

Notice of Motion

I wish to move the following Motion:-

"That this Council notes that October marks Black History Month, the annual recognition and celebration of the history, achievements and contribution of African Caribbean people to this country. We welcome the links forged with the Ashford BAME community evidenced by the recent and upcoming Mayoral engagements celebrating Black History Month.

That this Council also notes that there is no room for complacency in the face of inequality and social injustice – the Government's pioneering Ethnicity Facts and Figures website sets out in clear detail enduring ethnic and racial inequalities in housing, employment and the justice system.

That this Council recognises that it is not enough to be 'not racist'. That is too low a bar to set. Ashford is a caring, innovative Borough and we should aim high, striving to be actively anti-racist and anti-discriminatory and do all we can to champion and celebrate diversity and inclusiveness in our Borough.

That this Council acknowledges and recognises the valuable contribution that the BAME community has made to the NHS and the disproportionately high impact of Covid-19, both in the community and among healthcare staff in our community, as evidenced in the Public Health England review of June 2020.

The stated aims of the Recovery Plan are to improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do: to reach out to further develop ways of engaging individuals and communities to ensure their voice is heard and to develop a community action plan. I thank our officers for their contribution and urge the Council to:

Appoint a designated officer to actively and regularly engage with representatives of the BAME community, providing regular progress reports

To build on the excellent equalities and diversity training already delivered to officers and Councillors and to consider the inclusion of unconscious bias training

To support the work of community groups including the Ashford BME group and to actively support BAME businesses

To work towards the establishment of a cultural centre or centres to celebrate the contribution of our diverse Ashford communities

To consider BAME history and culture as a source for street names on future developments.'

Councillor Kate Walder