

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 25TH APRIL 2022
REPORT ON: CITY OF DUNDEE AND BLACK HISTORY WORKING GROUP
REPORT BY: HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES
REPORT NO: 107-2022

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This Report provides Elected Members with information on the work of the cross-party City of Dundee and Black History Working Group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee notes the content of the Report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly out of this Report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The establishment of a cross-party group to provide guidance and direction in taking forward discussions with stakeholders on Black History issues was agreed by the Committee on 28th September 2020 (Article VII of the minute of meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 28th September 2020 and Report No 237-2020 refer). This Report provides information on the work of the City of Dundee and Black History Working Group.

4.2 Membership of the Working Group consisted of:

Councillor Alexander
Councillor Rendall
Councillor Short
Councillor Cruickshank
Councillor Marra
Councillor McCready
Bailie Wright
Councillor Duncan
Councillor Hay
Councillor Murray

At the first meeting of the Working Group, held on 21st April 2021, Councillor Cruickshank was elected as Chair of the Working Group.

4.3 The following workstreams were agreed by the Working Group. Lead officers were agreed in conjunction with the Council Management Team and support was provided to the lead officers from other services, where appropriate:

1. A permanent display in the McManus Galleries telling the full story of the City's involvement in slavery (Lead – Leisure & Culture Dundee);
2. Good quality digital and print material which supports a walking/cycling trail around the City and which complements the display proposal above (Lead – Leisure & Culture Dundee);
3. More active support and participation in Black History Month in October each year, celebrating the achievements and contributions of black and minority ethnic communities both today and in the past (Lead – Neighbourhood Services);
4. Working with the University of Dundee, University of Abertay, Dundee & Angus College and other relevant institutions to commission further research into the City's and wider city-

region's involvement in slavery and emancipation, with a view to producing/coordinating an honest account of Dundee's history and legacy in this regard (Lead – Corporate Services);

5. Reassessing the Council's work to date on Fair Trade and examining what more the City could do to support Fair Trade with a new 3-year business plan (Lead – Chief Executive's Service);
6. Potentially commissioning a new and appropriate public art work in a key City location (Lead - City Development);
7. Further developing our approach to tackling racism and telling the story of slavery in Dundee's primary schools, building on previous experience around LGBT work and the activities of the Anne Frank Trust and Foundation (Lead – Children and Families Service);
8. Asking Dundee's Chief Officers Group and Public Protection Committee independent chairs to review our approach to tackling human trafficking and exploring how best to raise awareness and education in the City about the issues involved (Lead – Health & Social Care Partnership).

It was agreed that two workstreams would report to each Working Group meeting.

5.0 FEEDBACK FROM WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

5.1 16th June 2021

5.1.1 At the Working Group meeting held on 16th June 2021, a report on Workstream 6 (Potentially commissioning a new and appropriate public art work in a key City location) was presented by John Gray, Planning Officer (Public Art) which sought approval to commission two black artists to create two separate temporary public art projects for Slessor Gardens during October 2021 to run in conjunction with Black History Month. The Working Group approved the commission to develop a series of temporary public artworks that would bring the culture of Dundee's black community to the attention of the broader audience of Dundee. The Working Group noted that there was a desire for a permanent public artwork, but little was currently understood of the contribution to Dundee's society by black people as no formal study into the City's black and minority ethnic history had yet been undertaken.

5.1.2 The two artists that were commissioned were Claire Yspol and Senanu Tordzro. Claire's show was a text-based project engaging with black writers - she called the show a Lyrical Bibliography. It was sited on the northern eastern section of the hoardings in Slessor Gardens. Below is her description about her show:

'A Lyrical Bibliography foregrounds the intellectual and artistic vision of black creators. Making this text-based art project was an opportunity for me to engage more deeply with the work of some of the black writers, designers, thinkers, and artists I admire. A Lyrical Bibliography consists of thirty-plus intriguing titles referring to equally intriguing exhibitions, essays, poems, podcasts, and more (many of which are available online). As an aggregate, these titles become a poetic text of sorts. This 'text' can also be used as a resource to find works by black creators to reflect on, as well as, be inspired by.'

5.1.3 Senanu Tordzro's show was sited on the southwest hoardings in Slessor Gardens close to the V&A. She had made the show about her own culture and influences in Ghana. She had been working with Sustrans to create a trail of Ghanaian Adrinkra symbols along the Waterfront. Her display brought together her work for Sustrans. She called her show Adrinkra Way. She had started taking tours along the route where she talked about the meanings behind the symbols along the way and her show was an important display along the route she had chosen.

5.1.4 The Working Group also received a report on Workstream 8 (Asking Dundee's Chief Officers Group and Public Protection Committee independent chairs to review our approach to tackling human trafficking and exploring how best to raise awareness and education in the City about the issues involved) from Sophie Gwyther, Lead Officer, Protecting People providing information on the approach to tackling human trafficking in Dundee and making recommendations on how best to raise awareness and education in the City about the issues involved. The Working Group agreed to promote the multi-agency guidance and training materials through their networks, to support the refresh and finalisation of the Dundee Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy and to continue to take all opportunities to promote awareness raising

materials, both trafficking specific and wider protecting people, to the public and members of the workforce. The Working Group also agreed that Sophie's report would be shared with all Elected Members.

- 5.1.5 Reference was made to the Charter Against Modern Slavery which was agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee on 24th September 2018. The Committee had agreed to report publicly on the implementation of the policy annually however, it was noted that this had not yet happened. Following discussion with Greg Colgan, Robert Emmott and Andrea Calder it was agreed that this would form part of the annual procurement report to the Policy and Resources Committee and Paul Thomson, Head of Corporate Finance would take this forward.
- 5.1.6 It was reported that an approach had been made by Matthew Jarron from Dundee University in relation to a community-based research and engagement project being run by the Abertay Historical Society in collaboration with University of Dundee Museum Services exploring local Black, Asian and minority ethnic history in Dundee. Possible outputs included a website, exhibition, public talks and community discussions. It was hoped to employ a project officer for six months. Dundee University had committed £5k to the project and were looking for Dundee City Council to match the funding. The Working Group agreed to support the project and it was reported that £5k had been earmarked. The funding was reported to the University and a speaker was invited to the September Working Group meeting. It was agreed that the Dundee City Council Communications Teams would liaise with the University about media and PR in relation to the project.

5.2 1st September 2021

- 5.2.1 At the Working Group meeting held on 1st September 2021, a report on Workstream 3 (More active support and participation in Black History Month in October each year, celebrating the achievements and contributions of black and minority ethnic communities both today and in the past) was presented by David Simpson, Head of Housing and Communities summarising the work of a short life group established to consider future Council engagement with Black History Month. The Working Group agreed:-
- (i) that in conjunction with partners the Council should facilitate, support and promote access to activities related to Black History Month, specifically through the use of Council buildings and infrastructure and the dissemination and amplification of appropriate messaging;
 - (ii) that the Council should partner with Abertay Historical Society to support community-based research exploring local Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) history, identifying how the City had benefited from the culture and talents of migrants from different ethnic backgrounds; and
 - (iii) to note that while a mass public event to celebrate Black History Month in October 2021 was not possible due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the aspiration was that an event be considered for October 2022, subject to further discussions.
- 5.2.2 A verbal report on Workstream 4 (Working with the University of Dundee, University of Abertay, Dundee & Angus College and other relevant institutions to commission further research into the City's and wider city-region's involvement in slavery and emancipation, with a view to producing/coordinating an honest account of Dundee's history and legacy in this regard) was received from Matthew Jarron, University of Dundee focusing on the Woven Together Project. Matthew reported that the Project Officer post had recently been recruited to and that Councillor Cruickshank had been on the recruitment panel. The successful candidate would start on 20th September 2021. Matthew also reported that the launch date for the project would be 20th October 2021 with a live on-line event taking place at 7.00pm. Matthew explained that they were proposing a number of outputs from the project including a website, pop-up exhibitions, talks and concerts. Volunteers would be encouraged to carry out research to create new knowledge.
- 5.2.3 The following update was provided by Matthew Jarron:

'The Woven Together project has continued to develop. Several new research outputs have been added to the website and others are in preparation – these include features on anti-slavery campaigner George Gilfillan, local GP and Councillor Jainti Dass Saggarr and the history of the Tayside Community Relations Council. DC Thomson & Co and Dundee International Women's

Centre have kindly supplied us with various images and other material. A Resources page has also been added to bring together existing material elsewhere online. The project leads are also working with students on the Enable programme at Dundee & Angus College to improve the design of the website and add other features to it. Unfortunately, on-going Covid restrictions have meant that many of the organisations we had hoped to work with are still closed and we have found it difficult to recruit as many volunteers as we had hoped. This has had the subsequent effect of delaying the development of a pop-up exhibition and schools pack but we hope to be able to progress with these at a later date. However, other spin-off activities have come out of the project – for example it has led to the University of Dundee Archives carrying out an oral history interview with some Syrian refugees, and we are collaborating with Leisure & Culture Dundee on a walking trail revealing the city's connections to slavery.'

5.2.4 The Working Group also received a verbal report from Graham Fagan, University of Dundee on the University of Dundee Founders Project. Graham gave some background about his work at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design and his research into the transatlantic slave trade. In relation to the project, Graham explained that a post-doctoral researcher would be appointed for six months to look at the founding of the University of Dundee. Interviews were taking place on 15th September 2021. He explained that the whole history would be investigated. A fully documented report would be produced with a public event arranged to present the findings.

5.3 15th November 2021

5.3.1 At the Working Group Meeting held on 15th November 2021, a report on Workstream 5 (Reassessing the Council's work to date on Fair Trade and examining what more the City could do to support Fair Trade with a new 3-year business plan) was presented by Andrea Calder, Head of Chief Executive's Service. The report outlined the commitments which Dundee City Council had made to date in relation to Fair Trade and gave a brief update on progress in delivering these. The Working Group agreed to note the information contained in the report regarding progress and actions going forward and expressed support for the proposed future actions to strengthen the City Council's commitment to Fair Trade.

5.3.2 The Working Group also received a report on Workstream 7 (Further developing our approach to tackling racism and telling the story of slavery in Dundee's primary schools, building on previous experience around LGBT work and the activities of the Anne Frank Trust and Foundation) by Lawrie Stewart, Education Officer providing information on how Dundee primary schools tackled racism and explored slavery within their curriculum. The report also made recommendations on raising awareness and how best to support schools to engage with these issues. The Working Group agreed:-

- (i) to the establishment of a short life Working Group for schools to share good practice and resources for delivering topics during 'Black History Month'. It was anticipated the group would be convened in the near future and would report back to the Children and Families Services Committee in early 2022;
- (ii) for schools to work with partners to provide and develop resources for primary schools to support the teaching of slavery and its links to Dundee; and
- (iii) for schools to continue to engage with national organisations such as *Show Racism the Red Card* and *Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights* to promote anti-racism and equality.

The Working Group further noted the growing range of national resources available to schools to facilitate embedding awareness of racism and slavery within the curriculum and the roll out of general equality awareness training within the Council.

5.3.3 The following update on the establishment of the short life Working Group detailed at (i) was provided by Lawrie Stewart:

'The short life Working Group has been created which comprises both primary and secondary teachers. We are producing materials to support schools in teaching Black History and tackling racism in both primary and broad general education. Resources will be produced before the end of the academic year and will be launched at start of the 2022/23 session. The Working Group is being supported by Show Racism the Red Card who are supporting the Working Group in producing materials and will also help provide Career Long Professional Learning for staff to use these resources. Education Scotland will also support the Working Group in producing resources/training.'

5.3.4 The Chair expressed appreciation for the results of the public artwork project (Workstream 6 – which had been reported on at a previous Working Group). A discussion took place on the desirability of conferring the Freedom of the City, the highest honour the Council could bestow, on diverse candidates.

5.4 16th December 2021

5.4.1 At the final meeting of the Working Group held on 16th December 2021, a report on Workstreams 1 (A permanent display in the McManus Galleries telling the full story of the City's involvement in slavery) and 2 (Good quality digital and print material which supports a walking/cycling trail around the City and which complements the display proposal) was presented by Judy Dobbie, Managing Director, Leisure & Culture Dundee highlighting the work that was underway in relation to these Workstreams. The Working Group:-

- (i) noted that Leisure & Culture Dundee was awaiting the outcomes of the Abertay Historical Society project 'Woven Together' and the Museums Galleries Scotland project 'Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums' before embarking on any major projects focused on this area;
- (ii) agreed to ensure that Leisure & Culture Dundee are supported to prioritise access to collections for researchers for the duration of the Abertay Historical Society and Museums Galleries Scotland projects;
- (iii) noted that Leisure & Culture Dundee would investigate whether external funding might be secured in order to establish a post to undertake an audit of museum collections and materials held in the Local History Library; and
- (iv) supported all Cultural Venues within Dundee to ensure adequate representation of these issues in their buildings and displays, thus the issues are integrated into existing facilities rather than the creation of a new facility.

5.4.2 As this was the final meeting of the Working Group, the Chair noted that it been a privilege to lead the Working Group and expressed her thanks to the Working Group members and officers that had taken part in the workstreams and submitted reports.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team were consulted in the preparation of this Report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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