

George Floyd protests: Toppled statue of slave trader Edward Colston retrieved from harbour

Bristol City Council says the monument is being taken to "a secure location" and will later form part of its museums collection.

🕒 Thursday 11 June 2020 10:21, UK

BLACK LIVES MATTER

GEORGE FLOYD



Slaver statue pulled from harbour



Why you can trust Sky News

The toppled statue of slave trader Edward Colston, which was thrown into Bristol Harbour after being pulled down by Black Lives Matter protesters, has been retrieved by the city council.

The local authority tweeted it had been fished out and was being taken to "a secure location before later forming part of our museums collection".

"As we run a working harbour, the statue needed to be removed," it added.

Bristol protesters pull down slave trader statue

It comes as another council considers taking down a statue on Poole Quay of Robert Baden-Powell - a British Army officer and founder of the worldwide Scout movement - following concerns about his actions while in the military and "Nazi sympathies".

A statement from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on Wednesday evening had said it would be removed on Thursday to "minimise the risk of any public disorder" and put into "safe storage".

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But Mark Howell, deputy leader of the council, told Sky News it would not be coming down today.

The Robert Baden-Powell statue in Poole is on an activists' hit list of monuments they want removed

"Police have advised us it is on a target list of protesters to attack," he said.

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"We are considering whether to remove the statue. We think it is sensible in the short term, just to protect the statue."

He added: "I don't link this to the protests. He did an enormous amount of good. He created an organisation that has brought

people from different ethnic backgrounds, races and religions together, and we are very proud of that... and we want to keep him here in the long term.

"That means we have to protect him in the short term, which is why we are considering temporarily removing him."

Sky's Enda Brady, who is in Poole, said there is a lot of support for Baden-Powell. "People here are telling us they want the statue to stay," he said.

'A slow removal of black history'

Colston made his fortune off the back of the slave trade in the 17th century and helped build schools, churches and homes for the poor in Bristol.

The statue was yanked off its plinth and spray painted before it was dumped in the harbour after thousands signed a petition calling for it to be removed.

Demonstrations supporting the **Black Lives Matter** movement have been taking place across the UK since the death of **George Floyd** during his arrest by a white police officer in the US two weeks ago.

There have since been increasing demands to remove the legacy of racism and colonialism from institutions, including monuments of controversial historical figures.

Business minister Nadhim Zahawi told Sky News on Wednesday that "any slave trader should not have a statue".

Calls for controversial statues to be removed

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Activists have drawn up a list of statues they want to see removed on a website called "[Topple the Racists](#)".

As well as monuments to former prime ministers and leading figures from Britain's colonial past, targets include pub and street signs and demands to even rename a school and hospital.

The public can add suggestions - and an interactive map gives the locations as well as a description of each memorial.

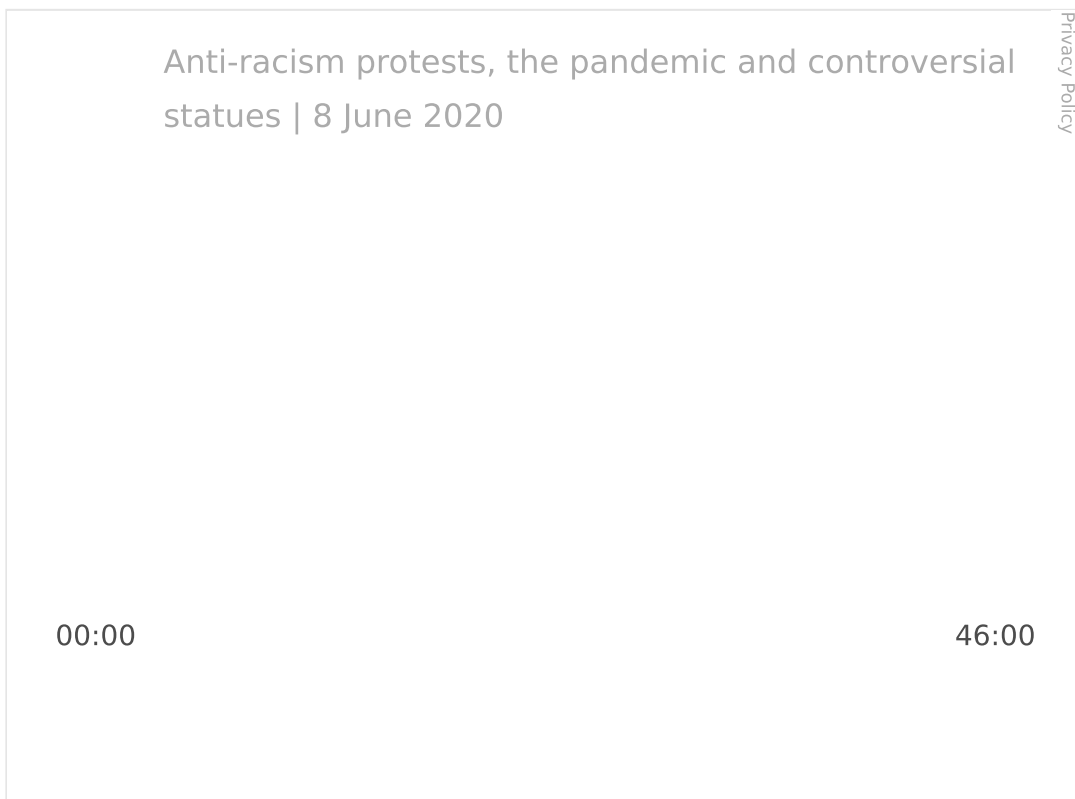
Labour councils across England and Wales have pledged to begin reviewing such monuments in their areas, and a review of landmarks in the capital including murals, street art, road names, statues and other memorials has been announced by the newly formed Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.

He added: "I wouldn't be breaking the law to take statues down, it should be done through our democratic process.

"This country is a democracy, a proud democracy and it should be up to local people to decide what they want to do with that statue and any other statue."

Home Secretary Priti Patel had described the toppling of the Colston statue as "utterly disgraceful", while Geoff Palmer, a professor emeritus in the School of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, told Sky News the removal of history should be carefully considered.

"I think it's a slow removal of history, and part of that is black history," he said.



London landmarks review after protests

Race and Revolution: Is Change Going to Come?

Sky News will broadcast a global debate show on Tuesday night at 8pm - looking at the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter protests, and examining institutional racism and how we fix it.

If you would like to be part of our virtual audience, and have a chance of putting a question to our panel, please send your name, location and question to newsdebates@sky.uk.

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