

# **Bridgend County Borough Council**

## **Report of the Chief Executive**

### **Equalities Committee**

**21 February 2007**

#### **Proposals on Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People**

##### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek the support of the Equalities Committee for the development of the Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People.

##### **2. Background**

###### **2.1** This proposal forms part of the Authority's Corporate Equality Policy and Plan and Disability Equality Scheme which includes commitments to:

- To work with our partner organisations to have a more inclusive county borough;
- To develop an inclusive consultation process that improves the council's understanding of the needs of service users and staff;
- To work with equality organisations and the voluntary sector to support the empowerment of local equality groups
- To encourage and support people from diverse backgrounds to participate in the public life of their community

The establishment of a disability coalition or advocacy support service, that is independent of formal health and social care services, was identified as a priority as part of the Bridgend Health and Social Care Disability Strategy 2005-2008. To take this forward funding was provided by Bridgend Local Health Board to Bridgend Association Voluntary Organisation to work with Disability Wales to set up a local coalition for disabled people.

###### **2.2** The coalition has now recruited a core membership and has adopted the aims and objectives set out at Appendix 1 of this report. Unfortunately the current funding will be coming to an end in April 2007 just as the coalition is beginning to become established and enjoy local support. At the 'Have your say' event in November organised by the Authority, Bridgend Local Health Board and Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust over 20 people who attended the event expressed an interest in joining such a coalition. Further the Authority's Corporate Access Improvement Planning Group have identified the importance of consulting with local disabled people through a local pan-disability

organisation as vital to the success of its plans to improve physical access to the Authority's buildings and thus make our services more inclusive to the whole community we serve.

### **3. Proposal for continuing support to the Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People**

**3.1** Following a review of relevant legislation there is a clear need to establish a local pan-disability organisation that will enable the Authority and its public sector partners to involve local disabled people in decisions that directly affect them.

**3.2** Also following a review of other disability coalitions in operation across the UK, and specifically those in neighbouring local authorities, it has been concluded that the continued support of the coalition would be beneficial in a number of ways:

- *Disability Equality Scheme* – The Coalition could perform a vital function in helping shape our statutory equality scheme and contribute significantly to the statutory duty to involve disabled people, while also monitoring the effectiveness of its delivery.
- *Bridgend Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)* – The Coalition could perform a very useful role linking with the LSP, which is the strategic body bringing together the local public, private and voluntary sectors to tackle joint priorities. Equality and inclusivity is a specific priority in the vision. The Forum might provide a means for voicing disability equality issues to the LSP, and might also act as conduit for information from the LSP to the local community.
- *The Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales* – The Coalition could perform a peer role in monitoring the Authority's progress towards the standard, and also meeting the specific requirements of the Standard in terms of community engagement.

**3.3** It is proposed that the Authority continue the current funding arrangements via BAVO and the level of funding currently being provided by the Health and Social Care Disability Strategy , £4,500, be provided through the Office of the Chief Executive. The funding arrangements will be reviewed after 1 year to ensure that the coalition and its activities are sustainable and making a positive contribution to the Authority's disability equality objectives.

### **4. Legal and financial implications**

This report contributes to the Authority meeting its statutory duties on disability equality and to achieving level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales as part of the Authority's policy agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 3.3 above.

## **5. Recommendations**

That the Equalities Committee approve the funding arrangements set out above and note the aims of objectives of the Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People (attached at Appendix 1).

**Jo Farrar**  
**Chief Executive**  
**21 February 2007**

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### **Background papers:**

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales

## **Appendix 1**

### **Aims and Objectives of Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People**

#### **AIMS**

- The overall aim of the Coalition is to promote the equality, rights, and choice in every aspect of life for disabled people living in Bridgend County Borough.
- These aspects will include:
  - Full Access to our environment
  - A fully accessible Transport System
  - Technical Aids - Equipment
  - Accessible/adapted Housing
  - Personal Assistance
  - Inclusive Education and Training
  - An adequate Income
  - Equal opportunities for Employment
  - Appropriate and accessible Information
  - Advocacy (towards self-advocacy)
  - Counselling
  
- Promote and work inline with the Social Model of Disability
- To be an independent organisation run and controlled by Disabled people.
- To promote the full inclusion of all Disabled People living in the Bridgend County Borough area.
  
- To be an independent focal point for disabled people to unite as a force to promote high standards of services and developments.
- To represent the views of Disabled People living in the Bridgend County Borough and speak out on issues of concern.
- To work in partnership in the exchange of information and raise awareness of local and national Disability issues.
  
- To be recognised as a body to be properly consulted at all times on Disabled People's issues.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Work with statutory and voluntary organisations to bring about change

- Challenge discrimination and inequality
- Provide a means for local issues to be raised and challenged
- Raise public awareness of local disability issues
- Promote the Coalition through a variety of means
- To build a strong, active and informed membership, who agrees with the social model of disability, enabling the Coalition to achieve its aims.
- To empower Disabled People to achieve their personal ambitions.
- To regularly review the Coalition's vision, aims, objectives and strategic/business plan.
- To encourage the participation of Disabled People from groups currently under-represented in the Coalition.
- To be non-party political.