

Bristol Commission on Race Equality reflects on a year of challenge and collaboration

Work to uncover, challenge and support the city to tackle racial inequality has continued at pace this year with Bristol's Mayoral Commission on Race Equality (CoRE) taking a leading role in this effort.

This is the message that the commission's chair, Museji Ahmed Takolia CBE, Independent Chair of CoRE, will share with Bristol councillors during the group's annual update to Full Council on Tuesday 8 November 2022.

In a report published on the [council's website](#), the commission outlines the work it has undertaken this year in pursuit of its core aims, including, amongst others; engaging minority communities in the city, challenging organisations in relation to race equality and supporting the development of policy and practice that embeds race equality is embedded into planning, delivery, and outcomes.

During the past year, commissioners have focused their efforts on the following activities:

- Started a dialogue and briefing all political parties in the council
- Held key events in public to build relationship with policy makers in key areas of Education, Health & Wellbeing, the Criminal Justice System and Economy/Jobs and Skills.
- In the process of raising public awareness of CoRE, increase engagement and enabled the public to hold statutory bodies to account
- Submitted evidence to the England & Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket in order to address issues arising from the Azeem Rafiq affair
- Started work with the Research Action Coalition for Race Equality (RACE), the South West Race Equality Action Group (SWREAG), BSWN and others to help gather the data and evidence needed to create a baseline set of indicators across all key social policy areas such as education, health, housing, criminal justice and employment

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, said: "We set up the commission with the intent of shining a light on racial inequality in the city and to develop an honest and mature conversation about how we tackle the issues that communities face. The commission has, throughout its existence, consisted of experts with both lived and learnt experience of racism, race inequality and the barriers this issue places in front of individuals and groups. I'm delighted to see the commission continue its good work in providing the critical support major city partners need to identify, develop and embed racial equality policy and practice that will ultimately unlock the full potential of organisations and the city. I look forward to continuing to support commissioners' efforts in the coming year."

Speaking ahead of Tuesday's meeting, Museji Ahmed Takolia CBE, Independent Chair of CoRE, said: "Over the past twelve months the commission has seen the evidence that Bristol is a city engaged with the agenda for racial equality and justice at so many levels and is a

positive aspect which we should not take for granted. Challenges continue as we witness racial inequality and hate crime for example, where communities and organisations are fighting back. The will to improve policy and practice is clear and there is action being taken across all sectors, much of which our commission or partners have able to support with and this provides me with hope that we are making progress.

“Whilst the appetite for change is strong, our work continues to uncover the depth of the challenge we face in delivering race equality across all communities and sectors. Working with Stand Against Racism and Inequality, we can see clearly that hate crime remains a

major issue for the city, with increases in racially motivated physical attacks on the increase. Likewise, reports of hate crime emerging from schools has risen, showing a worrying trend amongst younger age groups.

“Through our efforts this year, we have sought to work with leaders across sectors to identify challenges and make recommendations to deliver solutions. Our commissioners have worked with Avon and Somerset Police to further challenge issues of inequality in the force and take solutions forward to deliver positive outcomes for minority groups. Likewise, we continue to work with the council’s education team to inform their work in supporting the sector to challenge racial disparities in schools and will be seeking to maintain our efforts in this area during the coming year.

“A major area of work for commissioners has been in supporting the national Independent Commission on Equity in Cricket’s examination of racism in the sport. Following Azeem Rafiq’s testimony in Parliament about his experiences at the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, we initiated a local consultation across the main bodies responsible for the game in Bristol to begin to understand what issues clubs, players and others associated with the sport have experienced. Following difficult evidence gathering process, with far too many clubs fearful of victimisation, we submitted our findings to the ICEC to include in their national report. Alongside this we continue to support the local game tackle issues of equity at all levels.

“Moving into 2023, we aim to continue much of the work we’ve begun this year, to see our efforts through to the delivery and implementation of solutions across all sectors engaged with. New areas of focus will include examining how we can support the regeneration of Temple Quarter to deliver inclusive benefits across all communities. Likewise, we will also focus commissioners’ efforts to understand the difficult issues that many families and businesses will face with the cost of living crisis, and initiate research into the impact of local media reporting of race equality issues and Black leadership is having in Bristol.”

The report to Full Council submitted by the commission includes a full list of activities the group hope to focus on in 2023:

- The Economy, Jobs and Skills Task Group will lead a public session in January 2023 with a focus on social value, procurement and recruitment in the upcoming Temple Quarter development. CoRE hopes to identify opportunities to spread the benefits of

this investment to benefit local Black Asian and other minority ethnic communities and businesses

- Insights and policy development based on Census 2021 data will support the building of a 'Bristol Race Tracker' to monitor progress in key outcomes in key areas in the private and public sector
- Research on the relationship between media organisations and their reporting about racial equality issues and Black leadership in Bristol
- The Chair will lead consultation with partners on future sustainability and funding options that strengthen the leadership and impact through the various players in the Bristol race equality ecosystem, including reforms to current arrangements
- Create a Communications strategy to increase awareness of CoRE in local communities

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

About CoRE

Set up by Mayor Marvin Rees, CoRE operates independently. It was established to look at race and ethnicity discrimination in Bristol to:

- Work with Bristol's communities and organisations to improve and prioritise race equality to achieve an inclusive, cohesive, thriving and representative city.
- Guide Bristol's policy and strategy developers to make sure race equality is included in all their work.
- Hold public, private and voluntary sectors to account in relation to race equality to uphold the Bristol Race Equality Manifesto; and
- Report on progress on race equality and the general impact of inequality and discrimination on the Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities of Bristol.

<https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org/core-bristol>

Email contact: bristolcore@gmail.com Tel: _____