Dear Cllr Thomas,

We are writing to you concerning the replacement of the statue of Sir Thomas Picton within City Hall. We wish to propose a community-led solution which celebrates the life of Louisa Calderon, instead.

We undoubtedly find ourselves in a momentous time; events across the globe have provided an opportunity to re-assess race relations in our communities and address the United Kingdom’s colonial past. While statues of slave traders continue to be taken down around the world, the question of what is to be done with the empty plinths left behind by these statues and how to address their history is undoubtedly posed. These are questions that should be answered by the communities in which these statues have long stood. Indeed, in the case of the statue of Picton, residents of Cardiff ought to have a say.

We propose replacing the statue of Picton with an artwork of Louisa Calderon, his most famous victim who until now has not had justice for Picton’s crimes against her.

Louisa was a 14-year-old ‘Mulatto’ girl who, having been accused of aiding another man in a house robbery, was tortured, and held in chains for 8 months. Prior to this, she had been kept as a ‘mistress’ by a white slave owner since the age of 11. The gory details of her torture are well documented in literature. The torture was signed off by the then governor of Trinidad, Picton, at the request of one the island’s most influential planters, Begorrat. Picton, being the first tried for misconduct in the exercise of his official duties in service abroad, was found guilty but never sentenced, and later acquitted.

Louisa travelled to the UK and spoke in court, despite her fighting spirit and bravery, she did not see justice and disappeared into historical obscurity. It is time to set things right.

Statues on public display should reflect, at the very least, the embodied ideals of society. We believe in a Wales that makes amends for the past, that protects children from sexual abuse and harm, and that feels just as much as we do for Louisa Calderon. Our monuments should reflect this.

In this regard, we believe the most appropriate course of action should begin with the community taking an active part in this discussion. We believe that replacing the statue of
Picton with that of Louisa Calderon would be the best course of action for the community. It is a statement of intent and commitment to publicly addressing Wales and the UK’s colonial history. It is also a statement of courage and determination on the part of the council to uphold the values that our society stands for today. Those that have been victimised and silenced in the past will not be silenced anymore. On the contrary, let the council demonstrate its readiness to lead, bringing to light to historical and present wrongs and showing the way forward towards a more equal and just future.

We hope you will find our proposal most agreeable.

Signed:

2. Fadhili Maghiya 34. Hannah Sheppard 67. Izzy McLeod
5. Daouda Conte 37. Cath Mulogo 70. Hoda Alshaibani
8. Aileen Burmeister 40. Emma Westcott 73. Tamunodokubo
10. Wanitta Adzangoa 42. Kelsey Gauchi 75. Shoruk Nekeb
12. Frank Kamau 44. Amelia May Welsh 77. Williams-Baffoe
13. Abu-Bakr Madden 45. Lloyd James 78. Nicole Ready
15. Dr Donald Mlewa 47. Aimee Lewis 80. Bakheit
17. Vanessa Fada 49. Datsyl Wilson 82. Chloe Giles
   Uwayirigira 53. Olivia Brooks 86. Thomas Ogun
   Aimufua 55. Lowri Williams 88. Nicola Smyth
23. Sibani Roy 56. Lauren James 89. Aliya Khan
24. Donald Mutale 57. Sue Mclucas 90. Sara Ibrahim
27. Uzo Iwobi OBE 60. Donna Jones 93. Hilda Phiri
30. Beth Kid 63. Andrew Ogun 96. Elnaz Rezaee
31. Peter Gilbey 64. Andrew Ogun 97. Laiwah Hoki
32. Cat Jones 65. Wanitta Adzangoa 98. Laila Alkafu
34. Hoda Alshaibani 67. Farhan Faleh 100. Safia Elshafieh