

Council meeting, 26 July 2022
Administration Motion in the name of Cllr Linda Lusingu

Celebrating Black History Month – Time for change: Action not words

This Council notes:

1. October is Black History Month. This national celebration aims to promote and celebrate Black contributions to British society, and to foster an understanding of Black history in general. It has become an important date in the cultural calendar of many of the UK's museums, galleries, educational institutions, and local authorities
2. In the UK, Black History Month celebrates African, Caribbean, and Asian communities. The event is intended to recognise the contribution and achievements of those with African, Asian, or Caribbean heritage. It's also an opportunity for people to learn more about the effects of racism and how to challenge negative stereotypes.
3. Black History Month is celebrated in the community in places such as museums, care homes, libraries, schools, colleges, and workplaces. A broad range of topics is covered, from the slave trade, Britain's colonial past to migration and music, and therefore to a large extent Black History Month is also history of white people.
4. Barnet Council, under the previous administration has, in the past recognised this event but has not actively engaged meaningfully with Barnet's diverse communities.
5. The theme for Black History Month this year is Time for Change: Action Not Words, with a focus on ensuring we acknowledge and learn from the past, but also work to improve the future, through action, not just words.

This Council further:

1. Believes that the continued learning and understanding of black and minoritised ethnic history promotes integration and respect in communities, and that we should celebrate this throughout the year.
2. Recognises and celebrates the work of local community groups and organisations in the promotion of minoritised ethnic groups in civil society, and the work of the Council's staff networks and allies under The Barnet Equalities Allies to actively promote and ensure an inclusive workplace.
3. Acknowledges the contribution of all Barnet's black and minoritised ethnic councillors both past and present, applauds the increased number of new black and minoritised ethnic councillors in Barnet and calls on all political parties to continue to increase the racial diversity of their Councillors.
4. Considers and celebrates the rich contributions to science, culture and arts in this country by people of African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Asian descent.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To fully recognise Black History Month as an important month in the Council's Calendar each year, and recognising the short lead-in time this year instructs officers to work with members on possible proposals for 2022, with a view to developing the programme in future years, including:
2. To work with Barnet's diverse communities to promote events, including through the Council's communications platforms, throughout the month of October every year.
3. To support local organisations to access funding, via Area Committees or other appropriate mechanisms, to help mark Black History Month in their area.
4. To ask Council officers, Head Teachers and Pupils to co-design a programme to celebrate Black History Month – including by encouraging schools and colleges to develop and showcase their Black History Month projects, for example, by running a Council Black History Month competition with an Awards event to promote and showcase their projects and invite leading black educationalists, community leaders and role models to present the awards.
5. To identify and allocate funding for the above competition and awards event.
6. To use Black History Month as a learning opportunity to inform the Council's long-term strategy/EDI.
7. To use this as an opportunity to learn about best practice from other London Boroughs on positively engaging minoritised communities.