



COUNCIL MEETING – 9 JULY 2020

NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1: Atonement and Reparations for the United Kingdom's Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans

Moved by Cllr Caroline Russell

This Council notes that –

- the United Kingdom played a major role in the Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans (TTEA) which saw at least 15 million Africans forcibly trafficked to the Western Hemisphere with many thousands losing their lives during the crossing from Africa to the Americas on British Ships;
- a great deal of the wealth of the United Kingdom was founded on this vile crime against humanity, and the legacies of chattel, colonial and neocolonial forms of enslavement are still prevalent in our society today;
- the beneficiaries of the genocide and ecocide of African people and their environments, including many institutions and families in the UK, continue to benefit but have not made reparations, while the descendants of the victims continue to suffer racism, discrimination and inequality;
- one of the most visible and enduring legacies of African enslavement, colonisation and neocolonialism is systematic racism that exists within Western societies, which the Pan-African Liberation Movement, the Black Lives Matter Movement, the International Decade for People of African Descent Coalition UK and other organisations within Black communities are campaigning to eliminate. The systematic racism that is ingrained in our society manifests itself in inequality in education, housing, health, employment and the criminal justice system;
- the legacy of slavery is responsible for ingraining racial inequality within Western society, that manifests itself both in overt acts of violent racism, such as the death of George Floyd at the hands of American police, Black deaths in police custody, prison, psychiatric custody and immigration detention in the UK, or in institutional failings to provide sufficient support and care for Black communities, such as the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black people in the UK;
- whilst the United Kingdom abolished slavery in 1833, it did so only after 200 years of profiting from it. When abolishing slavery it paid £20 million, the equivalent of £17 billion today, to 'compensate' enslavers, whilst those which were enslaved were not compensated at all. Further that this was not paid off until 2015;

- the United Nations 'Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to A Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law' provides a framework for a comprehensive reparatory justice process;
- the International Decade for People of African Descent, proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 68/237 and to be observed from 2015 to 2024, provides an opportunity for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the programme of activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development;
- the work of Dr Nicola Frith, Professor Joyce-Hope-Scott, the Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE), the International Network of Scholars & Activists For African Reparations (INOSAAR) and their Principles of Participation which have been endorsed by the International Social Movement for African Reparations (ISMAR) and a global process of engagement in the UK, the US, Africa and the Caribbean;
- the CARICOM Reparation Commission has worked on a path to reconciliation, truth, and justice for the victims of slavery and their descendants. Further to this, it campaigns on the moral, ethical and legal case for the payment of reparations by the Governments of all former colonial powers and relevant institutions of those countries to the nations and people of the Caribbean Community for the Crimes against Humanity of Native Genocide, the TTEA and a racialised system of chattel Slavery;
- in 1993 Bernie Grant, MP tabled Early Day Motion (EDM) #1987 in the House of Commons welcoming the Abuja Proclamation after the first Pan-African Conference on Reparations sponsored by the Organisation of African Unity urging all countries who were enriched by enslavement and colonisation to review the case for reparations for "Africa and to Africans in the Diaspora";
- since 2015, the Stop the Maangamizi Campaign (The Maangamizi is the African Holocaust of chattel, colonial and neocolonial forms of enslavement) in association with the African Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee have been organising the annual African Emancipation Day Reparations March. The campaign presented the Stop the Maangamizi Petition to the Office of the UK Prime Minister calling for the establishment an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice;
- it is institutions such as the Black Cultural Archives and the International Museum of Slavery which effectively teach people about the history of the TTEA and its legacy, not statues of enslavers like Edward Colston or Robert Clayton;
- the national curriculum fails to educate our nation's children and young people about the history of slavery and its repercussions.

This Council welcomes –

- the announcement that Islington is conducting an audit of all Islington's public landmarks, statues roads names and works of art in the borough for any links with slavery;
- the celebration of Windrush Day 2020 on 22nd June, and the contribution of our Mayor Rakhia Ismail as well as the events organised by the council;

- that City University is reviewing it's ties to Sir John Cass and the appropriateness of having links with a major figure of the slave trade;
- similar motions that are being brought to Bristol City Council and Lambeth Borough Council that represent the hard work of community campaigners, Black activists and elected representatives.

This Council resolves –

- to call on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of the United Kingdom's Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans on social, political and economic life within the UK and the rest of the world in order to begin understanding the legacy of slavery on the society we live in and to start conversations on how to address it, which go further than a symbolic apology;
- write to the Speaker of Parliament, Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee and Chair of the Home Affairs Committee to request that they establish, and seek UK Government support for, an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice and call on the Government to commit to holistic reparations taking into consideration various proposals for reparations in accordance with the United Nations Framework on Reparations;
- to support the innovative work which has been carried out by the Runnymede Trust, the Black Curriculum and others to engage young people and teachers with more expansive, representative and inclusive histories of Britain, and to overhaul the curriculum to better educate about the United Kingdom's role in slavery;
- to support City University's review of ties to figures in the slave trade and to support a change to the name of Cass Business School.

Motion 2: Motion on ceasing spraying glyphosate in Islington

Moved by Cllr Caroline Russell

This Council notes –

- the growing body of scientific evidence showing a link between exposure to herbicides such as glyphosate and an increased risk of cancer;
- the spraying of herbicides in Islington is causing concern among residents and elected representatives about its potential harmful effects on children, animals and wildlife on our streets, housing estates and parks;
- the need to protect contracting staff who carry out herbicide spraying from harm;
- the work London wide of Transport for London (TfL) with suppliers and contractors to explore safer alternatives to herbicides such as hot foam, for essential vegetation management and weed control;
- the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham was the first council in London to cease the use of glyphosate, to support biodiversity and protect habitat against any long-term chemical effect;
- other London Boroughs such as Hackney and Croydon are trialling non-chemical weed removal and reductions in areas treated and exploring alternatives;
- in June 2019 the German state-owned rail operator Deutsche Bahn announced it would stop using glyphosate on its tracks and is looking for substitutes to replace the widely used glyphosate herbicide; and
- that residents in Islington streets are able to opt their street out of being sprayed with glyphosate or other herbicides.

This Council welcomes the council's commitment in the Biodiversity Action Plan currently under consultation to –

- continually review the use of pesticides and herbicides in public realm and housing and look to reduce where possible;
- carry out trials for alternative chemical free weed removal options; and
- adopt an integrated weed management document.

In light of the public and occupational health concerns about herbicide exposure and the need to protect habitat and biodiversity, this Council resolves to –

- bring forward an action plan and timetable for a major reduction, to zero, in the spraying of herbicides such as glyphosate in the borough,
- develop an integrated approach to phasing out glyphosate – from doing nothing in certain areas, to hand weeding in others, to adopting new methods such as a hot foam weed control systems.
- continue to use glyphosate to tackle invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed, where there is a duty to eradicate, and no acceptable non-chemical alternative is available. Its use should be limited to stem injection rather than spraying.

Motion 3: Black Lives Matter

Moved by Cllr Michelline Safi Ngongo

Seconded by Cllr Una O'Halloran

This Council notes –

- The shocking and distressing murder of George Floyd at the hands of police in America on 25th May 2020, which has led to protests and demonstrations against police and state brutality towards black people and systemic racism and injustice;
- The contributions that all communities, races and cultures have made to Islington in the past and will continue to make in future and that Islington has a proud history of celebrating its diversity and standing against racism, inequality and injustices;
- Racism and deep structural inequalities are not confined to the USA, and remain prevalent across society. According to a 2018 study by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, 35.7 per cent of ethnic minorities were living in poverty;
- Black people are almost 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched according to the government's own statistics and 40 times more likely under section 60 powers;
- Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean children have rates of permanent exclusion about three times that of the pupil population as a whole;
- Islington Council, in 2015, established all world history, to fully integrate black history into the school curriculum, all year round, as a step towards educating more children and young people on black history and oppression and help celebrate the contributions of our diverse communities in Islington.

This Council further notes that –

- A recent ONS report found that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities almost twice as likely to die as white people;
- The Prime Minister's recent announcement of a commission to look into racial disparities and inequality;
- The unimplemented recommendations from previous Government reports and reviews into systemic racism and injustice.

This Council believes that –

- Black lives matter;
- Urgent action is needed, now more than ever, that goes beyond word or a government position;
- Education on Black history, systemic racism and inequality is a vital step to achieving racial equity.

This Council resolves to –

- Stand in complete solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, and commits to fighting against all form of racism and injustice;
- Call on the Government to make urgent policy changes to protect Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community through the pandemic and implement the recommendations from the review of Public Health England into the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities;
- Call on the Government to take urgent meaningful action to address racial discrimination and injustices in the United Kingdom and implement the recommendations from the:
 - Lammy report
 - Angiolini review
 - Home Office Windrush review
 - McGregor-Smith review;
- Work with all communities in Islington, Islington Council staff and partners to educate each other on systemic racism and take real action to address the inequalities and racism experienced by communities in Islington;
- Support calls on the Government to make Black history a mandatory part of the national curriculum in all schools in England.

Motion 4: Central government must do whatever it takes

Moved by Cllr Richard Watts
Seconded by Cllr Satnam Gill

This Council notes –

- The heroic work of the NHS and other public services in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Councils across the country have been working alongside their local communities to lead the frontline response to the crisis and support local people;
- At the beginning of the crisis, Islington Council responded, at pace, to set up a new 'We are Islington' service for local people who needed help getting food, medicine, or financial support. The service has managed over 10,000 requests for help and helped more than 2,000 local people in need of food, nearly 500 asking for medicine, and around 700 in need of financial support;
- Islington Council front line staff have continued to keep local people safe including by helping over 130 people rough sleeping into safe accommodation, keeping weekly refuse collection and street cleansing services running, and introducing emergency measures to create more space for social distancing on Islington streets;
- The commitment at the beginning of the crisis, from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick MP, to do 'whatever it takes' to fund local authorities' response to the Covid-19 crisis;
- The welcome funding received from central government to help deliver the Council's response to the crisis.

This Council further notes -

- Since 2010, central government, has pursued an austerity agenda that has seen huge cuts to public services and forced Islington to make almost £250m of savings;
- Despite central government cuts, Islington Council has protected vital services that local people rely on and has invested in tackling the issues that matter most to local people;
- The latest Local Government Association (LGA) analysis which shows that local councils have lost £3.2bn income from council tax and business rates, and from sales, fees and charges;
- The recent findings published by the LGA which show that local councils require as much as £6bn more in central government funding to cover the costs of the Covid-19 pandemic through the course of this financial year.

This Council believes –

- The crisis has shown that local councils play a vital role in working with communities to provide services that residents rely on and the Government must listen to, and consult with, local government in developing its response to this crisis;
- That the Government should keep its promise to local councils to fully fund all costs related to the Covid-19 crisis. Local services cannot sustain any further cuts in funding after a decade of austerity and cannot pay the price for this national crisis now;
- Without additional emergency funding, central government will be forcing local councils to cut vital services which local people have relied on through this period.

This Council resolves –

- To continue to call on central government to keep its promise to fully fund the costs of responding to Covid-19, by urgently providing the £6bn to local authorities needed to close the funding gap for this year;
- To call on the central government to provide sustained, adequate and fairly distributed funding to public services, including councils, and not impose further austerity;
- To prioritise the safety of local people and continue to support those who need it.