

Tackling Racism Taskforce

A public summary of the Tackling Racism Taskforce's meeting held on 11 December 2020.

The Tackling Racism Taskforce held its twelfth meeting on 11 December 2020 with a focus on **culture**.

The Taskforce received a report from the Director of Communications regarding the results of the consultative exercise looking at historic items within the City of London. Members heard how the City Corporation had received 1580 individual responses to the consultative exercise, which presented the Taskforce with four options of varying actions to take regarding historic landmarks.

Following extensive discussion, the Taskforce were unanimous in agreeing the following recommendations to put forward to the Policy & Resources Committee in their final report:

- It is recommended that the statue of William Beckford be removed from the Great Hall and contextualised.
- It is recommended that the statue of Sir John Cass in the Guildhall be returned to the Sir John Cass Foundation.
- It is recommended that a working group, which would be led by City Arts Initiative members, and which would report to Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee and any decision ratified by the Policy & Resources Committee, should be established to manage the transferal of these items with a recommended way forward reported by the end of April 2021.
- A new installation be commissioned in place of where the statue of William Beckford currently resides in Great Hall. The aforementioned working group would scope options for replacing the Beckford statue and future public realm commissions which would mark the abolition of slavery and recognise the contribution of slavery toward the growth and expansion of the City of London.
- Following this work, the working group consider a process to audit and consider future commissions of street names and other cultural items that are associated with historic acts of racism such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- A memorial to the Transatlantic Slave Trade be commissioned in a prominent position within the City of London.
- Research be commissioned by the working group to understand and learn of notable historic Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic individuals who could be celebrated as making a positive contribution to the City.
- The Taskforce inform external stakeholders of their decisions in the hope that it encourages others to review any problematic items they own.

The Taskforce also received a report updating Members on recent work of the Cultural and Visitor Development Team including Black History Month and Google Arts & Culture. During this discussion, it came to light that cultural programming could potentially include celebrations on Stephen Lawrence day, taking place on Thursday 22nd April 2021 with the BAME Network keen to support such initiatives. It was agreed that the Co-Chairs of the BAME Network would liaise with the Culture team to discuss this possibility.

The Taskforce will now have one more meeting to discuss the final report before it is submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee (21 January) and the Establishment Committee (27 January).

For any enquiries to the Tackling Racism Taskforce, please contact emma.cunnington@cityoflondon.gov.uk