

## Scrutiny task group review update

<b>Title of scrutiny review:</b>	Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review
<b>Chair of scrutiny review:</b>	Councillor Favour Ezeifedi
<b>Final report published:</b>	January 2021
<b>Forwarded to Cabinet:</b>	1 March 2021
<b>Date of review:</b>	31 January 2022

<b>Recommendation:</b>	Watford Borough Council should agree a corporate definition of BAME. The council should also assess how well the needs of other communities, not captured in the task group's agreed definition of BAME, are understood and served.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	<p>In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME. And one of the recommendations in the <a href="#">final report on COVID-19 disparities</a>, published in December 2021, was to address specific ethnic minority groups rather than address ethnic minorities as a single group (through for example use of the term 'BAME'). This was supported by research commissioned by the Race Disparity Unit, which found that British ethnic minority people are three times more likely to agree that the term 'BAME' is unhelpful than disagree.</p> <p>Accordingly, Watford Council is considering the terminology used in its communications and documentation to ensure that it reflects best practice. The term 'BAME' does not reflect the full extent of the town's diversity. Watford Council remains committed to working with the whole community.</p>

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council should establish an equalities forum to include representatives of protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	The Community Forum has been established and had its first meeting on 11 January where it considered a range of issues. The forum is chaired by Councillor Dychton as Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Communities. Representatives from across the community are being invited and the work of the forum is being undertaken with W3RT.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council should develop a corporate equalities policy.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	The corporate equalities policy is being developed and will be shared in due course.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments for new council policies should be reviewed to reflect best practice.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	The council's Equalities Impact Assessment has been reviewed and will be included as an appendix to the forthcoming equalities policy. Best practice from other authorities and the Equality and Human Rights Commission has been considered as part of the review.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council, in partnership with ward councillors, should encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	Watford saw high levels of census returns. The council and local stakeholders worked well with the Area Manager and provided advice around reaching across the local communities. The data from the census will start to become available in 2022. A presentation was made to councillors about the work and their role in delivering a successful outcome for Watford.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	Councillors should maximise their community role to share public health messages and particularly to encourage take-up of vaccines for Covid 19 and promote wider health screening programmes.
<b>Cabinet response:</b>	This remains an ongoing role for councillors within their communities. Support from councillors throughout the pandemic has been very positive especially in relation to health messaging and vaccines.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council should provide compulsory training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members.
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<b>Cabinet response:</b>	Available training courses have been reviewed and none have been found to fulfil the brief for Watford. The Executive Head of Strategy and Communications intends to write an in-house training course in consultation with Human Resources. This is intended to be an eLearning module. Work on this is ongoing. Members have also been offered 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' training; two sessions were held on 29 September (6 members attended) and 12 October (7 members attended).
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council should adopt a new street naming policy for the borough which sets out the process for reviewing existing street names as well as naming new streets and buildings to reflect the rich diversity of the town.
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<b>Cabinet response:</b>	<a href="#">This policy</a> was approved by Cabinet in January 2022.
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	The council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, including those identified as having negative historic links.
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<b>Cabinet response:</b>	Within the proposals for a new museum, as part of the Town Hall Quarter Programme, there will be an exhibition around the Watford Story. This could include some information around the provenance of certain street names. This piece of work would best be built into longer-term plans for the museum to ensure it has the prominence it deserves.
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