

Notes of a meeting of the Corporate Equalities Management Group held in Level 4 Conference Room, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend on 11 June 2009

Meeting commenced at 11.30am

Present:

D MacGregor (Chair)	-	Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
G Ennis	-	Head of Central Administration (Communities Directorate)
L Hutton	-	Transformation & Development Manager (Human Resources section)
J Gregson	-	Children's Partnership Coordinator (Children's Directorate)
J Brooks	-	Professional Support Officer (Health and Wellbeing Directorate)
L Smith	-	Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
R Simmonds	-	Corporate Information Manager (Resources Directorate)
R Crocombe (Notes)	-	Administrative Assistant (Corporate Development & Partnerships)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Children and Young People's Framework Manager and the Customer Services Manager.

2. Notes of last CEMG meeting (19 March 2009)

The notes were approved.

3. Minutes of Cabinet Equalities Committee (CEC) 6th April 2009

CEC had looked at draft Corporate Equality Scheme (CES). This was approved by Cabinet on 26th May.

Naomi Alleyne, Director of Equalities and Social Justice Unit, Welsh Local Government Association, had given a presentation on the Equality Improvement Framework (EIF) and the Welsh Assembly Government's proposals on an All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy.

Agreed action:

- LS to agree with Satwant Pryce, Head of Regeneration and Development, a timetable for carrying out the Equality Impact Assessment on the Disability Facilities Grant programme.

4. Matters arising

Over 40 staff members have applied for the BSL introductory training course. A training provider has been identified and projected training costs have been established which will be funded by relevant service areas. Therefore staff and line managers requesting the training will be required to complete the relevant application forms to show how they will put their learning to use in their work role.

LH informed the Group that some elected Members have expressed interest in the training, but it was felt that the training should be made available in the first instance to staff delivering front-line services. It was recognised that unless the skills were used the training would have limited long-term benefit. In view of this it was agreed that a clear business case would need to be made.

Agreed action:

- LS and LH to check applications received and follow up with applicants to establish business case for training.
- LS to link in with BD with regards to idea of running BSL 'interpretation surgeries' and improving access to services for BSL users.

JG confirmed that she had asked the Children's Director to send a message to heads of service and LEA managers requiring that they ensure relevant staff members participate in the corporate equality and diversity training. It was confirmed that the Children's Director and LS / DRM were in correspondence about this matter. LJ has scheduled the matter for discussion at the Directorate's senior management team meeting on 20th July.

LS confirmed that a response had been sent to the Welsh Assembly Government proposals on '*All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy*' from the Bridgend Local Service Board. Proposals to amend the terms of reference of the Bridgend Equality Forum to respond to this policy development and the UK Government counter-terrorism strategy, notably the 'Prevent' agenda, would be tabled at the next meeting of the Forum on 29th June. LS also confirmed that Cllr Sage had agreed to be nominated as Chair of the Bridgend Equality Forum and that he would be notified of the meeting schedule. There were also plans to amend the terms of reference for the Bridgend Community Cohesion Group.

5. Equality Training Programme

The Group expressed concern that the general equality and diversity awareness training had not been well attended by staff from the Children's Directorate and the Wellbeing Directorate.

JB confirmed that she had tried hard to improve attendance from Wellbeing staff, but that some staff had expressed the view that they were already aware of the issues through other training.

JG confirmed that there were difficulties for school based staff attending courses run during school hours and suggested that attendance may be

improved by running courses evening or inset days. Also that the training package may need to be targeted more specifically to school settings.

LS informed the Group that the evaluation of the general equality awareness training had raised concerns about staff awareness on the Human Rights Act and how it relates to work roles. These concerns need to be considered in the context of related internal policies and procedures that operate in specific service areas. These issues should be considered in the context of the proposal that CEMG representatives work with the PPMO (Equality) to carry out a survey of equality and diversity training needs within their Directorates.

The Group expressed concern about the cost of the multicultural awareness training. This training was arranged by the Resources Directorate to meet additional training needs identified for customer service staff and to supplement the general awareness training. The costs were charged to participating service areas.

Agreed action:

- That the PPMO (Equality) work with Organisational Development to make e-learning training resources on equality and diversity available to support the Corporate Equality Scheme. LH and LS to meet to discuss e-learning options in more detail.
- That CEMG representatives work with the PPMO (Equality) to carry out a equality and diversity training needs survey within their respective Directorates. This will involve the following activities:
 - A detailed report on attendance at the general equality awareness training and the multicultural awareness training by Directorate, service area, work role and cost per head.
 - Additional feedback be sought from attendees and managers on the benefit of the training to work roles. Further it was suggested that those who attended the training should be asked to cascade what they have learned to others within their teams.
 - Information be sought about the equality and human rights content of existing training for staff in education and care settings.
 - LH to coordinate with Clare Holt and LS to circulate information to CEMG representatives.
- CEMG to review progress on training needs survey at the meeting on 14th September. CEMG representatives to agree priority training actions for their relevant directorate to be approved by each directorate management team. CEMG aim will be to develop and implement a training programme by May 2010 in line with the Corporate Equality Scheme.

6. Revised terms of reference for the Cabinet Equality Committee

The Group were advised of revised terms of reference for the Cabinet Equality Committee due to Cabinet on 16th June.

7. Proposals for revised terms of reference for the CEMG

The Group were advised that revised terms of reference for the CEMG to match the amendments to the Cabinet Equality Committee.

Agreed action:

- LS to re-circulate the revised terms of reference to CEMG for them to review and agree.

8. Corporate Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements

The Corporate Equality Scheme includes a commitment to report on the authority's progress each year and to achieve 'improving authority' status under the Equality Improvement Framework for Local Government in Wales. The Corporate Equality Scheme Action Plan sets out the following actions as being required by May 2010:

- Develop a self-assessment process in line with the WLGA Equality Improvement Framework guidance (by December 2009).
- Carry out self-assessment across the authority to identify equality improvement objectives in services.
- Report on findings and make recommendations for improvement as part of Corporate Equality Scheme annual monitoring report.

CEMG were asked to nominate an appropriate officer to project manager the process; to identify officers to design a preliminary self-assessment tool based on the WLGA guidance, linking to existing performance management processes; and agree timescales for delivery.

Agreed action:

- That the newly appointed Policy and Performance Manager, Yuan Shen, should project manage the process.

9. Impact Screening Toolkit

The Group were informed that CMB have approved the combined Impact Screening Toolkit (IST) and workshop following a successful pilot led by the Communities Directorate.

LS clarified that the IST can headline equality issues in a strategy, policy or function. The key aim is to identify whether or not a more detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. The IST workshop involves 4 officers covering the areas of equality, sustainability, health and community safety and a preliminary agreement has been reached on how the workload will be distributed and how the authority can develop a desk-top version of the toolkit and in-house capacity to run the workshops. However it will be necessary to link with the EIA process and the EIA schedule set out in the Corporate Equality Scheme.

Agreed action:

- CEMG representatives to check whether the EIA schedule in the Scheme requires amendment and to inform LS by the end of month.
- Pay and Grading Structure to be removed from the EIA schedule as this will be carried out at a national level.
- LS to meet with JB and DM to discuss the IST and EIA process.
- That consideration be given to developing a desktop version of the IST and EIA toolkits and an e-learning module.

10. Consultation with Bridgend County Borough Citizens' Panel

The Group were informed that a *Neighbourhood and Society* survey will be circulated to the Bridgend County Borough Citizen's Panel to provide the authority and partners with baseline evidence about changes in local people's experiences, perceptions and attitudes on equality and community relations. The survey is based on a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the authority and is based on social attitude survey carried out by the Scottish Parliament and the *'Who do you see? Living together in Wales'* survey carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2008. Some concerns were raised about the phrasing of the questions.

Agreed action:

- DM and LS to discuss the concerns with the contractor.

11. Any other business

None.

Meeting closed 1.30pm