

# **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SKILLS COMMITTEE ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2021**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

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# ADDENDUM

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**Subject:** Deputation – Anti-Racism I Schools Strategy  
**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2021  
**Report of:** Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law  
**Contact Officer: Name:** Penny Jennings **Tel:** 29-1065  
**email:** Penny.jennings@brighton-hove.gov.uk  
**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council’s Procedural Rules a Deputation may be presented to an appropriate Committee meeting for consideration.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee either
- (a) Notes the deputation; or
  - (b) Notes the deputation and calls for an officer report on the issues raised by the deputation.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- 3.1 A copy of the deputation is attached to the report as appendix 1.

**4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

- 4.1 The Procedural Rules states that ‘the lead spokesperson will receive written confirmation of the response given to the deputation and that the signatories to the deputation will be invited to attend the meeting and will be permitted 5 minutes speaking time in total.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Deputation and supporting information.

**Deputation ??**  
**Spokesperson – ??**



## Deputation concerning Anti-Racist Schools Strategy: The price of conforming to Critical Race Theory - Spokesperson Adrian Hart

I suspect that few of our 54 councillors had heard of “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) when they supported last summer’s motion ‘to become an anti-racist council’. Leaving aside the fact that CRT forms the basis of BHCC staff and councillor anti-racism training, the council surely has a duty to explain to *electors* (and especially to parents) why they have allowed this racial ideology to enter schools (see Note 1).

The fact that the approach to anti-racism advocated by CRT runs counter to liberal approaches and *promotes* an impossible to verify and hugely contested political belief – namely, *that our society is fundamentally constructed around systemic white supremacy* – cannot be a fact that the council is comfortable with? To defend your decision, **you should explain** to citizens why you have seen fit to break with liberal-universal approaches. Moreover, you should:

(a) **Explain** to citizens why, in sponsoring a partisan political ideology, you chose to contravene s406 and s407 of the Education Act (1996) and s78 of the Education Act (2002) (See Note 2).

(b) **Explain** to citizens why you approved a CRT approach to staff and pupil training given that it invites teachers and children to define and treat one another differently according to the immutable characteristic of skin colour. The invitation CRT issues to children is, precisely, that they should define themselves and each other as victims or oppressors according to their colour. Amongst younger children in particular this will foster confusion, upset and division. Your choice of CRT is, therefore, a breach of the Equalities Act and, specifically, the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 1c) *the duty to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*.

It seems extraordinary that on November 9th 2020, the CYPS committee was not advised of these legal implications in the Report of Deb Austin. Just one month earlier a government minister had given a speech to parliament (widely reported in the media) reminding the house that CRT-taught-as-fact *breaches the Education Act*.

(c) **Explain** to citizens why you describe the ‘Racial Literacy 101’ training as non-mandatory (see Note 3).

(d) **Explain** to citizens why such fundamental and controversial changes have taken place without the fullest public discussion. The November 9th officer report states that a small number from a group called the ‘Brighton & Hove Educators of Colour Collective’ (BHECC) worked with a consultant commissioned by the council to draft your schools strategy (see Notes 4 and 5).

Thank you.

(Note 1) Integral to CRT is its rejection of liberal-humanist and universalist approaches to anti-racist education. A liberal approach correctly views schools as a politically neutral sphere in which partisan political ideologies can be *presented* (discussing and contrasting alternative standpoints at GCSE or A level stages is, of course, a good thing), but they should never be *promoted*. Our long agreed liberal approach is underpinned by a social consensus around democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, *mutual respect and tolerance*. Informed by UK equality law, a liberal approach to anti-racism in schools holds as self-evident the humanist view that skin-colour is not grounds for discrimination and people should not be defined and treated differently solely on the basis of an immutable characteristic. The universalist standpoint recognises and condemns skin-colour racism while embracing the aspiration to transcend colour difference. Yet, CRT caricatures colour-blindness as though it can only ever be *racism-blindness*. This committee has seen fit to commission a 5 year 'Anti-racist Schools Strategy' currently underway in the form of a 'Racial Literacy' teacher and staff training which describes itself as providing: '***an understanding of structural/institutional racism, white privilege and a critical race theory approach***'. [<https://www.beem.org.uk/Event/128271>]

(Note 2) In doing so you have brought our council into disrepute according to your own code of conduct.

(Note 3) when your strategy document says: '**It is advised that the program aims to initially engage with staff/teachers/governors that support the work and any mandatory engagement comes further down the line**'. The council may view the training as 'recommended' rather than mandatory but the leadership of my local primary (Carlton Hill School), having been urged to take the training, has booked it for an all-staff INSET in September (INSETs are mandatory).

(Note 4) The council is elected to represent all citizens, including the majority of parents who have not been consulted, and who may have different beliefs to those of CRT. Policies should reflect the broadest consensus view - not those of a small pressure group who adhere to an extreme political ideology.

(Note 5) To end: As someone who has produced anti-racism resources for schools (see link to the film 'Only Human' Note 6) and who has written books and articles on this topic, I would urge you to seek out groups providing educational outreach work along liberal-humanist principles (these include Equiano Project and Don't Divide Us, Debating Matters to name a few). As I write this deputation (for submission late in May) my FOI request to see the school training materials is overdue. I cannot verify the nature and extent of its CRT approach. But I trust this committee has scrutinised the training and will justify it by offering the explanations I've outlined above.

(There follows two A4 sides of supplementary material in support of my deputation - Adrian Hart et al deputation to CYPs committee 14<sup>th</sup> June).

Footnote (i) The council's schools *Strategy* can be viewed here: <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s156944/Anti-racist%20schools.pdf>. The reluctance of the council to give me sight of the schools training materials currently in use means the extent that a "CRT approach" permeates these materials is unclear. As with the mandatory anti-racism training given to BHCC employees and voluntary training offered to councillors, the term 'Critical Race Theory' is invariably not used. Indeed, many of those who promote ideas of a structural or systemic racism (rooted in white privilege/supremacy/whiteness) deliberately avoid the label of CRT (R DiAngelo does this but is no less an exponent of CRT). The "CRT approach" is the description of schools training the council uses here: <https://www.beem.org.uk/Event/128270> and tallies with the approach outlined in the *Strategy* (which references self-described critical race theorists such as David Gillborn and Vini Lander). My purpose is not to object to CRT itself (but I do regard it as a pernicious racialising ideology). I object to your use of it and seek CYPs agreement that it is wrong for CRT be taught as *fact* in our city's state maintained schools.

### **The CRT approach is dogma.**

Although it describes itself as a scholarly field CRT disqualifies itself from accepted academic norms. Like the broader field of *critical social justice* ('intersectionality' being its core concept), CRTs claim of an omnipotent, largely invisible, often unconscious racism cannot be falsified by facts, evidence or reason. The tools to do so, asserts CRT, are integral to oppressive dominant discourses and therefore invalid. With the existence of 'white systemic racism' presented as a given, CRT is closer to a religion in that it demands we embrace its interpretations (of 'lived experience', of 'microaggression') as equal to evidence of racism; we must accept that racism is the survival strategy of whiteness, that this social condition is ordinary and ubiquitous (it needs no proof; its manifestations are proof of their root cause). Whereas an academic discipline *invites falsification*, CRT presents an article of faith – it merely invites conversion to the task of dismantling racism in ways prescribed by CRT. Our failure to see 'the truth' is, therefore, a failure to break free of social conditioning, to wake up to reality (to be 'woke') and to see what CRT sees. Today, in public-life, fear of being accused of racism is palpable. My ardent hope is that BHCC councillors (CRT 'true believers', those fearful, those for whom the implications of this are only just dawning) will at least unite in recognising that love it or loath it **the CRT faith cannot justifiably be taught as fact in schools**. In fairness to CRT, I have summarised an explanation of CRT *in the words of Prof Gillborn and others*; it can be found here:

<http://www.adrianhart.com/critical-race-theory-in-its-own-words/> )

### **Colour-blindness = racism blindness: The caricature of CRTs critics.**

Pre-empting those who would deflect from my argument that teaching CRT is unsuitable for schools I add this: Many exponents *and* critics of CRT accuse one another of caricaturing what each has to say. Both camps include commentators left and right who battle to attack or defend CRT (one of Britain's most vociferous critics of CRT in education is well known to some at BHCC – the Marxist academic Dave Hill was a councillor in Brighton/East Sussex across the 1970s and 80s. Hill ran as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate for Kempton in 2010s parliamentary elections). His various exchanges with Britain's pre-eminent CRT scholar David Gillborn are well known to educationalists). In the minds of many conservative academics CRT is itself a product of Marxism (they deduce this from CRTs lineage to the 1920s Frankfurt School). **However, CRT proponents and classical liberal critics agree on one thing:** the concept of 'race' as applied to skin-colour is a social construct without any scientific basis. Critical race theorists, however, reinstate a colour-coded view of 'race'. They insist racism is ingrained into whiteness, endemic in the culture, imprinted on the consciousness of every individual (thus, challenging individual instances of prejudice is futile - *the entire social hierarchy must be overturned*). So long as we fail to see endemic racism as CRT sees it, our liberal universalist dreams of a colour-blind future – like those of Martin Luther King – are at best naïve

and at worst a refusal to see colour at all and, as such, the hallmark of a racism-denier. **This YouTube clip offers a succinct illustration of the issue raised by my deputation and one example of how its caricatured:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSqnbe0JMWA>.

This exchange between a headteacher and the CEO of think-tank 'Race on the Agenda' (ROTA) followed a controversial speech by equalities minister Kemi Badenoch. Badenoch makes a similar point to mine albeit with a sharper emphasis on how teaching CRT as fact is against the law. In response to the headteacher (who agrees with Badenoch), the ROTA CEO simply assumes any objection to CRT (and by extension Black Lives Matter who adopt the CRT outlook) must represent a denial of the existence of racism. In a crude, simplified form, CRT is imagined as a mere observation of this obvious reality. Objecting to the teaching of CRT in schools as *fact* is, therefore, absurd because the existence of racism *is a fact*. Has CYPS – poorly advised by officers - taken the same superficial view of CRT?

*Footnote (ii)* Emailed reply from Cllr Clare, May 11. Don't Divide Us, responding to an article I wrote (<https://dontdivideus.com/race-in-the-city-an-anti-democratic-anti-educational-practice/>), sent a letter to BHCC May 6: <https://dontdivideus.com/letter-re-crt-based-anti-racism-in-brighton-hove-schools/>. Cllr Clare replies: '[the *Strategy*] references and makes use of critical race theory, but this is just one approach to responding to and preventing racism in Brighton & Hove schools'.

*Footnote (iii)* Because violations of s406/7 are frequently ignored and the law unenforced, BHCC lawyers perhaps felt no obligation to mention this to CYPS. Moreover, while some analysis of Badenoch's claims view the matter as a storm in a teacup (because teachers always strive for 'balance' in what they educate see: TES *Can what you teach land you in trouble with the law?*) this unlikely to apply to training. BHCC propose teacher/pupil/parents be *trained* in CRT worldviews from nursery up (these are not education topics investigating CRT alongside other views but rather the inculcation of CRT as an articulating principle for all that takes place in schools). As such, the breach of these laws is serious and actionable although, thankfully, given teachers are being compelled, they are not directly subject to s406/7 (teaching unions would do well to take a stand though).

*Footnote (iv)* 'Racial Literacy' will antagonise friendships between white and non-white children as notions of white privilege and black/brown victimhood foster division. BHCC would do well to look into liberal-universalist schools workshops (Debating Matters, The Equiano Project are just a few of the groups offering this and my own film resource is free online – see below).

*Footnote (v)* See p218 <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s156944/Anti-racist%20schools.pdf>

*Footnote (vi)* The Nov 9 officer report states that members of BHECC and a consultant devised the strategy. Self-selecting and like-minded over CRT, they cannot, democratically, speak for the whole city. Moreover, if BHCC claim the strategy is BAME-led then educators 'of colour' excludes 'white other' minority ethnic residents. The council is elected to represent all citizens, including the majority of parents white or non-white (they were not consulted). TECC July 29 2020 minutes (16.1) indicates that "moving fast" and avoiding compounding "harm" (harm caused by asking?) meant "no consultation was needed".

**About me:** I am the author of books and articles on 'race' and the deficiencies of top-down 'official' anti-racism. I am a veteran of left-wing anti-racism campaigns (*East London Workers Against Racism*), a former London FE teacher and a community filmmaker who, in 2006, made an anti-racism video resource for Essex schools – watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqyXS5wp6ls>. I write about this film *Only Human*, last year's Channel 4 CRT in schools doc here: <http://www.adrianhart.com/keep-critical-race-theory-out-of-the-classroom/>. I have lived in Brighton for 19 years, worked in its schools, stood as a councillor (my son was born in Brighton and currently educated here) and is studying for A-Levels. I am a supporter of the group **Don't Divide Us:** <https://dontdivideus.com/>