

Part A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: Thursday, 24 September 2020

Report author: Senior Democratic Services Officer

Title: New scrutiny task group - Watford's BAME community

1.0 Summary

1.1 Following two separate motions from Councillors Ezeifedi and Khan debated and agreed at Full Council on 14 July, this report provides details of a potential scrutiny review of the issues of importance to Watford's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community. One of the key issues identified by councillors, and the subject of Councillor Khan's motion, is street naming in the borough and the authority's policy for naming streets going forward.

1.2 The scrutiny committee is asked to consider the scrutiny suggestion and, if approved, agree the membership and chair from amongst the nominations received.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
The scrutiny committee does not agree to the suggestion	(i) Decisions of Council will not be implemented (ii) Non-executive councillors will not have the ability to review the issues of importance to Watford's BAME community, nor to ensure that the council addresses any barriers to access and equality for its residents.	None	Tolerate	2

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the scrutiny proposal to review the issues of importance to Watford's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community, including street naming in the borough and the authority's policy for naming streets going forward.
- 3.2 If the scrutiny proposal is approved, that Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the task group's membership and chair.

Further information:

Ishbel Morren

ishbel.morren@watford.gov.uk

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 Following two separate motions from Councillors Ezeifedi and Khan debated and agreed at Full Council on 14 July, this report provides details of a proposed scrutiny review of the issues of importance to Watford's BAME community.
- 4.2 Early in the pandemic, it became clear that COVID 19 has disproportionately impacted BAME communities. The Public Health England review of June 2020 concludes that the unequal impacts of COVID 19 may be explained by social and economic inequalities.
- 4.3 The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement of recent months has also focussed on the experiences of the Black community across the globe and the history of its struggles, including the legacy of slavery and oppression.
- 4.4 It is recognised that the BAME communities have specific areas of concern, including, but not limited to, the factors which appear to have led to worse health outcomes during the pandemic and the memorialisation of aspects of history which do not reflect Watford's values or the community we aspire to be.
- 4.5 It is proposed to investigate the issues that matter to members of our BAME communities and work with them to develop recommendations that will take these forward. One of the issues agreed by Full Council, is the authority's policy for naming its streets. It is suggested that the task group reviews several street names.
- 4.6 If agreed, the task group will need to agree a schedule of meetings with the various stakeholders. This schedule may include some daytime meetings, subject to availability.

4.7 Once the task group has completed its work, the final report and recommendations will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2021, before being submitted to Cabinet for consideration at the beginning of March.

4.8 The scrutiny committee is asked to approve the task group's membership and appoint a chair. Committee members are reminded that a task group should comprise between three and five non-executive councillors. The following councillors, listed in order of response, have put their names forward to participate in this task group:

- Councillor Dawn Allen Williamson
- Councillor Bilqees Mauthoor
- Councillor Peter Jeffree
- Councillor Favour Ezeifedi (plus nomination to chair)
- Councillor Asif Khan
- Councillor Jenny Pattinson (plus nomination to chair)
- Councillor Jagtar Dhindsa

Councillors Ezeifedi and Pattinson have indicated that they would like to be considered for the role of chair. Their supporting statements are attached as appendix 2 to this report.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications as a result of this report.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Having regard to the council's obligations under s149 of the Equality Act, the task group will consider if there are any implications that may need to be addressed as they make their recommendations.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 The task group will be managed by Democratic Services.

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no accommodation implications as a result of this report.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no sustainability implications as a result of this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny task group proposal form.

Appendix 2 – Supporting statements for the role of chair from Councillors Ezeifedi and Pattinson.

Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page.

- Emails from those councillors interested in taking part in the proposed task group.