

CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE - 4 JANUARY 2010

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON MONDAY, 4 JANUARY 2010 AT 10.00AM

Present: -

Councillor D Sage - Chairperson

Councillors

H J David  
A E Davies

Councillors

L C Morgan  
M E J Nott  
J C Spanswick

Invitees:

Councillor D A D Brett  
Councillor N Clarke  
Councillor C A Green  
Councillor P A Hacking  
Councillor R D Jenkins  
Councillor M Thomas  
Councillor M Wilkins

Officers:

D MacGregor - Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships  
L Hutton - Transformation and Development Manager - Human Resources  
L Smith - Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities)  
J Davies - Team Leader, Community Safety  
C Branford - Cabinet and Committee Officer

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:-

Councillor P A Evans - Attending a funeral  
Councillor M Gregory - Holiday

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

58 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2009 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the words, "and would be followed by a peer assessment process" being removed from paragraph 2 of minute number 54.

59 NOTES OF THE CORPORATE EQUALITIES MANAGEMENT GROUP

The notes of the meeting of the Corporate Equalities Management Group held on 14 September and 19 November 2009 were noted, subject to the following amendment

to the former: in minute number 8 paragraph 4, the words “collating information” be replaced with “providing an overview”.

60 COMMUNITY COHESION

The Team Leader Community Safety presented a report the purpose of which was to inform the Committee about how the Authority was responding to national strategic developments on community cohesion. He explained that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had been allocated £69,248 under the new annual Community Cohesion Fund made available by the Welsh Assembly Government. The fund was made up of a mixture of existing funding for Communities First areas and new monies. BCBC were required to use the funding by the end of March 2010 and it had been intended to carry out a mapping exercise as a first step in this process and a submission had been made for VALREC to carry out this exercise but WAG was yet to approve this. Safer Bridgend had invited bids from a range of partners in the voluntary and public sectors and these bids would be considered by the Community Safety Partnership Finance Group on 12 January before a spending plan was submitted to WAG.

The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships advised that at a recent meeting of the Community Safety Partnership, the Communities First representatives had indicated that they did not feel that hate crimes were a particular problem in the County Borough but this impression was not borne out by the crime statistics presented by the Team Leader, Community Safety. These statistics also underlined the need for a mapping exercise which would give a better understanding of the nature of the incidents, identify potential issues and enable the available funding to be targeted effectively.

Members agreed that whilst this situation was not satisfactory it was important to work with the police to achieve a better understanding of the incidents and not to be alarmist or complacent about the situation in Bridgend County Borough.

The Policy and Performance Management Officer advised the Committee that South Wales Police (SWP) had acknowledged that they needed to be more proactive in tackling hate crimes in local communities. The SWP had also recognised the need to keep the Council informed of any issues in local communities.

Members expressed concern at the apparent lack of awareness by community groups of the existence of hate crimes in their communities. The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships explained that there was a need for better information sharing amongst all the agencies involved in making Bridgend's communities safer. He advised that most complainants appeared to report any incidents directly to the police and would not necessarily be aware of the existence of other agencies that could provide support and advice. The Policy and Performance Management Officer confirmed that a representative from Communities First would be attending meetings of the Community Cohesion Group in the future. She confirmed that the Committee would receive information about hate crime in the annual monitoring report on the Corporate Equality Scheme, although the Committee should be mindful of the need to anonymise the information.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the information provided in the report, and reiterated their commitment to tackling all forms of racism and bigotry that existed in Bridgend County Borough.

61 EQUALITIES IN THE BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WORKFORCE

The Transformation and Development Manager, Human Resources presented a report the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with BCBC workforce data as at 30 September 2009. She explained that in Appendix 1a the numbers of casual and relief staff had been categorised separately from the permanent members of staff and this reflected the way in which data was used across the Authority to compile, for example, absence management information. The Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate Development and Partnerships advised that this was more accurate data which now needed to be used to improve workforce planning.

In response to a question on BCBC's responsibilities towards Agency Workers, the Transformation and Development Manager, Human Resources clarified that BCBC had the same Health and Safety responsibilities as for regular employees, but that BCBC did not have any employment law responsibilities towards Agency Workers.

RESOLVED: That the Equalities Committee noted the information provided.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance. On behalf of the Committee the Chairperson also thanked the Transformation and Development Manager, Human Resources for all the work she had done for the Committee and wished her well in her new job.

The meeting closed at 11.00am.