

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE
DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS**

12th JANUARY 2009

**REPORT ON PROGRESS ON THE CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME
AND RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMME**

1. Purpose of report: -

1.1 To up-date the Cabinet Equalities Committee on progress on the Authority's commitment to publish a Corporate Equality Scheme and to put in place an equality training programme.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority: -

2.2 The information set out in this report identifies the action being taken to mitigate the risk of failure to meet the Council's statutory duties in respect of equalities. As equalities is a cross-cutting issue this information will support all of the Council's corporate priorities.

3. Background:-

3.1 In June 2008 an independent review of the Authority's existing equality and diversity policies and practices was carried out as part of the authority's commitment to attain '*improving authority*' status under the new *Equality Improvement Framework for Welsh Local Government* (EIF).

3.2 This review identified a call for training and development on equality across the Directorates and a need to improve the level of knowledge and understanding across services of the new 'positive' equality duties.

3.3 The development of such an equality training programme will help the Authority to satisfy the '*capability*' element of the Equality Improvement Framework which calls on the local authority to evidence how it will build organisational capacity to meet the needs of equality improvement.

4. Current situation / proposal :-

- 4.1 In early September the Corporate Equalities Management Group agreed to develop a training programme to support the delivery of the customer service charter targeting management and front-line staff, including schools.
- 4.2 The following training activities have been arranged in order to achieve this outcome:
- **General Equality Awareness for staff** – In the coming year training will be made available to priority groups of managers and staff in front-line service areas across the Authority's Directorates. The training will make sure that staff are aware of the Authority's equality duties in services and the workplace and help them to understand their role in making the Council's services more accessible for its customers. The training will commence in February 2009. Each Directorate will be offered 3 training sessions that are designed to put their learning into practice with service based case studies.
 - **Members Equality Training** – Members will be offered an opportunity to attend short training sessions in January 2009 that will make them aware of their equality duties and their role in making the Council's services more accessible and responsive to its customers and employees.
 - **Equality Training for School Governors** - Governors from local schools will be offered an opportunity to attend a pilot training course in Spring 2009. The course will make them aware of their specific equality duties and help them to understand their role in making schools accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the training programme is reviewed and further training be developed to support the delivery of the Corporate Equality Scheme when it is adopted by Council.
- 4.4 A proposed timetable for the publication of Corporate Equality Scheme is set out in **Appendix 1**. The timetable includes a proposal that the Cabinet Equalities Committee agree the draft Corporate Equality Scheme prior to wider consultation on its contents.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules:-

- 5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but does support the effective implementation of the Council's statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.

6. Legal Implications :-

- 6.1 The proposals set out in this report will help the Authority to comply with statutory provisions of equality and human rights legislation and mitigate the risk of enforcement action and litigation.

7. Financial Implications :-

- 7.1 The proposals set out in this report will be met from existing budgets and will help the Authority to mitigate exposure to risk over its responsibilities in this area.

8. Recommendation: -

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee agree the proposed approach on developing the equality training programme for the Authority
- 8.2 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee agree to have a special meeting arranged on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme prior to wider consultation on its contents.

David MacGregor
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6th January 2009

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10. Background documents:-

- Bridgend County Borough Council Review on Equalities policy, process and practice Review.
- The WLGA Equality Improvement Framework for Welsh Local Government.

Timetable for Publication of Corporate Equality Scheme

| Action | Target Date |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Agree draft Corporate and Directorate Equality Action Plans | By Mid February 2009 |
| Gather baseline data to support Corporate Equality Scheme in line with Equality Measurement Framework | By Mid February 2009 |
| Agree with Cabinet Equality Committee format of draft Corporate Equality Scheme for public consultation | By Mid February 2009 |
| Conduct consultation and involvement activities on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme | By Mid February to end March 2009 |
| Finalise arrangements for monitoring impact in line with equality duties and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress on the Corporate Equality Scheme | By end March 2009 |
| Finalise content of Corporate Equality Scheme | By end March 2009 |
| Submit reports on Corporate Equality Scheme. | By end May 2009 |
| Publication of Corporate Equality Scheme | By end May 2009 |

