

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE HELD
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON
THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 2:00PM

Present: -

Councillor D Sage - Chairperson

Councillors

H J David
A E Davies
L C Morgan

Councillors

M E J Nott
J C Spanswick

Invitees

Councillor N Clarke
Councillor C A Green
Councillor M Gregory
Councillor R M James
Councillor M Thomas
Councillor M Wilkins

Officers

D MacGregor - Assistant Chief Executive Corporate Development and Partnerships
L Smith - Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities)
C Branford - Cabinet and Committee Officer

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:-

Councillor P A Evans - Prior commitments
Councillor P A Hacking - Unwell
Councillor R D Jenkins - Unwell

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2009 were approved as a true and accurate record.

26 PROGRESS ON THE DRAFT CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships introduced the report, explaining that its purpose was to seek approval of the Authority's draft Corporate Equality Scheme for public consultation. He outlined the consultation process as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report, and advised that the consultation event hosted by the Bridgend Equality Forum was scheduled to take place on 2 March

2009. He explained that the draft scheme would come back before the Committee at its next meeting, before going to Cabinet and finally to Council for formal adoption. He advised that a summary of the scheme, covering its key aspects would be provided to local and national organisations as well as to town and community councils together with a questionnaire. He added that there would also be an opportunity for engagement via the BCBC website.

In response to a question from Members, the Policy and Performance Management Officer advised that, so far, twelve organisations had confirmed their attendance at the consultation event. She explained that trade union consultation would take place via the monthly meetings with the Human Resources department, and agreed to check whether these also involved a teaching union. The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships added that written submissions could be provided by those organisations who were unable to attend the consultation event.

The Policy and Performance Management Officer introduced the draft Corporate Equality Scheme, explaining that her intention had been to produce a user friendly document for the public with a view to being as accessible as possible. She explained that she was liaising with local groups to produce an easy-read version of the scheme.

She advised that Appendices 2 and 3 would be developed and agreed internally over the coming month, but that much work had been done already on the equality action plan. She emphasised that it was a work in progress which could be updated as and when necessary to respond to changes in the local community.

Members suggested the following amendments to the draft Corporate Equality Scheme:

- P.5 - paragraph 3, remove reference to the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl in the final sentence.
- P.5 - final paragraph, add the words "and management" after the words "the Executive" in the final sentence.
- P.5 - paragraph 3, add "schools and day-centres" to the list in the final sentence.
- P.9 - paragraph 2, in the section 'Our wider legal responsibilities', remove the words "people under 25 years" in the brackets following the words "Children and Young People", and the words "people aged over 50 years" in the brackets following the words "older people".
- P.11 - bullet points 1 and 2 to be amended in terms of tense.
- P.12 - bullet point 5, be re-worded to read: "Physical access has been improved to a number of Council buildings".
- P.13 - paragraph 2, sentence 2 the word 'Council' be replaced by 'Cabinet'.
- P.16 - section 1, bullet point 3 be re-worded as follows: "19% of the population of the County Borough are children aged under 15 years".
- P.16 - section 2, bullet point 1, to be checked for consistency with the data source.
- PP. 16-18 - An explanatory sentence be included to the effect that the figures given derive from the 2001 Census and that BCBC is aware that changes have taken place in the population since that date.

Members asked for further information on how BCBC's website would be made accessible to disabled people. The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships explained that BCBC had recently purchased a 'browsealoud' IT package which enabled visually impaired and blind people to access websites via software that reads web-pages aloud to them. He explained that this

package was being tested at present and was part of the ongoing website improvements. He agreed to arrange for a demonstration of this technology to be provided to Members. The Policy and Performance Management Officer advised that the authority would be consulting with a group of disabled people to test the new look website and give feedback.

In response to a question from Members on the work of the Valleys Regional Equality Council, the Policy and Performance Management Officer advised that the body had successfully made a transition from a race equality council to a regional pan-equality council and that it was currently seeking funding to assist it in fulfilling its expanded remit from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government. The Chairperson agreed, as the BCBC Member representative on this body to provide feedback from its meetings to the Cabinet Equalities Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Equalities Committee approves the draft Corporate Equality Scheme for public consultation subject to the amendments detailed above.

The meeting closed at 2.50pm.