

Executive

Supporting Councils to improve services and practice by addressing Racial Inequality

Item no: 4

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Summary: This report provides an overview of:

- a) The work that Leaders' Committee initiated in July 2020 to support councils in tackling racial inequality.
- b) An outline of some immediate opportunities for London local government to collaborate and exchange promising practice.
- c) London Councils' corporate engagement with this agenda, as encapsulated in a draft statement.

Recommendations: The Executive is asked to:

- 1. Note the progress made to date in co-designing a programme of activity with the Portfolio Holder and senior borough officers.
- 2. Note and comment on the emerging model for the programme of work set out in the diagram at Appendix A.
- 3. Commend the draft statement set out in Appendix B to Leaders' Committee for its consideration.

Supporting Councils to improve services and practice by addressing Racial Inequality

Introduction

1. Leaders' Committee adopted a business plan for 2020/21 at its meeting in July 2020, which set out how the organisation aims to deliver its strategic objectives over the medium term and which commits to us working to build a fairer, more inclusive capital.
2. The plan opened with a section which sought to respond directly the devastating, disproportionate impacts of the Coronavirus on communities, businesses and local government. One stark aspect of this, is the impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, bringing inequality and specifically racial inequality into sharp focus.
3. A recent Public Health England Review found that in England:
After accounting for the confounding effects of age, gender and deprivation, risk of death from coronavirus was twice as high in Bangladeshi groups; and between 10-50% higher in persons from Black, Asian, Indian, and Chinese ethnic groups compared to the White population.
4. The brutal killing of George Floyd and the subsequent involvement of many Londoners in the Black Lives Matters movement has illustrated the depth and breadth of feeling about disproportionality and racial injustice.
5. At their July meeting, in agreeing the business plan, Leaders instructed officers to:
Support service improvement, by collecting and sharing the best emerging local government practice in tackling inequality; co-ordinating, where appropriate, across service areas – with the aim of helping local initiatives to tackle unfair outcomes (e.g. those

disproportionately affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities) – supported by targeted early intervention.

Emerging Programme of work

6. London Councils, under the leadership of Cllr Muhammed Butt (*Portfolio Holder for Welfare, Social Inclusion and Empowerment*) is working closely with Chief Executives and other local authority professionals to co-design a programme of activity that will provide effective support to boroughs in taking this agenda forwards. A CELC working group, chaired by Kim Smith (*Chief Executive of Hammersmith and Fulham Council*) is providing managerial leadership and several borough officers have helpfully stepped forwards to provide their help and advice.
7. It is recognised that we are not starting with a blank sheet of paper, indeed many authorities have well developed models of intervention and effective programmes for promoting equalities, which have led to a number of improvements across services and in employment practice. Consequently, we have begun to collate examples of promising practice so that this is available as a resource for other authorities.
8. In addition to locally based practice, a number of professional networks (such as the Association of London Directors of Children's services) are developing their own initiatives to share and promote good practice.
9. It will be important to design London Councils contribution in a way that adds value to these broader initiatives and avoids unnecessary duplication and 'crowding out'.

Supporting boroughs to improve services and practice

10. The co-design process mentioned above has led to the development of a tentative model to frame our work around three main blocks of activity (see *diagram attached as Appendix A*)

- Demonstrating Leadership
- Building Inclusive Workplaces
- Challenging and Improving Practice across Services

11. There are a number of immediate opportunities where London Councils has the levers to act, and hence where we are quickly moving forwards:

- i. London Leadership Programme
 - A review is in train with a view to swiftly adapting the offer to address the need to support the development of a cohort of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic managerial leaders.
- ii. Good Practice
 - Work is in train to collect promising practice.
 - Discussions have begun on co-designing a 'standard' to support authorities in benchmarking their practice
- iii. Data
 - Work is in train to identify a strategic approach to collecting data that will support practice improvement.
- iv. Procurement practice and social value
 - Early discussions have begun around how authorities can improve their approach to procurement and social value consideration.

London Councils

12. The Executive will be mindful of London Councils own responsibilities as a membership association, a provider of services and an employer. With reference to the three blocks of activities mentioned above, these responsibilities could be framed in the following way:

Demonstrating Leadership

13. A visible way of responding to this challenge would be to reinforce the commitments made in our 2020/21 Business Plan, which commits to us working to build a fairer, more inclusive capital. This is buttressed by more detailed commitments, including: collecting and sharing best emerging local government practice; working with Public Health

England and other partners to identify and tackle the disproportionate impact of COVID 19 on Londoners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

14. Our engagement with the London Recovery Board also provides a potential opportunity to 'build back better' by ensuring that the Board's programme prioritises tackling racial inequality.

Building Inclusive Workplaces

15. London Councils is well placed to work through the Employers Organisation and the network of HR Directors to:
 - collect, analyse and publicise pan London local government workplace ethnicity data.
 - Support the development of inclusive employment policies and practices (e.g. training and mentoring programmes) as well as career progression and recruitment initiatives designed to advance the goal of building more inclusive workplaces at all levels.
16. In addition, the Executive, and organisation's senior managers, will be mindful of the need to continue to strive to create a working environment at London Councils that is free from discrimination in any form and in which our staff and our stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect. The journey towards such an environment will be enhanced by a co-production approach, re-booted through discussions with our staff, in a variety of settings.

Challenging and Improving Practice across Services

17. London Councils collaborative work with Chief Executives and Professional Networks puts us in a good position to help facilitate and support a programme of thematic reviews by CELC Lead Advisers exploring disproportionality issues across a range of service and policy areas and share emerging best practice among member authorities in tackling inequality.

18. The Executive, and organisation's senior managers, will be mindful of the need to continue to challenge our own direct service delivery at London Councils, with a view to identifying disproportionality and improving practice.

Conclusion

19. As requested by Leaders, a programme of work has been initiated over the summer, co-produced with senior managers from our member authorities. This is expected to lead to the delivery of a number of 'quick wins', including the sharpening of the London Leadership Programme.
20. There are, however, several longer-term challenges which will require sustained effort in order to deliver meaningful outcomes. As a first step in this longer-term challenge, the Executive is asked to consider the draft statement *attached at Appendix B*, with a view to asking Leaders' Committee to adopt this as a visible demonstration of their corporate leadership on this agenda.

Recommendations

The Executive is asked to:

1. Note the progress made to date, in co-designing a programme of activity with the Portfolio Holder and senior borough officers.
2. Note and comment on the emerging model for the programme of work set out in the diagram at Appendix A.
3. Commend the draft statement set out in Appendix B to Leaders' Committee for its consideration.

Financial Implications for London Councils

We are working with the Lead Member to assess the resource implications of this programme of work and will revert to the Executive when the resource implications have been quantified.

Legal Implications for London Councils

None specifically flowing from this paper.

Equalities Implications for London Councils

These are addressed in the body of the report.

Appendices:

- **Appendix A:** Tackling Racial Inequality - emerging work programme
- **Appendix B:** Draft London Councils Statement on Race Equality

Emerging pan-London work

Supporting the work of individual councils as they seek to address inequality

Demonstrating Leadership

- *Identifying a CELC Lead?*
- High profile messaging by political and managerial Leaders
- London Councils Business Plan – including BAME equalities initiatives as headline priorities in current business plans
- London Recovery Board
- Working with community sector – listening to local ‘unheard voices’ and nurturing community development
- Pan-London standard/ assurance
 - *Peer review?*

Accelerating Action to Ensure an Inclusive Workforce (*Work as Large Employers*)

- Undertaking focussed work on race inequality in the workplace
 - Collect, analyse and publish pan-London workforce ethnicity data
 - Increase awareness and buy-in of off-the-shelf standards/ packages to increase external verification and validation of practice
 - Career progression initiatives/ L&D – **Adapting/ developing the London Leadership Programme (LLP)**
 - Recruitment practice – *mutual aid to support diverse recruitment panels?*
 - Sharing inclusive employment policies/ practice (e.g. training and reverse mentoring programmes)
 - Promoting (and linking) diversity networks
- } **best practice compendium/ resources hub**

Challenging and Improving Practice Across Services

- **Thematic reviews by CELC Lead Advisers** (Adult Care; Children’s Services; Health; Crime and Policing; Employment; Housing and Growth; Skills; Transport; Environment; Finance; Welfare) – exploring disproportionality sector by sector
 - *New pan-London campaigns? New lobbying lines?*
- Support service improvement by collecting and sharing emerging practice in tackling inequality – **best practice compendium/ resources hub**
- *Commissioning and procuring services – leveraging authorities collective buying power?*

Appendix B

DRAFT LONDON COUNCILS STATEMENT ON RACE EQUALITY

Introduction

In recent months, the brutal killing of George Floyd has brought to the forefront feelings of enormous frustration and anger about the ongoing scale of racial injustice that confronts us. The disproportionate impact of COVID 19 on Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities underscores the longstanding challenge that we must address - making London a fairer place for its citizens.

London Councils is itself reflecting on that challenge and the things that the organisation can do to contribute to addressing that challenge. That includes its day to day work with London's boroughs, our partner organisations and with Londoners, as well as our organisation internally.

This statement captures the state of that reflection to date, but also acknowledges that there is an ongoing and evolving conversation on these issues and that the content will change as that conversation changes.

London Local Government and Racial Inequality

London Councils recognises that racial inequalities exist in all areas of public life with devastating consequences for far too many Londoners. We pledge to work with our member authorities to create a fairer and more equal society.

As public bodies, we and our member authorities have a legal duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations

Councils across the capital along with London Councils itself agree that they can make a difference by committing to lead change across different communities, building more diverse and inclusive workplaces and challenging ourselves and others to identify and remove inequalities in access to services.

By working together and with London's Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities, London local government will work consistently towards the goal of greater equality.

London Councils working with its member authorities

London Councils will work with its member authorities on this agenda against the same three broad areas of activity as illustrated below.

Demonstrating Leadership

We will:

- Reflect the importance of this agenda in our Business and Work Plans. Our 2020/21 Business Plan commits to us working to build a fairer, more inclusive capital and to collecting and sharing best emerging local government practice on tackling inequalities, co-ordinating where appropriate across service areas with the aim of helping local initiatives to tackle unfair outcomes (e.g. those disproportionately affected BAME communities). The importance of this theme is reflected more broadly in the Business Plan and work plans, for example in the work with Public Health England and other

partners to identify and tackle the disproportionate impact of COVID 19 on Londoners from minority ethnic communities.

- Seek to ensure that tackling racial inequality is an issue that is captured in the work of the London Recovery Board.

Building Inclusive Workplaces

We will:

- Support London local government to collect, analyse and publicise pan London local government workplace ethnicity data.
- Support the development of inclusive employment policies and practices (e.g. training and mentoring programmes) as well as career progression and recruitment initiatives designed to advance the goal of building more inclusive workplaces at all levels.

Challenging and Improving Practice across Services

We will:

- Facilitate and support thematic reviews by CELC Lead Advisers exploring disproportionality issues across a range of service and policy areas and share emerging best practice among member authorities in tackling inequality.
- Challenge our own direct service delivery at London Councils to identify disproportionality issues and practice that may tackle inequality.

London Councils as an Employer

London Councils strives to create a working environment that is free from discrimination in any form and in which our staff and our stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that many of our staff, along with those across the capital, are feeling pain and anger as a result of the wider racial injustices highlighted by document. We wish to discuss these feelings with our staff, in a variety of settings, gain a better and deeper understanding of the impact this has on individuals and identify ways in which, in our working environment and lives, we can help colleagues feel that London Councils is striving for fairer outcomes.

We will:

- Prompt wider conversations with staff about the issues that racial inequality raises and identify further steps that we can take to promote equality in the workplace
- Learn from initiatives on successfully building inclusive workplaces that our member authorities implement
- Reaffirm our commitment to training and support, including mandatory equalities training for staff across the organisation to raise awareness of these issues and as a means of tackling inequality in the workplace.