

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Equalities Management Group
Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend
Wednesday 2 July 2008

Meeting commenced at 11.30am

Present:

D MacGregor (Chair)	- Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
B Davies	- Customer Services Manager (Resources Directorate)
G Ennis	- Head of Central Administration (Communities Directorate)
L Hutton	- Employee Resourcing Manager (Resources Directorate)
L Jones	- Children & Young People's Framework Manager (Children's Directorate)
L Smith	- Policy and Performance Management Officer (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
L Lynham	- Business Support Officer (Corporate Development & Partnerships)

1. Apologies

J Brooks - Professional Support Officer (Wellbeing Directorate)

J McKirdle - Head of Service - Housing (Communities Directorate)

2. Minutes of previous meeting (16 May 2008)

Approved.

3. Matters arising

The Group were advised that the revised Welsh Language Scheme is due to be presented to Cabinet in August and to Council as soon as possible after that. It was noted that Corporate Management Board had raised points about the role of the Monitoring Officer and the scheme would be amended accordingly.

4. Independent Equality Review

The Assistant Chief Executive led a discussion on the report that had been circulated to members of the Group previously. He thanked the officers who had taken part in the project for their contribution. The Group accepted the main findings and recommendations of the report subject to clarification on some minor points. These included:

- Risks of non-compliance – There were risks identified in terms of the equality and Welsh language schemes and equal pay review. These needed to be progressed and up-dated to ensure compliance with all relevant equality duties to mitigate the risks of litigation and resource waste.
- Vision and Leadership - A high level of commitment to the principles of equality and diversity coupled with a strong desire to deliver fair services

were evidenced among interviewees and in policies. However, the review demonstrated that this commitment was not being used to inform service delivery.

- Accountability and responsibility - Good practice was evidenced but clearer methods for accounting for equality and diversity are needed to be put in place to capture this. The Corporate Equality Management Group (CEMG) and the Cabinet Equalities Committee need to have access to better management information.
- Knowledge and understanding – This appeared patchy and was often based on personal or service experiences rather than a corporate approach. There was varying levels of knowledge on the different equality strands and based around the anti-discrimination legislation with very little understanding of the new ‘positive’ equality duties.
- Training - There was a universal call for training and development on equality and diversity to address the issues raised and mitigates the risks identified in the review.

Following an extensive discussion the Group agreed the following objectives and actions:

- a) That the findings and recommendations form the basis of the Group’s next meeting in the form of a facilitated workshop with the review’s author. It was agreed that the *Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities)* arrange the workshop. The workshop should focus on:
 - Development of a clear Vision Statement on equality and diversity
 - Development of training across the Authority, focusing on high risk service areas and tailored to be relevant to each area;
 - Data collection by the authority and how it could be better used to inform equality actions and outcomes
 - Collection of case studies of good and bad practice (based on the examples given on page 23 of the review).

It was noted that the Corporate Equality Management Group and the Cabinet Equalities Committee would need to be consulted on the content of the training plan to ensure it meets identified needs. It was agreed that the independent specialist should have input into the equality and diversity module of the new Management Development Programme. Further that the Employee Resourcing Manager and Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) would work with Directorates and develop a training programme to fit in with current service requirements.

In addition, the Assistant Chief Executive and Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) look at current inter-directorate data capture and information sharing mechanisms.

It was agreed that the Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) liaise with Group representatives to gather potential case studies that could be used in training. It was noted that the case studies would also help the Authority meet

the requirements of the new Equality Improvement Framework and provide evidence for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

- b) That a Single Equality Scheme be drafted as a priority taking into account feedback on the draft Race Equality Scheme.
- c) That the Equal Pay Review be progressed and completed.
- d) That the revised Welsh Language Scheme action plan be implemented to ensure that the Authority meets its obligations under the Welsh Language Act.
- e) That resources be identified and ring fenced in order to help carry out these objectives.
- f) That the report form part of the Authority's evidence base for the Equality Improvement Framework;

4. Update on Equality Impact Assessment

The Group discussed the priority list of EIAs and the following was noted:

- a) That an update on the Wellbeing EIA list would shortly be presented to the Group;
- b) That the Youth Information Service should be included;
- c) That Waste Management and Development Control should be included;
- d) That the potential for a EIA to be carried out on Procurement and the Registrar Service should be investigated as these are areas of particular concern for the Equality and Human Rights Commission and UK Government;
- e) It was noted that consideration should be given to the Authority rolling out its EIA programme from small front-line services and then working its way up to larger-scale service areas as this would bring about more immediate service improvements for customers;
- f) That the Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) explore a 'shadowing' scheme for relevant officers to have opportunities to learn from one another while the EIA work is being carried out;

The Customer Services Manager provided feedback on the pilot EIA carried out on the customer service centre and the customer charter. The following points were made:

- That the process had taken less than 2 hours to complete and the form had been reasonably easy to follow;
- That some minor changes were needed to the wording;
- That carrying out the EIA in the context of how a service meets the new Customer Service Charter could be carried out on those services linking to

the Customer Service Centre as this would help to identify areas requiring corporate improvement and ensure consistent responses to customer needs.

5. Update on Race Equality Scheme

The Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) reported that many other authorities had difficulties meeting the statutory deadline to publish a new scheme by the end of May 2008 due to the local elections. An announcement had been posted on the Authority's website and the Commission had been notified.

The Group considered the draft scheme and the following comments were noted:

- That the format was acceptable but may need to be amended to reflect the findings and recommendations of the Equality Review;
- That meeting the statutory requirements on employment and workforce monitoring presented a considerable workload and the Employee Resourcing Manager expressed concern about capacity to meet this workload;
- That the Authority would need to take action to be able to respond to the increasing need for minority language translation in line with the new Customer Service Charter.
- That the proposal to produce a '*Welcome Pack for Migrant Workers*' would require further consideration and an assessment of resource implications.
- That the details of the scheme's action plan are agreed with each Directorate.

6. Any Other Business

None.

Next meeting scheduled for 3 September 2008.