

Agenda Item: 4

One Nottingham Board

Title of Paper: Black Lives Matter

Date: 13 January 2017

1. Purpose

This paper is provided as a background paper to the presentation and discussions to take place at the ON Board meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 In September 2016 the Black Lives Matter Nottingham Group wrote to the Chair of the Board, Jane Todd, and to the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council. The Board agreed to hear from representatives of Black Lives Matter at its January meeting.
- 2.2 This background paper is only provided to enable Board members to understand the local position and the initiatives which One Nottingham has been involved in during recent years on equalities and the issues which Black Lives Matter are campaigning around.
- 2.3 No specific requests have been made of the ON Board by the Black Lives Matter / Nottingham Black Intergenerational Group, (NBIG)
- 2.4 The papers should be read with the Community Cohesion briefing paper which is attached for later on the agenda of this meeting.
- 2.5 David Shire will attend the meeting with a colleague to present on the issues which Black Lives Matter are campaigning. I have attached the original letter Black Lives Matter sent to the Board in September and the follow up letter which they sent to Ian Curryer from the City Council.
- 2.6 This is not written as a briefing on the population and employment breakdown of Nottingham, or as a comprehensive guide to positive activity in the city.

3. Briefing

3.1 Priorities of ON

Aspiration and Fairness

The Nottingham Plan to 2020 has equalities as a cross cutting theme through its Aspirations and Fairness strategic priorities. Through focusing on this area we are seeking to promote opportunities for all of Nottingham's communities. We seek to have significant representation from BME communities in all of the activity we are

engaged in and organise.

3.2 **Creativity, Culture and Sport** have been key aspects of ON delivery. A number of initiatives have been targeted at BME communities.

For instance in developing the bid for the City of Football, we explicitly made it clear that we would target new and emerging communities and encourage participation amongst groups of people who were under represented in football at all levels. The ongoing research evidence shows over 40% of participants of the COF are from BME groups.

The Young Creative Awards have had high representation of BME Young People amongst the winners and highly commended participants.

ON Board has representation specifically for the BME voluntary sector. This post is elected from an electorate of BME voluntary sector agencies. The only other specific group with a place on the Board is the Faith Sector which currently has a BME Member, who has also been elected from an electorate comprising faith organisations.

The Board recently held a major discussion with the City Council Education Service on the education achievements of BME children and heard about the initiative the council is making to address disadvantage in schools.

Board members have been engaged in activity including a BME business conference at the University of Nottingham, and represented ON at events across the city.

3.3 **ON have provided funding:**

Campaigns for Voter Registration for young BME people voters in the 2015 General Election and 2016 EU Referendum.

Nottingham Carnival and the Rock and Reggae Festival over a number of years.

Supported black young people on business development courses,.

Two years Sponsorship of the Black Achievers Award.

3.4 **The ON staff and volunteer team have :**

Provided 5 PATRA trainee placements.

Supported BME events including BME Cancer Communities, Bright Ideas and British Heart Foundation work with BME communities.

Support to events and initiatives including work with BME young people.

Support for the Equalities and Fairness Commission although this is in need of a major re-think as it has not been actively supported or operated effectively since 2015.

3.5 Nottingham City Council background to the NBIG/Black Lives Matter.

NBIG raised a number of Nottingham City Council specific employment issues in their letter of the 19th September.

A breakdown of Nottingham City Council's workforce profile (please see Appendix 2), shows that:

- 21.7% of the City Council workforce is from a BME background (where indicated).
- This is below the 35% level of BME representation in the local population as a whole (as at the last census).
- We know that almost two thirds of the City Council workforce is Female.

There is a commitment in the Council Plan 2015-2019 to tackling inequality and ensuring an equal Nottingham by:

- Making sure that our workforce will reflect the citizens we serve

We will achieve this by, amongst other things, attracting people from the diverse talent pool that we have here in Nottingham through the 'Future Leaders Programme.

- Create economic growth for the benefit of all communities

Our work to achieve this will include infrastructure improvements including transport and schools and the development of diverse business support schemes.

- Provide inclusive and accessible services for our citizens

We will achieve this by, for example, protecting from cuts services that support Nottingham's most vulnerable citizens.

- Lead the City in tackling discrimination and promoting equality

Our work to achieve this will include tackling fuel poverty, building lifetime homes and by developing better opportunities for children and young people with additional needs.

Accordingly, the City Council is taking a number of measures at the corporate level to try to address the employment issues raised by NBIG and ensure equality and fairness for all groups. These include :-

- Develop and implement targeted exit interviews for use with BME employees leaving the council.
- Develop linkages with universities and all city schools for careers events to champion local government roles to help shape and spark interest for the local young population, include social media processes.
- Emphasise in application forms for City Council vacancies that "*we particularly welcome applicants from the Black, Minority and Ethnic communities for this role to support Nottingham City Council to employ a more diverse and representative workforce.*" As well as more prominently displaying "positive about disability", Stonewall and other relevant logos.
- Create an attraction action plan - a toolkit for general and SLMG recruitment and connect with our BME/LGBT/Disability network groups to investigate new


routes for recruitment opportunities

- PATRA/Placements: Continue to attract diverse pools of applicants for apprenticeship vacancies, ensuring the participants are encouraged into securing sustainable employment.
- Develop business case for generic and specific advertising to targeted communities e.g. via local radio, national equality networks etc. *HR&T to submit contingency request.*
- Provide a range of positive action placements for young BME citizens, supporting them to secure sustainable employment.
- Consider how existing positive action training providers can support the Council to diversify, including reviewing the current contractual arrangements.
- Develop business case and plan to deliver unconscious bias/inclusive leadership training to all managers and roll it out.
- Implement positive action initiatives and track outcomes and impact, including: Future Leaders/LEAP/PATRA and apprenticeships/ASPIRE

There are other initiatives from partners to address workforce concerns, for instance the police are shortly to announce a new round of recruitment and will be targeting improving their BME representation after some recent successes. Notably a scheme developed with the active support of the Nottingham Citizens.

4. Contact Details

Name: Nigel Cooke

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30th August 2016
Jane Todd
Chair, One Nottingham
By email: Secretariat

Dear Jane Todd

Re: To Add Black Lives Matter to Agenda for Next Meeting

Nottingham Black Lives Matter is a local group of activists whose aim is to promote peace and social justice local and beyond. It is supported and guided by an experienced group of local Black elders (known as the intergenerational support group) whose role is to develop strategy and promote intergenerational engagement.

Nottingham BLM is also nationally and internationally recognized for its efforts in engaging communities in positive action and protests; especially following a recent visit to Nottingham by our sister founding members from the USA. We are not affiliated to any political party and indeed believe that politics is about taking sides but our activism is about taking the initiative to address issues of serious concern to all in a systematic and strategic fashion. We have recently met and have further meetings arranged with the Police & Crime Commissioner's office to discuss a wide range of issues in relation CJS; in particular disproportionality in crime prosecutions. We also expect to engage bilaterally with other ON partners for issues that would be relevant to them. We have invited Nottingham City Council CEO to an exploratory meeting to discuss issues that could be resolved operationally but await his response.

However, there are many race and justice issues that still require a joined up strategic approach. In particular this should enhance some work by the Equality & Fairness Commission who I believe have a sit on ON. This is especially timely following the recent publication by the Equality & Human Rights Commission and subsequent calls by the PM for an equality audit.

Some 21 years ago to the day, a local consortium that included NCC came together to commission a major study on Black skills and employment. Some 2,000 Black people were interviewed in the survey, followed by widespread media calls for better opportunities for Black people. The Evening Post rather prosaically put it: "Let's Give Black People Jobs". About ten years ago, another local study identified that whilst unemployment rates for Black people were still high, data on health status was also very concerning. There have been many other local studies on education, housing, health and criminal justice painting the same disappointing picture.

Today, the EHRC is reporting that Black and ethnic minority people in Britain still face "entrenched" race inequality in *employment, housing, pay, and criminal justice*. The PM call for an audit has already faced criticism from academics because of past pronouncements have fizzled out without producing sustainable results. Unemployment figures for Nottingham released only last week show yet again that Black people are lagging behind with no evidence of the supposed economic recovery having any positive impact on them and their families.

In addition to many other yet to be considered strategic approaches; one of the missing jigsaw pieces is a well-resourced complainant aid; acting as both first port of call listening ear for local grievances before they escalate. There is also an urgent need for a succession plan involving young Black people in civic activities.

Black Lives Matter in a short time has been able to provide a model that encourages both the participation of young Black people whilst highlighting and campaigning for the removal of structural inequalities blighting communities. The Nottingham Plan, whilst welcomed by

all has not provided us with detail on how these issues are or will be addressed moving forward. We will need to see that performance data is seriously unpacked to demonstrate that we are doing something to address these issues.

I am suggesting that we allocate at least half an hour exploratory discussion at your meeting; preceded by a short presentation from BLM. An invitation at your next meeting would be extremely helpful to our other meeting scheduled with the Crime & Police Commissioner just a few days after.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr Cooke for his attention and the Race Equality Lead on ON for her information. For completeness, I am also sending you a copy of my letter to Mr Curryer as background.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours sincerely

David Shire

Nottingham Black Intergenerational Support Group (NBIG)

On behalf of Nottingham Black Lives Matter UK

twitter: @blacklivesuk

www.nottinghamblacklivesmatter.com

10th August 2016
Mr Ian Curryer
Chief Executive
Nottingham City Council
Loxley House
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

Via email: ian.curryer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Dear Mr Curryer

Promoting Peace and Social Justice in Nottingham: An Invitation from NBLM

Nottingham Black Lives Matter is a local group of activists whose aim is to promote peace and social justice local and beyond. It is supported and guided by an experienced group of local Black elders (known as the intergenerational support group) whose role is to develop strategy and promote intergenerational engagement.

Nottingham BLM is also nationally and internationally recognized for its efforts in engaging communities in positive action and protests; especially following a recent visit to Nottingham by our sister founding members from the USA. We are not affiliated to any political party and indeed believe that politics is about taking sides but our activism is about taking the initiative to address issues of serious concern to all in a systematic and strategic fashion. Following recent demonstrations in the city, our Black Intergenerational Support Group (NBIG) is inviting all leaders in Nottingham to a dialogue on how we move forward in a peaceful and non-confrontational way. We specifically need an update on how the local leadership is responding to the grievances that are causing serious disaffection amongst the Black community. Whilst our priority at present is the safety of our community who face daily challenges and harassment from the political narrative left over from Brexit and biased media; we are equally concerned about the long term structural inequalities in employment, health and education that are affecting the Black community on a daily basis.

We have meetings arranged with the leaders of the Police to ensure that disaffection does not lead to violence or disturbance. Most significantly, the Black community has raised serious concerns about the failures on the part of all local leaders to respond to our grievances in a clear, strategic and joined up fashion. NBIG; acting as the listening ear for such grievances has received complaints about schooling, housing, social care and discrimination in job recruitment, poor promotional opportunities and disproportionate dismissals; even within the authority itself.

Employment figures due for release this week will show steady growth in overall economic activity, yet the unemployment rate amongst Black people remains high and for Black youths; significantly higher than that for their white peers. We are also concerned about the growing number of young Black men who are unofficially out of work and not counted as such and therefore likely to depend on illegality to survive. This in turn is fuelling a cycle of poverty, crime, unemployment back to poverty, violence/crime and so forth; which is clearly unsustainable.

The job of all responsible leaders of this city is to arrest this cycle. Yet as things stand, there appears to be no clear strategy for bringing communities together to address these needs. The *shutdown* actions last weekend was in part a reaction by a community that feels economically neglected and left behind and yet face daily challenges from the unequal criminal justice system that not only incarcerates disproportionate numbers of Black people but fails to adequately address the grievances raised by Black victims including families of those who die in custody. Whilst those in the media reacted to a temporary shut down in the road, they nevertheless failed to acknowledge that the road to justice for Black people has been cordoned off for generations.

We would like the authority to join us in promoting a narrative that is positive and inclusive rather than the media portrayal of us as divisive or inherently incapable of articulating our own lived experiences of discrimination. Indeed, the scandal in all this is in the deafening media silence on the daily plight experienced by Black people to the point that much of the white community remains ignorant of their *white privileged* status and in turn our misery of living with casual racism, discrimination and the inevitable social injustices. The media invariably presents our grievances as *whingeing political correctness*; understandably a significant proportion of white communities do not take our grievances seriously. We want all communities to engage positively in challenging discrimination and promoting good relations. We strongly believe that injustice against Black people poses serious threats to justice for all communities.

Black Lives Matter is not against white people; indeed, not against any other community. Unlike those right wing groups that constantly threaten community cohesion; their agenda is essentially anti-people, anti-democracy and divisive. We are the opposite and object to being presented in the same bracket as them. We do not demonstrate against other community groups and indeed we respect everyone's rights regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation. We aim to promote peace and democracy to achieve justice and therefore our demonstrations are all about and against injustice; that's all.

The narrative presented by our media has been very negative and especially the recent irresponsible reporting of names and addresses of our local Black activists following police arrests. This has put our colleagues at risk of serious harm from racists and other miscreants at a time when we are already facing threats of racist abuse and harassment following Brexit.

A large number of our young people are interested in the issues raised in this letter, however, some of them have faced serious and malicious trolling on social media because of such negative reporting and lack of positive publicity of our aim to protect Black lives. This is at a time when we should all be striving to encourage these young people to engage in the democratic process.

In its advisory capacity, NBIG is proposing an urgent exploratory meeting with you to start the process of developing long term strategies and dialogue between Black Lives Matter activists and those in leadership of our great city. We would like to be able to report back to the activists on any progress the authority is making in addressing some of the issues raised in this letter and in the media.

We would therefore urgently request that an initial agenda setting meeting be held with you and council leader as soon as possible; preferably this side of summer and before the autumn national party political conferences.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours sincerely

David Shire
Nottingham Black Intergenerational Support Group (NBIG)
On behalf of Nottingham Black Lives Matter UK