

Bridgend County Borough Council

Report of the Chief Executive

Equalities Committee

21 February 2007

Mainstreaming 'Equalities' into Performance Planning

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Equalities Committee with an update on how the Authority will mainstream equalities into the performance planning process and seek the endorsement of the Committee on the proposals.

2. Background

- 2.1** In October 2005 WAG published new guidance for Local Authorities on the Wales Programme for Improvement (circular 28/2005). This guidance places clear emphasis on equality and sustainability in improvement planning:

“...A failure to ensure equality in service delivery, or a failure to meet needs in a sustainable way, is a failure to perform in a fully effective and efficient way.”

(p.5 WPI Circular 28/2005)

3. Actions to Date

- 3.1** Key to 'mainstreaming' equality into services and employment is ensuring that managers take ownership of equalities issues and account for them fully in their annual Service Business Plans.

Consequently, in December 2006, the Authority's new Performance Management Framework (PMF) and business plan templates were implemented corporately. The PMF and business plan templates were agreed by the Corporate Improvement Group following consultation by the Directorate representatives with their staff. Templates and guidance notes were distributed to Directors and Assistant Directors on 28 December 2006.

The templates are intended as a means to ensure that all Services set out their business plans in a comparable way – so as to aid the Quarterly Business Review process which is due to commence in July 2007. The detailed content of the plans (e.g. priorities for the service, recent key achievements, key challenges facing the service, priority risks, narrative on intended actions etc.) is entirely at the discretion of

the managers responsible for drafting them as they are able to provide expertise in their service areas. The corporate business plan template contains a specific section on 'Equality' (p.7). This will provide services managers with an opportunity to consider and set out how they will address equality Issues that are impacting on their service delivery or workforce. The business plan templates also ask service managers to address sustainable development and efficiencies.

- 3.2** Completed draft business plans must be submitted to the Policy and Performance Management Unit (PPMU) by 28 February for quality assurance checks to be undertaken. As part of the quality business review process, PPMU will advise on suggested content where, for example, insufficient narrative has been included in submitted draft plans. The Corporate Equalities Co-ordinator will be involved in this process and will provide basic guidance via the intranet to assist managers in the completion of their business plans. The PPMU will, also, comment and advise on performance targets and indicators to be included in section 5 of the completed plans. This will give the service managers to identify any equality targets or indicators.

The business plans, once completed by the service managers, will be signed off by the appropriate Cabinet member. The respective managers will be challenged on the content of their plans as part of the Quarterly Business Review process, which commences in July 2007.

4. Legal and financial implications

This report contributes to the Authority meeting its statutory duties on equality and there are no financial implications arising.

5. Recommendations

That the Equalities Committee endorse the proposals for the mainstreaming of equalities into the performance planning process of the Authority.

Jo Farrar
Chief Executive
21 February 2007

Contact Officer:
L Smith, Corporate Equalities Co-ordinator
Email: smithlj@bridgend.gov.uk

Background papers:

- Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales
- Wales Programme of Improvement Guidance for Local Authorities 2005 (Circular 28/2005)