

## **CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**County Council  
30<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor Graham Breeze, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Engagement  
County Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture

**SUBJECT:** Question from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe

**What is Powys County Council doing to acknowledge the Black Lives Matter campaign?**

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Engagement**

The Council has supported employees in a number of ways in relation to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign, as follows:

#### **Communicating an opportunity for employees to join a BLM protest**

The Council on 12<sup>th</sup> June promoted an invitation from the Race Council Cymru, BAWSO (an organisation that provides specialist services to BME (Black Minority Ethnic) communities ) and Wales TUC, to all employees, which invited them to take part in a BLM protest which was **hosted online** on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

#### **COVID risk assessment**

Recognising that people from a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) background are at greater risk of catching COVID-19 and experience a higher risk of death, the Council during June asked the managers of all employees who had self-identified as being from a BAME background to undertake a COVID risk assessment with the employee.

The on-line risk assessment tool used for this was developed by Welsh Government and helps to identify which employees are at more risk from the impact of COVID. The risk assessment tool is useful for all employees to determine their risk of developing more serious symptoms if they come into contact with the COVID-19 virus. The tool looks at many relevant factors, such as sex, age, health conditions and ethnicity and provides an overall risk rating. Where an employee scores a rating of 4 or above, the manager will support them by exploring and making any necessary adjustments to their work.

Whilst all employees were invited to complete this, managers of staff from a BAME background were asked to support the employee in completing it and to identify any adjustments required in relation to their ongoing health and safety.

Given that not all of the Council's workforce had provided their equalities data when they started with the Council and had not done so since, we also asked all staff during June if they could voluntarily provide their data where missing. Our intention in doing this was to ensure that we could support any further staff who had not previously identified that they are from a BAME background.

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture**

Powys County Council is currently reviewing its historical artefacts, monuments and archive collections in light of the Black Lives Matters Campaign, and advice regarding this has been sought from the Culture and Sport Division of Welsh Government, the National Archives, the Federation of Museums & Art Galleries of Wales, and the National Library of Wales.

Officers of the Council are also engaged in debate with museum, archives and arts colleagues across Wales to advance the conversation on structural racism by joining together to explore how we can follow up on recent statements of support with tangible actions to address racial diversity, equity, and inclusive environments.

At Brecknock Museum at y Gaer for example, we will survey the collection for any relevant material; Continue to liaise with the Town Council regarding the Captains Walk plaque and the Picton Plaques, and depending on those discussions create a display case looking at the Black Lives Matters movement and protest in the context of Brecon and the surrounding area. In the long term we want to encourage a BAME audience and educate a white audience about Black History. We need to continue to train staff across the County about diversity and in particular the ability to recognise everyday racism.

Powys Arts Service commissions and works in partnership with a range of arts organisations and providers who commit to the Arts Council of Wales Equality Strategy 'For the Benefit of All'. Furthermore, a commitment to supporting the Arts Council's recently published 10 bold actions will inform current and future collaborative arrangements for delivering arts and cultural activities for communities in Powys. Diversity has long been acknowledged as essential to creative practice and arts production, as has the principle of inclusion, equality and accessibility.

Please be assured that Powys County Council is fully committed to reviewing our historical artefacts and records to ensure they embrace the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. We acknowledge we have much work to do, but as a custodian of the county's history our aim is to promote and share the diverse stories within our collections to raise awareness of racial injustice. The Black Lives Matter protests across the world have reinforced the need for us to undertake this work to ensure we respect history without omitting vital context.