the report are:

The report will provide progress against milestones within Education, Criminal Justice, Health and Wellbeing, the Economy and Community Engagement work streams, and its objective is to tackle systemic racial inequality, and outline CoRE's direction for 2021/22.



Policy

CoRE's recommendations related to existing Council policy through the:

- One City Plan
- Bristol City Council Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy
- House of Commons Women's & Equalities Committee: Coronavirus (Covid-19-) Inquiry
- Bristol City Council's Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2018-2023
- Bristol City Council's 'Advancing Equality and Inclusion' new actions 2020/21
- Transforming Race and Equality at Bristol City Council (BCC) - conclusions and recommendations June 2020

Consultation

1. Internal

This report was informed in consultation with Deputy Mayor Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Equalities BCC; Rebecca Baldwin-Cantello, Head of Equality and Inclusion BCC; and Cherene Whitfield, Equalities Officer BCC. The secretariat, Black South West Network (BSWN), has further contributed to planning and direction for 2021/22.

2. External

Participants and contributors to the work of CoRE include local strategic groups and bodies such as the new Education and Skill Race Equality Steering Group, Bristol One Curriculum Project, the Local Lammy Review Group, the Covid-19 Steering Group, the Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group, and various city-wide council-led boards such as the Health Board. Several recommendations for future activities of the Commission, as part of this report, were conducted during a series of 5 cross-sectoral community consultations.

Context

CoRE was set up by Bristol's Mayor, Marvin Rees, in response to the Bristol Manifesto for Race Equality, to look at race and ethnicity discrimination in Bristol. Bristol has a long-standing history of challenging inequality and this is reflected in the core principles developed in memory of Batook Pandya, as a precursor to Bristol's Manifesto for promoting race equality. The need for this Commission is long-standing but now, as we move into a new era of post Covid-19 and Brexit, CoRE can play a critical role in furthering race equality in Bristol.

The key functions of the Commission include:

- Ensure the effective engagement of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in the city
- Provide challenge to public, private, and voluntary institutions and organisations in relation to race equality.
- Engage with policy and strategy developers to inform processes to ensure that race equality is embedded into planning, delivery, and outcomes.
- Engage with organisations and institutions (regardless of their geographical coverage) whose operations impact directly on the Black, Asian Minority Ethnic communities of Bristol.
- Provide independent scrutiny, including through collaboration with The Bristol Strategic Race Equality Leaders Group, Learning City Partnership, One City Partnership Boards, HR Race

Strategic Leaders Group and Bristol Equality Charter Network.

- Progress a strategic action plan to be reviewed annually.

The Commission's focus included to:

- work with Bristol's communities and organisations to improve and prioritise race equality to achieve an inclusive, cohesive, thriving, and representative city
- guide Bristol's policy and strategy developers to make sure race equality is included in all their work
- hold public, private, and voluntary sectors to account in relation to race equality to uphold the Bristol Race Equality manifesto
- report on progress on race equality and the general impact of inequality and discrimination on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities of Bristol

CoRE would like to thank the Commissioners for their dedicated work so far.

1. Update on activities since last report (undertaken between October 2020 and September 2021)

1.1 Education work stream - Lead: Fatima Mohamed Ali

Education was identified as a top priority at each of the CORE community consultations and therefore must be a key focus for the work of the commissioners.

Since the consultation the Education Task Group has produced a brief action plan which sets out the strategic focus of its work for the year. The Task group has used published, validated education data to inform its action plan. The data shows a significant gap in educational attainment over decades for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners across primary and secondary schools when compared to their white peers. In addition, the data also shows over-representation of these groups in exclusions and attendance levels, with the over-identification of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners with additional needs over-represented in SEND data.

Two commissioners are members of the newly reformed Education and Skill Race Equality Steering Group and co-chair the meeting. While this group builds on the work of the previous Race Equality in Education Group (REEG), the membership and terms of reference has changed to reflect a more strategic and advisory role. The membership includes a diverse range of senior education professional across the City with the authority and ability to transform and challenge race inequality within the sector. There is representation from CEOs, headteachers, other school leaders, teaching practitioners, the independent sector, and colleges. The group has met twice, and the initial focus has been to establish a shared understanding of the racial disparities in education outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners. Local authority officers have shared local data on education outcomes up to summer 2019 (exams and assessment changed in 2020 & 2021 therefore this data is unavailable) and current data on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic exclusions, attendance and SEND. It was vital to share this data to demonstrate why addressing race equality in education is an urgent action for schools, colleges and setting across the city. Significantly, the data confirms unequivocally the commonly held view of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic parents and carers that schools are systematically failing our children and young people. Policies and practices intentionally or unintentionally consistently discriminate against our children and impact disproportionately on their learning and future career prospects.

Two CORE commissioners will contribute to the Education & Skills Race Equality Steering group and ensure that it is aligned with that of the Education Task Group. The group is also beginning to work alongside the Criminal Justice Task Group, to deliver rights awareness training around school exclusions to affected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The Education Task Group have commissioned a mapping of the local and regional education eco-system. The next step is to map a portfolio of race equality work being done in education so that we do not duplicate scarce resources and efforts. In addition, the task group has made early links with the Prince's Trust project to discuss the involvement of CORE in shaping the project so that it is sustainable and meets community-based needs. Collaboration with and building on work by EmbRACE and Growing Future to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic parental advocacy, recruitment of more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic school governors and provide training for governors on promoting race equality in schools will further enrich the work of the task groups.

1.2 Criminal Justice work stream – Lead: Maya Mate-Kole

As the Commission on Race Equality was relaunched and following community consultations the criminal justice system was not identified as a priority theme and so a task group was not established initially. However, amidst the global Black Lives Matter movement, a response to police brutality, racism and structural inequality, the introduction of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, local Police and Crime Commissioner elections and violence against women and girls the role of CoRE in relation to this system was recognised as imperative.

We know Black and minoritised communities continue to be overrepresented throughout various stages of the criminal justice system including stop and search, use of force and in custody. Within Avon and Somerset Constabulary in the last quarter there was a decrease in stop and search disproportionately with those from a Black Ethnicity 6.6 times more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterpart (Avon & Somerset Police April-Jun 2021). This data combined with several high-profile police incidents, community concerns, fractured relationships, serious violence, and street conflict highlights just how far we still must go.

Subsequently the Criminal justice Task Group was re-established May 2021 with the aim to address race disparity within the city relating to the Criminal Justice System to be achieved by focussing on the following key priorities:

Avon & Somerset Lammy Review

- To support the work of local Lammy review including the development of a framework and working group to monitor the implementation of final report recommendations.

Training

- Scrutiny and review of Equality and Diversity, cultural intelligence and de-escalation training delivered across Avon & Somerset Constabulary including outcome measures and impact

Representation

- Increase Black, Asian & minoritised communities' representation within strategic groups/boards and governance structures relating to criminal justice within the city.

Community Engagement

- To increase community awareness of criminal justice system including pathways, rights &

responsibilities & tackling serious youth violence.

Commissioning

- Review commissioning, tendering and resource allocation processes in relation to service delivery and support services for those involved in serious youth violence and community.

Strategic Planning

- To influence the OPCC and ASP's priorities and objectives to identify and address where there is disproportionate impact on Black and marginalised communities.

1.2.1 Updates:

- Ongoing collaboration with ASC in relation to inclusive policing strategy plan and community engagement plan.
- Chaired Youth Task Group as part of local Lammy Review.
- Scrutiny of police incidents/arrests.
- Ongoing collaboration with ASC in their development of young people's Scrutiny of Powers Panel and accessible pathways to SOP panel to increase representation
- Mapped representation amongst criminal justice advisory groups and strategic boards to identify gaps in influence and opportunities to widen participation to link to auditing workstream.

1.2.2 Aims for the future:

- Develop auditing tool and framework to assess inclusivity of boards relating to the criminal justice system; identifying areas for improvement & establish best practice.
- Work with Independent Office for Police Conduct to explore opportunities for collaboration to improve trust with Black and minoritised communities.
- Collaborate with local solicitors and Safer Options to develop rights & responsibilities workshop series that can be delivered with local community groups, parenting groups and education settings.
- As far as possible, while remaining legally compliant, we aim to map commissioning landscape within criminal justice system and review process and framework used by partners for service needs assessment, service gap analysis, procurement, and resource allocation; identifying barriers for community/ Black led organisations to inform the revision of processes to promote inclusive procurement and commissioning.
- Review and interrogate use of equality impact assessments by OPCC and ASP in relation to priorities, policing practices, and strategic plans.
- Agree mechanism with police partners to review training and offer feedback including developing a mechanism for sharing evaluation and impact of training delivery.

1.3 Health and Wellbeing work stream - Lead: Euella Jackson

The Health and Wellbeing task-group was formed out of the Bristol Commission of Race Equality in Spring 2021. In March 2021, we invited Carol Slater, Head of Public Health at Bristol City Council to inform the task group of the current state of public health in the city and the racial disparities - particularly in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advisory members from a range of different community and mainstream health organisations in

Bristol were invited to join in April 2021 and at our first meeting we shared the task-group's three key objectives. We have spent the past few months developing a realistic strategy. In order to narrow down our focus, in September 2021, we took the decision to prioritise supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic refugee and asylum seekers and use our three objectives (see below) to measure and focus our impact.

Objective 1: To empower the community to access and take full advantage of the city's (mental) health and wellbeing services, provisions and resources.

- In the short-term, the task group wants to engage with the existing support organisations that work with these communities and refugee and asylum seekers to identify challenges, support and service offerings.
- The workstream's Chair, has been attending meetings alongside the other task group Chairs to ensure synergy and consistency across the CoRE. The health and wellbeing group hopes to work with Sister Jendayi to engage, talk with and speak with the community about taking full advantage of the city's services and understand the challenges they may face.
- The health and wellbeing task-group is working on developing a communication strategy to increase the group's visibility among the community and remain connected to the concerns of the community.

Objective 2: To influence and interrogate the commissioning of health (and mental health) and wellbeing services, provision and procurement in the city.

- Link up with the work being done with Black South West Network's Make It Work initiative that supports Bristol's Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic enterprises and VCSE organisations to work with Bristol City Council's care commissioning framework.
- As far as possible, while remaining legally compliant, we aim to acquire Bristol City Council's Care Commissioning Timetable for the next few years, so we can influence commissioning in advance of deadlines.

Objective 3: To promote the use of community-centred/led data in decision-making as an industry standard/ best practice.

- We plan to use the information acquired from community and organisational consultation to develop a best practice framework for commissioning bodies.
- Alongside this, we will conduct a mapping exercise to identify where the commissioning opportunities are in the region - identify where the gaps are.
- We hope to compile a letter to the commissioning and public bodies with a call to action, requesting that they give commitment to reducing health inequalities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic refugee and asylum seekers, with the priorities we identify in the letter.

1.4 Community Engagement work stream - Lead: Jendayi Serwah

The Community Engagement Committee is the newest of the CORE committees. In spring 2021 Commissioners agreed that a community engagement committee needed to be established to fulfil our commitments to engage with and hear the voices of Black and Brown communities as it carries out its primary role of influencing and securing racial equity within structures and institutions within the city. The terms of reference are being developed and it is envisaged that there may be a co-chair for the committee as well as co-opted individuals.

The Community Engagement Committee aspires to create spaces where the community can be

heard on issues that matter to them, and for commissioners to take key messages and concerns into these strategic spaces that it interfaces with. This would also include targeted activities, for example with young people, whose voices are often unheard. There is a need for Commissioners to be very visible, grounded, accessible and establishing a series of community engagements will facilitate this. It is important for these independent commissioners be endorsed and supported by communities they serve, who also have a role in the quest for racial justice and equity. These are important principles beyond inclusion, which for the most part is demonstrated by racial visibility and statistics rather than through systemic change.

There is a need to build confidence in the commissioners and support them to shape the landscape of city leadership so that substantive, rather than numerical and visible representation of Black and Brown Global South community interests, are part of the decision-making processes in the city. Community engagement is central to driving this in a credible way and I look forward to working with the beautiful range of communities in Bristol. ‘Nothing About Us Without Us’.

In the coming months the community engagement committee will:

- Appoint a co-chair and committee members
- Agree a series of engagements aimed at specific groups e.g., Asian Communities, Youth, Afrikan Heritage communities
- Facilitate some online conversations and polls for those who feel vulnerable due to Covid-19
- Conduct a series of radio interviews/features to build engagement with Commissioners on various topic related to our core priority areas of education, health & wellbeing, criminal justice, economy (employment & enterprise)

1.5 Economy work stream (March – October 2021) – Lead: Dr Marcus Walters

The Economy Task Group within CoRE was established in March 2021 with an assigned focus to develop and implement a strategy to take steps to address racial inequality in the identified ‘key priority area’ of ‘Economy’ (i.e., Employment and Enterprise – see below for further detail). The Economy Task Group is comprised of four Commissioners: Marcus Walters (Chair of the Task Group), Jane Khawaja, Zain Shaffi and Forward Maisokwadzo.

1.5.1 Background to the Economy Task Group

During the Summer of 2020 (July through to September) CoRE, in partnership with BSWN, hosted several community consultations (five in total) with members of Bristol’s Black and Ethnic Minority communities, including key business leaders, for the purpose of gaining a critical insight into the consultees’ concerns, and the ways in which CoRE could promote and tackle racial inequality. One of the key areas of concern for the consultees centred on the ‘Economy’ of the City, which was broken down as follows (in summary):

(a) Employment

- High rates of unemployment – likely to be exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19
- Lack of employment opportunities in the City caused by biased recruitment and retention practices
- Limited opportunities for career advancement

(b) Enterprise

- Disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on businesses and business owners
- Inequitable access to funding and resources
- Lack of support for local businesses and business owners

Following the establishment of the CoRE Economy Task Group in March 2021, having due regard to the outcome of the abovementioned community consultation (as well as other things – e.g., the One City Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy etc.), the Task Group put together an ‘Action Plan’ for the purpose of strategizing how it may best tackle the identified issues regarding economic racial inequality within the City.

1.5.2 High-Level Summary of the CoRE Economy Task Group Action Plan

In accordance with the outcomes of the community consultation referred to above, the ‘Action Plan’ has two key strands to it: (i) **Employment**; and (ii) **Enterprise**.

(i) Employment

In terms of ‘**Employment**’, we have summarised below the (current) two specific areas of focus for the Economy Task Group and the intended key outputs of the work and activities it is intending to carry out in these areas:

(a) Unemployment

The proposed key outputs of the work that the Economy Task Group will be doing in this area over the next 6 to 12 months is as follows:

- Create an area on Bristol City Council website/CoRE area on the website that provides an effective signpost for readers/viewers regarding the financial and non-financial support that may be available to unemployed persons.
- Understand the worst affected sectors and carry out a skills gap analysis to understand where the gaps are to support with identifying potential opportunities for unemployed persons – e.g., opportunities in new/emerging sectors, such as net zero/decarbonisation etc.
- Create a network of private sector organisations (see below) that can potentially be utilised to support in this area.

(b) Employment Opportunities

The proposed key outputs of the work that the Economy Task Group will be doing in this area over the next 6 to 12 months is as follows:

- Create a network of private sector organisations that the CoRE Economy Task Group collaborates with in respect of its vision, and which provides opportunities to unemployed persons from Black and Ethnic Minority communities. The intention is that this will cover both employment (e.g., access to jobs, work experience etc.) and business opportunities (e.g., pro bono support etc. – see the ‘Enterprise’ section below in respect of the latter).

- Work with these private sector organisations to support them (and in turn provide support and opportunities to Black and Ethnic Minority Communities) with initiatives around the ‘S’ in ‘ESG’ (Environment, **Social** and Governance factors).

(ii) Enterprise

In terms of ‘**Enterprise**, we have summarised below the (current) specific areas of focus for the Economy Task Group and the intended key outputs of the work and activities it is intending to carry out in these areas:

(a) Black and Asian-owned business directory

The proposed key outputs of the work that the Economy Task Group will be doing in this area over the next 6 to 12 months is as follows:

- To create or understand what support we can provide in relation to the creation of, a directory of Black and Ethnic Minority businesses in the City.
- Once created, we would also promote/signpost this directory – e.g., to the organisations within the networks described under the headings of ‘Employment Opportunities’ above and ‘Business Opportunities and Support’ below.

(b) Impact of COVID-19 on Black and Asian-owned businesses

The proposed key outputs of the work that the Economy Task Group will be doing in this area over the next 6 to 12 months is as follows:

- Creating an area on Bristol City Council website/CoRE area on the website that provides an effective signpost for readers/viewers re: support that may be available to such organisations.
- In addition, and where relevant/appropriate, provide such organisations with access to the networks described under the heading of ‘Employment Opportunities’ above – e.g., re: pro bono/discounted support, access to space/facilities etc. – and also under the heading of ‘Business Opportunities and Support’ below.

(c) Business Opportunities and Support

The proposed key outputs of the work that the Economy Task Group will be doing in this area over the next 6 to 12 months is as follows:

- Gain an understanding of what the various organisations say regarding Social Value (in the Race space) as part of their procurement policies and understand how they are doing against the targets/requirements they set for themselves.
- Create a similar network to the one at ‘Employment Opportunities’ above for the purpose of providing access to funding (or funding opportunities) for Black and Ethnic Minority-owned businesses. There will be some overlap with the network described under the heading of ‘Employment Opportunities’ above, as organisations on that network may be able to provide pro bono or discounted support to black and Asian-owned businesses.

2. Key activities: October 2020 - September 2021

2.1 Policy Contribution

- In partnership with BSWN, CoRE prepared a joint statement in response to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission review of the Home Office's hostile environment in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty. CoRE welcomed the review of the Commission but warned of the continuation of racism in British immigration law and that proper engagement with Britain's history in this regard will help us to make better sense of how the past has shaped - and continues to shape - who 'belongs' in modern Britain.
- CoRE further prepared a joint submission with BSWN to the House of Commons Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities call for evidence which provided our responses to the Commission's ten questions around education, health, crime and policing, and employment and enterprise.
- In addition, BSWN and CoRE have partnered on several responses to local consultations such as the consultation on the new Traffic Clean Air Zone; the University of Bristol's draft strategy for civic engagement and social responsibility; or the Council's Corporate Leadership Board's economic alleviation strategy.

2.2 Recruitment of three new Commissioners and the Independent Chair

- During July 2021, the role of Independent Chair was advertised in a city-wide campaign, attracting significant interest and number of applications and on the 11th of October 2021, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor announced the appointment of Museji Takolia CBE as the new Chair of CoRE.
- We have now successfully recruited three new Commissioners, bringing forward a wide range of skills, expertise and perspectives to the task of tackling systemic racism: Newly appointed Commissioners from October 2021 are:
 - Abbigael Bainton, Assistant Principle and Science Teacher at Bristol Brunel Academy
 - Dr Adeela Shafi, Associate Professor in Education, University of Gloucestershire; Founding member of Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership Group (BMSLG)
 - Enitan Amorolaran, Matter Support Paralegal RPC

They will join 11 existing commissioners, including:

- Zahra Kosar, Mental Health Coordinator at Bristol Somali Resource Centre
- Margaret Simmons-Bird, Education Consultant & Executive Lead for School Improvement at Wellsway Multi Academy Trust
- Marie-Annick Gournet, Senior Lecturer and Director of Part-time Programmes at University of Bristol
- Fatima Mohamed Ali, Teacher at Cabot Primary School
- Jane Khawaja, Head of Research Development at University of Bristol
- Zain Shaffi, Investment Consultant and Lead in Black, Asian Minority Ethnic Financial Inclusion CSR Group at Hargreaves Lansdown
- Forward Maisokwadzo, Inclusion Advisor to the Mayor's Office
- Euella Jackson, Engagement Producer and Talent Manager at Rising Arts Agency
- Maya Mate-Kole, Senior Service Coordinator at Golden Key Partnership Programme
- Marcus Walters, Senior Associate at Burges Salmon LLP
- Jendayi Serwah, Convenor of the Afrikan ConneXions Consortium

The Commission intend to deliver improved outcomes in the City, bringing together their collective

skills and abilities, knowledge, and influence to activate its scrutiny and accountability functions, in a framework that measures change.

Proposal

The Commission has an away-day followed by a board meeting later this month at which our work plans for 2022 will be developed to reflect several things:

- The Commission is likely to shift towards a more strategic role for its commissioners, and as a consequence for the Commission as a whole.
- We will work with local, regional (and where appropriate national partners) to use data and evidence to support the delivery of measurable outcomes in performance against a fewer set of key priorities.
- We will aim to increase our visibility and presence through engagement events and developing a communications plan, with a special effort with local communities.

Overall, our aim is to make the work of CORE felt through increasing visibility, collaboration, giving support where appropriate but looking to the city’s leadership as individuals and institutions (across all sectors) – to evidence changes and positive impacts through policies, practices, culture, and priorities and be held accountable for improving racial equity and inclusion in the city in the process

Other Options Considered

None

Risk Assessment

None

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

The public sector equality duties are relevant to the proposals and these duties have been considered in developing the proposals. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

CoRE’s key objective lies in addressing racial inequality however we recognise that many of the challenges are cross-sectional and impact communities based on multiple characteristics. The following key requirements have been addressed accordingly:

- a) To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The reviewed key functions of CoRE ensure that advancing equal access to opportunity for local Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities is at the heart of its purpose.

- b) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Through events and meetings such as the series of 5 community consultations conducted last summer, CoRE strives to encourage cross-sectoral and city-wide input into the work of the commission and facilitate conversation and networking between business owners, community organisations, and local community members of all backgrounds.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None

Financial

(a) Revenue

CoRE request the council to continue with the annual funding of £5,000 for the Commission's function and core activities, as well as use of Main Hall for events as appropriate post-Covid-19.

(b) Capital

Not applicable

Land

Not applicable

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None