

Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen Cydraddoldeb ac Amrywiaeth (Du, Asiaidd a Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig)

Equality and Diversity Task & Finish Group (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic)

Adroddiad Interim / Interim Report

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Introduction

The death of George Floyd in May drew the world's attention to racial inequality; subsequent marches, protests, and campaigning marked a global response and brought racism to the forefront of many agendas. In light of these events the council considered two Notices of Motions during 2020 and as a result a Task and Finish Group was established to review the referred matters.

Notices of Motion received by Council

The first Notice of Motion was received by Council at its meeting held on the 12th February 2020. Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive Board:

(Minute 7.1 refers)

That Carmarthenshire County Council –

- *Believe that more needs to be done to improve diversity within our workforce*
- *Commits to working with community groups to understand the barriers that exist for individuals BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic)*
- *Calls on the Executive Board to create an Advisory Panel to consider what actions can be taken to increase diversity in the workplace*

The second Notice of Motion was received by Council at its meeting on the 8th July 2020 Council referred the following notice of motion to the Executive Board: -

(Minute 7.1 refers)

The harrowing death of George Floyd in the USA and the weeks of protest and debate that have followed has given us all an opportunity to reflect on the harsh reality of racism across the world. We pride ourselves on being a caring, open, and inclusive County, but it has to be openly acknowledged that sadly elements of racism and intolerance remain within our society today. It is therefore incumbent on this Council to formally recognise these failings, reach out to the BAME community, formulate proactive educational programmes, and undertake a re-evaluation of our historical monuments in the light of recent events. Therefore, this Council

- *Makes a clear and unequivocal statement that it abhors racism, prejudice, and discrimination in all its forms – past and present.*
- *Supports the message of 'Black Lives Matter' and believes in the right of citizens to protest peacefully in a safe environment.*
- *Recognises the importance of BAME communities in our county and commits to working with them. We aim to educate, identify, and eradicate racism in Carmarthenshire.*

The council will:

- *Listen to the voice of BAME communities in our county and will set up a Cross Party Task and Finish group to take evidence to ensure that their concerns, fears and proposals are fully heard and informs future policy, with the group completing the work within six months.*
- *Work with the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner to deal with racism, prejudice, and discrimination within the judicial system.*
- *Continue to learn from historical events in a factually balanced approach*
- *Commit to working with our schools to include the themes of colonialism, exploitation, discrimination, and racism in the new National Curriculum and in lifelong learning*
- *Welcome the First Minister's announcement to undertake a national review of public monuments, including the one to Thomas Picton in Carmarthen, as well as street names and report upon their appropriateness in 21st century Wales.*

- *Embrace Black History Month (October) by holding public events to highlight the reality of the negative impact of racial inequality and celebrate the contribution made by BAME communities to our local and national life*

The Executive Board gave due regard to both Notices of Motion and as a result decided that they should be addressed in conjunction with each other and proposed that a Cross Party Task & Finish Group should be established.

Equality and Diversity Task & Finish Group (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic)

The first meeting was held on 3 August 2020, whereby terms of reference were agreed, and a work plan for the following six months was initiated. One of the first areas of discussion for the Group was a review of public monuments and street names and the Wales-based review being undertaken via Welsh Government. Members of the Group were aware of public comment and discussion about monuments and memorials across Wales and in Carmarthenshire, noting that the Picton Monument in Carmarthen Town had drawn particular attention. The Group considered all aspects of their work and agreed that the matter of the interpretation and history of Sir Thomas Picton and the monument in Carmarthen Town should be dealt with at the outset. This decision was made in light of the great public and media interest. The Group also agreed at an early stage that in order to move forward and focus on the more significant areas of review, including equality and diversity in the workplace, education and the broader issues effecting BAME communities in Carmarthenshire, this matter should be dealt with first.

The findings of the consultation and additional evidence were considered by the Equality and Diversity (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) Task and Finish Group at meetings during October 2020, and the recommendations contained within this report were formulated.

The Group remain focused on bringing a full report to the Executive Board in February 2021.

Public consultation

The Group undertook a public consultation to gain an understanding of the views and comments of the people so that they could consider this information as part of their decision-making. It was not the intention of the Group to consider data from the consultation only. The Group also reviewed information from Carmarthen Civic Society and invited oral evidence from the following local members: –

- Cllr Gareth John, County Councillor for Carmarthen Town South Ward, Town Councillor and Mayor of Carmarthen Town
- Cllr Dr Baba M Gana, Carmarthen Town Council
- Cllr Alan Speake, County Councillor for Carmarthen Town West Ward

The Group also consulted Race Council Cymru and the Llanelli Multicultural Network.

An online survey was produced, as well as paper copies being made available for people to request and return to a freepost address. The survey was publicised on the corporate website as well as being advertised on social media and local press. The consultation was open from the 19th August until the 30th September 2020. 2470 responses were received, with 2357 opting to add additional comments to substantiate their views. The initial closing date was extended from the 16th of September to the 30th of September due to a small technical issue in the days following the launch of the consultation.

In addition to the formal consultation led by Carmarthenshire County Council, letters and emails were received, with a number following a standardised template. Alongside those, a number of

letters from individuals were received and sent directly for the attention of the Council Leader, Chief Executive, Chair of the Task and Finish Group and Elected Members.

The Group also received evidence from Carmarthenshire County Council Museum Services regarding a pilot project entitled 'Decolonising Our Collections' - focused on reinterpreting history. The Group were keen to support the work of the project and to accept guidance on how any relevant recommendations could be implemented. The Group noted that a large portrait of Sir Thomas Picton is displayed in the courtroom at the Guildhall in Nott's Square.

The consultation focused on one main question about the Monument. It also contained a subset of questions around the ethnicity and demographic of respondents. It also asked respondents to provide some information on their postcode to allow a breakdown of information per ward or specific area.

Although the Group did not consider any external data reported online regarding petitions relating to the removal or saving of the Picton Monument, the Group was aware that there were several online petitions and pressure Groups that may have sought to influence the outcome of this consultation. However, the verification of responses was limited in relation to demographic and geographic information and accepted in good faith. This is consistent with all other consultations undertaken by this authority.

A copy of the consultation can be found at Appendix 1. The following is a summary of results and responses.

Summary of results

In response to the following question – **Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument?**

744 people stated **Yes** that steps need to be taken and 1,613 people stated **No** that no steps need to be taken in response.

113 people chose not to answer the first question but gave feedback through the free text option.

567 responses were received from **outside** of Carmarthenshire.

219 responses were received from people aged 16-24.

1143 responses were received from people aged 25-54.

809 responses were received from people aged 55+.

Of the 223 responses received from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community,

83 were received from the African, Caribbean, and Black British group.

29 were received from the Asian and Asian British group.

86 were received from mixed multiple ethnicities, and

25 were received from other ethnic groups.

Within the survey, a number of demographic questions were set, which were not mandatory. Respondents had the option not to answer these questions or that they preferred not to say. This led to the total number of responses being higher than those noted in the individual breakdowns by category.

Carmarthenshire feedback

Of the 2470 responses received, **1797** of responses were from Carmarthenshire, which is 73% of the total.

The breakdown of results to the question and ethnic background is noted below –

Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument?

Yes	BME	White	No	BME	White
599	25 (4.2%)	522 (87.1%)	1096	118 (10.8%)	811 (74.0%)

The following word clouds aim to summarise the key words used within the free text responses. **If answered, Yes**



If answered, No



Carmarthen Town Feedback

Of the 2470 responses received, 750 were from the Carmarthen Town wards. This area includes Carmarthen Town South, Carmarthen Town West, Carmarthen Town North, and areas within Llangunnor which share the postcodes.

30.4% of responses were received from Carmarthen Town.

Yes	BME	White	No	BME	White
233	12 (5.2%)	194 (83.3%)	485	72 (14.8%)	332 (68.5%)

Due to the variances in the postcodes inputted through the survey, we were unable to filter comments in order to create a summary report for members of a word cloud to highlight key words used.

Feedback based on age

The breakdown of results to the question by age groups are noted below –

Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument?

16-24 age group	Number	Percentage
No	147	67%
Yes	72	33%

25 – 54 age group	Number	Percentage
No	785	69%
Yes	358	31%

55+ age group	Number	Percentage
No	571	67%
Yes	283	33%

Feedback based on ethnicity

The breakdown of results to the question by ethnicity is noted below –

Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument?

Ethnicity (in total)	Number	Percentage
No	186	83%
Yes	37	17%

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Number	Percentage
No	74	89%
Yes	9	11%

Asian / Asian British	Number	Percentage
No	24	83%
Yes	5	17%

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	Number	Percentage
No	70	81%
Yes	16	19%

The following word clouds aim to summarise the key words used within the free text responses: –



Summary of key themes in the free text responses

Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument? If YES, what steps do you think should be taken?

Total of 744 responses can be summarised into the following themes – these are not in order of preference. The number of comments relation to each theme is noted in the bracket: -

1. Remove the monument to another location i.e. Carmarthen Museum, and replace with public art or garden of remembrance or celebration of diversity (196)
2. Demolish the monument and replace with public art or garden of remembrance or celebration of diversity (42)
3. Rename/rededicate the monument and garden to another person/cause e.g. recognition of key workers during Covid-19 pandemic (98)
4. Erect an information board / plaque at the site to explain the full history of Sir Thomas Picton (59)
5. Ensure appropriate education on the full history through local schools (24)
6. Leave it as it is (84)
7. Ask the people of Carmarthen what they want (1)
8. Ask the BAME community what they want (78)
9. Review all monuments, street and place names and take further action as appropriate (22)

Do you think Carmarthenshire County Council (and key partners) need to take any steps in response to the recent public discussion about the Sir Thomas Picton monument? If NO, what steps do you think should be taken?

Total of 1,613 responses can be summarised into the following themes – these are not in order of preference. The number of comments relation to each theme is noted in the bracket: -

1. The focus of the monument is military recognition (137)
2. No formal complaints or feedback has been heard / noted pre-2020 (12)
3. You cannot change (or erase) history (483)
4. Additional information / plaques and education are key to placing the monument in context (91)
5. The monument is integral to Carmarthen and local residents should have their say (11)
6. Carmarthenshire County Council needs to focus on local services (32)
7. Picton was a figure of his time (74)
8. The monument must remain (195)

Conclusions

Having considered all of the evidence relating to the consultation process, the Task & Finish Group were in agreement that the monument should remain, and should not be repurposed, renamed or altered. It was also agreed that the same approach should be taken with regards to place names.

Evidence relating to place names other than Picton were noted by the Group but none were considered for removal or alteration – preferring to educate and inform. The Group did not consider it proportionate to create a policy for future requests for changes to place names etc as each case should be reviewed individually.

Given that there are several street names and references to Sir Thomas Picton across Carmarthen Town, the Group recognised that there is little historical information on display to inform the public and agreed that this ought to be addressed.

The Group also acknowledged the conclusive result of the consultation and agreed that steps needed to be taken as a matter of priority to reflect recent global events and reconsideration in view of the history of Sir Thomas Picton.

When reviewing the data the Group noted that respondents who answered yes or no to taking any steps in relation to the monument both contained reference to placing information boards near the monument.

When interpreting the history of Sir Thomas Picton the Group emphatically agreed that consideration should be given to his tenure as the Governor of Trinidad, his links with slavery, as well as his military career.

In the light of the need to educate and inform in a more comprehensive way it was decided that information boards should be put in place. The information boards or display should seek to educate and inform the public on local history alongside that of Sir Thomas Picton.

Recommendations

The Equality and Diversity Task & Finish Group (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) recommend to the Executive Board that: –

1. Information boards should be prominently placed near the Picton Monument with due regard to accessibility, and to include a QR code.
2. An Information Board should also be placed on a prominent site within the grounds of the monument.
3. A further information board placed in the vicinity of the Court Room at the Guildhall, where a portrait of Sir Thomas Picton is displayed.
4. Any information boards should reference the local history of the area and also the history of Sir Thomas Picton encompassing his military career as well as his known links with slavery.

The Group did not consider it necessary to impose a time scale on the recommendations to the Executive Board, however, they would encourage implementation within 12 months of any endorsement.

Costs

Recommendation 1

Placing of Information Boards (inc. labour)	£750
QR Code setting and maintaining N/A	£----
Total for Recommendation 1	<u>£750</u>

Recommendation 2

Application Cost inc. Heritage Impact Assessment	£500
Drawings	£1,000
Placing of Information Boards (inc. labour)	£750
QR Code setting and maintaining N/A	£----
Total for Recommendation 2	<u>£2,250</u>

Recommendation 3*

Application Cost inc. Heritage Impact Assessment	£500
Drawings	£1,000
Placing of Information Boards (inc. labour)	£750
QR Code setting and maintaining	£----
Total for Recommendation 3	<u>£2,250</u>

Possibility of Grants

*The Museum Service 'Decolonising our Collection' project may negate the need for an information board at the Guildhall as the project contains an aim to improve and add to the reinterpretation of the history of Sir Thomas Picton. This would also remove the need to apply for Listed Building Consent.