

Watford Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Task Group Scope and Terms of Reference

Scrutiny review title	Watford’s Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community
Scrutiny proposer	Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillors Favour Ezeifedi and Asif Khan
Details of specific area for review	<p>Early in the COVID 19 pandemic it became clear that the virus has disproportionately impacted BAME communities with certain communities hit particularly hard. The Public Health England review of June 2020 concludes that the unequal impacts of COVID 19 may be explained by social and economic inequalities.</p> <p>At a local level, Watford and Hertsmere have both had the highest rate of COVID 19 cases and the highest crude mortality rate of COVID-19 registered deaths per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire (12.7 in Watford and 17.6 in Hertsmere – as of 23 June 2020).</p> <p>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. BLM has highlighted the symbols of the past that Black people are confronted with on a daily basis. These include street names and statues which memorialise individuals who played a role in the slave trade and/or British imperialism.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>It is proposed to identify the issues that matter to members of our BAME communities and work with them to develop recommendations that will take these issues forward.</p> <p>One of the issues, agreed by Full Council on 14 July, is the authority’s policy for naming streets. It is suggested that the task group reviews several street names and propose new approaches for the naming of roads within the borough.</p>
Why this has been proposed for review, including the council themes it supports	<p>Watford Borough Council is committed to championing equality and embracing diversity in everything we do. This encompasses our role as a leader in our community, in the delivery of our services and as an employer. The commitment goes beyond our statutory duty so that we understand the community we serve and are working with them, and for them, to make sure everyone is able to access and enjoy all that Watford has to offer. We work with other organisations to influence and</p>

	<p>champion the advancement of equalities to make sure everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. ¹</p> <p>The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities presents an opportunity to create a sustainable change that would mitigate further impact.</p> <p>It is recognised that as representatives of the local population, a provider of local services and key stakeholder in the local community, the council has a central role to play and leads in identifying what and who should be celebrated in the naming of streets in the town.</p> <p>In focussing on the issues that matter to the local BAME community, it is proposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey Watford’s BAME community to identify the issues of concern including views on street names • explore the data around the issues raised • review existing street naming policies • focus on the issues that matter to the community and working with them to develop recommendations that will progress them • use the findings of the review to recommend any updates to the council’s equalities statement and policy. <p>The scrutiny suggestion supports the following theme in the Council Plan: a council that serves our residents and a healthy and happy town.</p>
<p>Purpose / objectives of the review, including key questions</p>	<p>To determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The make-up of Watford’s residents including data on ethnicity, faiths and languages. • Key issues that matter to Watford’s BAME communities through surveys and taking evidence from witnesses. • Views on changes to the council’s street naming policy and process for altering current street names. • Any appropriate updates to the council’s policy for naming new buildings and streets or erecting statues or monuments which reflects our town and its history and diversity. • Any appropriate updates required to the council’s equalities statement and policy. <p>To investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and further details about these issues. • Next steps required to progress the issues. <p>To develop recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which reflect the concerns of the communities and ensure that momentum is maintained in addressing them • for any amendments to the council’s equalities statement and policy

¹ WBC Equalities Statement 2019

https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3347/equalities_statement_2019

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for any amendments to the council's street naming policy.
Any areas excluded from the scope	None.
Desired outcomes / indicators of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of the local BAME communities. An overview of the issues which concern residents who belong to BAME communities in particular. The development of recommendations which enable these issues to be taken forward by relevant groups, authorities or services. Recommendations for any changes to the council's equalities and diversity policy statement. Recommendations for any changes to the street naming policy. Suggestions on any changes to the council's street naming policy and process for altering current street names.
Timescale and key dates, including proposed meeting format	<p>24 Sept: Task Group outline, membership and chair to O&S</p> <p>Oct/Nov: Preparation with Chair to agree witnesses, draw up and arrange a schedule of meetings and meeting formats.</p> <p>Nov/Dec: Send out and publicise survey. Establish evidence base on the issues raised in the surveys</p> <p>Dec: Meetings with witnesses</p> <p>04 Feb: Final report and recommendations to O&S</p> <p>01 Mar: Final report and recommendations to Cabinet</p>
Key departmental lead officer	<p>Ishbel Morren Senior Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Jodie Kloss Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Andrew Cox Liaison with Leadership Board</p>
Witnesses	<p>Initial suggestions include:</p> <p>Council officers: Kathryn Robson Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications and others in the Communications team Justine Hoy - Head of Community Protection Ryan Rodrigues – Senior Geographic Information Officer</p> <p>Community and voluntary sector organisations: Watford Afro-Caribbean Association Representatives of Watford mosques Representatives of black majority churches Other representatives from the BAME communities</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council</p>
What activities need to be taken to achieve the outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate data on the make-up of Watford's population. Carry out a survey of community groups as the primary means for gathering responses. There will need to be some support from the Communications team with the publicity of this. Undertake desktop research into the issues raised through the survey to explore them and provide further detail where possible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake interviews with witnesses – this could take the form of concentrated daytime discussions grouping witnesses together in a series of themed back-to-back sessions (half day at a time) or evening meetings • Devise a list of questions for officers and organisations – send out to witnesses in advance and seek responses from those unable to attend. • Produce a final report with recommendations reflecting the issues raised and suggesting ways forward.
Key policies / documentation / baseline information needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on Watford’s communities • WBC Equalities Statement • Street naming policies
Any other sources of evidence (e.g., site visit)	None
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That any barriers to access and equality for BAME residents are not identified and addressed • That the council does not effectively manage its relationship with its BAME communities or build confidence that it is listening and acting on what it has heard • That the authority’s policy for naming its streets, buildings, statues and monuments does not reflect the town’s values.

21 October 2020