

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 June 2022
Report of: Head of Community Services
Title of Report: Review of the Anti-Racism Charter

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	Oxford City Council agreed to make Oxford an Anti-Racism City through a motion at its Full Council meeting in July 2019. An Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) was then formally adopted in October 2020. This report highlights the scheduled review of the Anti-Racism Charter which has involved community focus groups and subsequently asks members to approve the recommended changes and actions
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Emerging Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:
1. Approve the updated Anti-Racism Charter at Appendix 1 and the actions shown in Table 1.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Updated Anti-Racism Charter
Appendix 2	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 3	Risk Register

Introduction and background

- Oxford City Council agreed to make Oxford an Anti-Racist City through a motion at its Full Council meeting in July 2019. The motion and its commitments can be found [on our Making Oxford an Anti-racist City page](#) of our website.
- We then worked closely with lead members and our diverse communities and stakeholders to develop an Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) that was launched in

October 2020. The work included a series of focus groups, including one with members.

3. The key priorities within the ARC are:

- **We're** a city, making an active and conscious effort to have difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations about what it means in practice to be anti-racist – both as individuals and across our organisations and institutions.
- **We** are a city working together to change our thinking of racism as conscious, intentional and explicit actions **to also** understanding when it is unconscious, unintentional and indirect actions too.
- **We** recognise that although racism does happen to, and by individuals, it can often be institutional too – racist actions that are embedded in an organisation and the way it behaves towards certain groups and individuals.
- **Without** understanding the root causes of racism and how it affects people we cannot dismantle the institutional structures which give rise to it, that result in inequality and unfair outcomes for people from ethnic minorities and people of colour.

4. The ARC was promoted widely at the time through various media, including press releases, on You Tube and was also placed on our website. There are 14 different organisations and community leaders that have become signatories since the launch back in October 2020 this includes faith leaders, community associations, local authorities and educational establishments.

5. As a result of the work on the ARC there were three key actions for the Council that emerged and these were ;

- Every year we will review the Charter, review the definitions and reaffirm our commitment to be an Anti-Racist city.
- Every year we will showcase the talent and achievements of ethnic minorities and people of colour across the city – at awards ceremonies, through arts and cultural events, exhibitions and storytelling conversations.
- In the first year of the Charter, we will launch an Oxford-specific Anti-Racism City Quality Mark that organisations and community groups can download and incorporate in their stationery after signing and committing to the principles set out in this Charter.

Progress to date

6. Showcasing talent and achievements. A snapshot of some of the activities where we have worked on this with our communities and community partners are shown below;

- Black History Month
- South Asian Heritage Month
- Windrush Day

- ‘Unlock the Chains’ discussion surrounding the fears, frustrations, fatigue and anger as another Black life is taken by the system that is there to protect.
 - Oxford Poetry Library and The Children’s Allotment are returning to Flo’s Place in the Park with their Many Voices Collection, a collection of children’s books featuring Black characters, written by Black writers, or which centre on anti-racist messages
 - Volunteers week
 - Promoting a wide range of religious and cultural festivals
 - Our Youth Ambition programme, celebrating young people’s achievements
7. Quality Mark: We carefully explored the potential of a quality mark for the City, talked to various Councils, quality assurance providers, stakeholders and it became very clear that administering this type of award on our own would be very resource intensive. We have stopped this work for the time-being, but will continue to explore whether we could join up with other schemes that may develop within the City in the future.
8. Review: The final action was for the Council to review the ARC after a year. This was completed and also discussed in the review with our focus groups.

Reviewing the Anti-Racism Charter

9. We wrote to all of our diverse communities in October 2021 who had been involved in developing the ARC and those who were not able to be involved previously and invited them to attend a focus group session to review the ARC.
10. We held three focus groups in November 2021 with 20 people attending. The sessions were diverse with people attending from various backgrounds, including, Black African and Caribbean, South Asian, Jewish, White and other ethnic backgrounds. These sessions were facilitated by the Head of Community Services; or by the Active Communities Manager, and supported by the Youth Ambition Manger.
11. We asked the following questions in the focus groups in the context of the theme;
a) What does it mean to be an anti-racism city? b) Does this charter still reflect the right anti-racism values/principles?
12. As a result of the engagement above, those involved felt that the Charter should be reviewed every two years going forward to enable more time to sufficiently implement any actions that arise. We have also developed an action plan (see below table). Three key actions short term actions were identified and have been completed these are;
- a) Improving the accessibility on the ARC webpage –some people are still unaware of the Charter and find it is not user friendly and struggle to navigate through the tabs. That we should put all of the information together into a single document.
 - b) Make the 5th principle more prominent by bringing it to the start of the Charter- *‘Tackle institutional and structural racism. People in positions of power and leadership exhibit the moral leadership and conscience to raise their voices against racial injustice, and empower people to speak truth to*

power in a fear-free, supportive environment.' This has been updated on the web version.

- c) Feedback from the focus group was that the wording throughout should be more proactive because the Charter is trying to promote positive change.

Longer-term actions

13. Longer-term actions are shown below in table 1 below. The wording for the actions are taken directly from the focus groups.

Table 1

Action	Completion date	Responsible officer
1) The focus groups had very few white people attending and there was feedback that we needed to increase representation of white people within the focus groups going forward.	September 2023	Locality Managers
2) Find a way to encourage organisations to monitor and tackle discriminatory practices by adhering to relevant policies/plans. Look at how Oxford City Council can champion this.	September 2023	Active Community Manager
3) There must be a focus on anti-racism training to ensure the Council is adopting a customer orientated approach.	March 2023	Human Resources
4) Work with the community to review service delivery to ensure it is equitable and accessible (there is an action to do this in the EDI strategy). https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20356/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy	March 2023	Locality Managers
5) Continue to promote the charter and also engage more organisations and groups to sign up to it. Re-launching this after cabinet in June.	June 2022	Locality Managers / Comms
6) Set up a monitoring system for signatories to feedback about the changes they are implementing in line with the ARC insight and indicators to reflect shift change, if any – greater or lesser.	September 2023	Active Community Manager / Locality Managers and Comms
7) To develop a definition with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities (GRT) that can be used in future ARC reviews, and drawing on recent international work in this area including challenging negative language.	March 2023	Locality Managers

Financial implications

14. There are no financial implications. The training on anti-racism will be delivered within existing budgets.

Legal issues

15. The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people

when carrying out their activities. Whilst the Council is keen to encourage other organisations to sign up to the ARC, it does not have any powers to enforce this.

Level of risk

16. The risk register is attached in Appendix 3.

Equalities impact

17. The equalities impact assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

Environmental Impact Assessment

18. Not applicable.

Conclusion

19. Members are asked to approve the updated Anti-Racism Charter and associated actions from the recent review.

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Background Papers: None

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