

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**

4th JANUARY 2010

REPORT ON COMMUNITY COHESION

1. Purpose of report: -

1.1 To inform the Cabinet Equalities Committee about how the Authority is responding to national strategic developments on community cohesion.

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 which was recognised in its Corporate Improvement Plan 2008-11.

3. Background:-

3.1 Community Cohesion work is allied to CONTEST (the UK Government Counter Terrorism Strategy) which was re-launched in June 2009. The strategy includes 4 work-streams:

PURSUE	To stop terrorist attacks
PREVENT	To stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
PROTECT	To strengthen our protection against terrorist attack
PREPARE	Where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact

3.2 In response to this the Welsh Assembly Government launched its strategy and action plan on 3rd December 2009, "*Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*" The action plan includes guidance to local authorities and their partners on how to develop local cohesion frameworks. It also provides guidance on undertaking local community mapping, monitoring and evaluation on community cohesion.

- 3.3 To support this work Welsh Assembly Government has created a new annual “*Community Cohesion Fund*”. The size of the Fund for 2010/12 will be agreed in the New Year but the focus of the Fund in 2009/10 is to enable local partnerships to pump prime cohesion work in local communities and to strengthen the links between Community Safety Partnerships and Communities First Partnerships. The new Community Cohesion Fund has been allocated to the 22 Community Safety Partnerships taking into account of the number of Communities First areas covered by the CSP and the allocation for Safer Bridgend for the current year is £69,248.

4. Current situation / proposal :-

- 4.1 The response to this agenda is developing in the following ways:

4.2 Local partnership governance arrangements

The Local Service Board will provide collective leadership based on the Community Strategy theme - *Bright Future, Strong Communities: Enhance every resident’s sense of safety, citizenship and belonging*. The Community Safety Partnership Executive Group has developed a partnership structure to deliver and progress actions on community cohesion and counter-terrorism. The Community Safety Partnership will report back to the Wales CONTEST Board via the South Wales Police Basic Command Unit. The Council’s Corporate Equality Scheme also includes objectives to support national initiatives on community cohesion.

4.3 Multi-agency partnership established to act as Prevent Forum lead by police and local authority

To deliver and progress actions on community cohesion The Community Safety Partnership Executive Group has developed new partnership arrangements and terms of reference between the Bridgend Equality Forum (Chaired by the Deputy Leader) and the Bridgend & District Community Cohesion Group (Chaired by Ian Hibble, with Suleman Hawas as Vice-Chair).

The C S P Executive Group have strategic ownership of the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) produced for Bridgend County Borough and decide how best to develop a partnership plan to deliver and progress actions based on intelligence. The Community Safety Partnership has agreed a common reporting format for both PREVENT and community cohesion activities.

4.5 Map local communities and community tensions

- A Citizens Panel Survey on Neighbourhood and Community has been completed and its main findings are attached in Appendix 1.
- Hate crime information is being compiled by the Community Safety Partnership and will be reported to the Community Cohesion Group on a regular basis.

- In order to progress this work the Deputy Leader hosted a meeting with the Director of the Valleys Regional Equality Council (VALREC) and officers from Corporate Development and Partnerships, the Communities First Partnerships and Community Safety Partnership.
- The Community Safety Partnership has prepared a study brief to commission a Community Cohesion Mapping report.
- The Community Safety Partnership have invited partners in the voluntary and public sector to submit proposals for the Community Cohesion Fund. These will be considered by the Community Safety Partnership Finance Committee, with members of the Community Cohesion Group, early in the New Year in order to maximise the opportunity the new Community Cohesion Fund represents for the Authority.

4.6 This approach builds on well-established and committed working relationships across the public and voluntary sector. Using existing engagement mechanisms is appropriate and proportionate to local circumstances and reflects the limitations of existing resources.

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 proposed actions set out in this report will assist the Authority in meeting its statutory duties in respect of equality and good race relations.

7. Financial Implications :-

7.1 The costs incurred by the Partnership are within the value of the Grant available from WAG, with no residual costs falling on the Council.

8. Recommendation: -

8.1 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee note the information provided in this report.

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Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships
18th December 2009

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10. Background documents:-

- CONTEST - the UK Strategy for Countering International Terrorism (Home Office, 2009).
- Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009).
- Bright Future: A Community Strategy for Bridgend County (2009-12).
- Corporate Equality Scheme for Bridgend County Borough Council (2009-12).

Briefing for Cabinet Equality Committee

Citizens' Panel Survey Summer 2009

Background

- In June/July 2009, the Council conducted a citizen survey using the Citizens' Panel.
- The Citizens' Panel Survey forms part of the Council's Engagement Strategy that aims to forge an on-going dialogue with its citizens and the communities it serves, and put their needs at the centre for its service delivery.
- The questionnaire that was circulated to the panellists included questions relating to:
 - Satisfaction with the Council's services;
 - Emotional and mental wellbeing;
 - Neighbourhood and Community; and
 - Internet use.
- 972 surveys were returned representing a response rate of 64.1%.

Neighbourhood and Community

- Respondents felt that all social groups (e.g. disabled, ethnic minorities, religious minorities) were more likely to experience prejudice and/or discrimination in Britain than in Bridgend County Borough itself.
- The two groups that respondents felt were most likely to experience prejudice and/or discrimination both in Britain and Bridgend County Borough were Refugees/Asylum seekers and Travellers/Gypsies.
- Around two-fifths of respondents personally feel less positive towards Travellers/Gypsies (42.8%) and Refugees/Asylum seekers (37.3%). In contrast, three-tenths of respondents (27.9%) when asked who they felt less positive towards responded 'Nobody'.
- Three-tenths of respondents felt that newspapers/television (29.1%) or a personal experience (28.2%) had influenced them in feeling less positive about certain groups. A further one-fifth (22.9%) had been influenced by law and public policy.
- Older people (43.3%), disabled people (40.9%) and younger people (36.9%) were the three groups that respondents felt the Council should be working more closely with to eliminate any prejudice or discrimination. The least popular responses for this answer were Women (8.9%) and Men (7.4%), perhaps reflecting the low number of respondents who felt these groups experienced prejudice or discrimination.
- Almost three-fifths of respondents (57.7%) agreed that they would be worried if more refugee or asylum seekers came to live in Bridgend

County Borough, followed by 43.8% who were concerned about foreign workers.

- Further analysis shows that almost two-thirds (66.2%) of respondents aged under thirty-five would not be worried if more Black or Asian people came to live in Bridgend County Borough.
- Respondents were most confident that black or ethnic minorities (78.7%), women (78.7%) and men (77.7%) would receive fair treatment from the Council. Respondents felt least confident that Travellers/Gypsies would receive fair treatment from the Council.
- Over three-quarters (76.9%) of respondents were confident that they personally would receive fair treatment from the Council.