

**Notes of a meeting of the Corporate Equalities Management Group held in Level 4 Conference Room, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend on 14 September 2009**

**Meeting commenced at 9.30am**

**Present:**

D MacGregor (Chair)	-	Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
G Ennis	-	Head of Central Administration (Communities Directorate)
P Miles	-	Pay and Reward Officer (Human Resources section)
Les Jones	-	Children and Young People's Framework Manager (Children's Directorate)
J Brooks	-	Professional Support Officer (Health and Wellbeing Directorate)
L Smith	-	Policy and Performance Management Officer (Equalities) (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
B Davies	-	Customer Services Manager (Resources Directorate)
Y Shen	-	Policy and Performance Manager (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
S Kelly	-	Policy and Performance Officer (Corporate Development & Partnerships)
R Crocombe (Notes)	-	Administrative Assistant (Corporate Development & Partnerships)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from the Transformation & Development Manager.

**2. Notes of CEMG meeting (11.06.09)**

Approved.

**3. Minutes of Cabinet Equality Committee 06.07.09**

With reference to para. 34 BD raised concerns of Deputy Leader, Cllr Sage, that some service areas are not producing their leaflets bilingually for display in the Customer Service Centre at Civic Offices. It was noted that the Welsh Language Scheme sets out clear guidance on the production of bilingual publications.

The resolution set out at para. 37 was noted.

Agreed actions:

- DRM to discuss the issue with M Bower and relevant Head of Service, and to discuss with the communications team ways of reinforcing the guidance set out in the scheme.

- DRM to meet with PM to discuss the presentation of the workforce data for the next Committee meeting.

#### **4. Matters arising from CEMG meeting (11.06.09)**

It was noted that approximately 40 applications for the introduction to BSL training had been received. Applications had been reviewed to ensure that there was a good business case for the training identified. In addition BD informed the Group that a new member of staff who has basic BSL skills has been recruited into the Customer Service Centre team.

It was noted that BD and LS had attended the Bridgend Deaf Club to discuss ways to improve access to services in the customer contact centre. The option of holding monthly BSL interpreting surgeries was not widely supported by members of the Club as it would not provide a responsive enough service. BD and LS will investigate other options for discussion with the Deaf Club and report back in due course.

PM reported that 204 staff members had received the general equality awareness training and that the equality module of the Leadership and Management Programme would be rolled out over the autumn.

With regards to the low take up of the general equalities awareness training by staff within the Children's Directorate, LJ reported that the issue had been discussed at their DMT meeting on 20 July. LJ reported that it had been established that there is an issue about schools organising their own training, and that a need for specialist equalities training rather than general training had been identified within the Children's directorate – some of which has now been delivered.

It was confirmed that LS has worked together with Organisational Development on creating equality and diversity e-learning training resources, and that 3 modules were now ready to be rolled out.

It was reported that LS has met with S Kingsbury with regards to developing a self-assessment process on the CES, in line with the WLGA EIF guidance. LS confirmed that she will also be attending an event run by the WLGA, which should help in developing a suitable CES self-assessment process, on 21 September.

LS confirmed that she has amended the EIA schedule further to feedback received from the Group.

LS confirmed that the Neighbourhood and Society questionnaire was amended before being sent out to the Citizens' Panel as part of their most recent survey. The Group was informed that the overall response rate to the survey was 64%, and that 96% of these returns had completed the Neighbourhood and Society questionnaire. LS reported that the results of the questionnaire showed a slight change in peoples concerns about certain groups.

DRM confirmed that the recent Citizens' Panel survey also sought the views of the Panel on general satisfaction with council services and on issues around emotional and mental wellbeing. As such, DRM confirmed that the results of this survey as a whole would need to go to CMB.

Agreed actions:

- GE to speak to S Pryce to establish a timescale for the DFG EIA.
- LS to pass the list of applications received for the BSL training to DRM
- LS to establish what equalities training has been delivered for staff in the Children's Directorate, as mentioned by LJ.
- LS to complete the response to HA on the issue of attendance at the general equalities training sessions.
- DRM to revisit the issue of equalities training within the Children's Directorate as part of the overall training plan for the council.
- LS to provide feedback on the WLGA EIF event to CEMG via email.
- LS to circulate the questions asked and summary of findings from the Neighbourhood and Society questionnaire to CEMG.

## **5. Mid-year report on the Welsh Language Scheme**

SK presented the report to the Group.

It was noted that SK and JB learned about the existence of a Welsh language AYPO by chance, and that while this development was commended, the importance of steps such as this being undertaken with the involvement of PPMU (so they can ensure that this progress is marketed) was noted.

Agreed actions:

- SK and DRM to review and amend some of the wording and content of the report and appendix – in particular, reference to the Welsh language training that finished in June and to the article on 'Yr Hogwr' which is to appear in the next edition of the Bulletin will be included, as will reference to the childcare team which is looking at promoting Welsh medium childcare.
- SK to link in with the Welsh medium secondary school and ensure that they have a means of feeding back information to him on any projects which involve promotion of the Welsh language.
- DRM to meet with S Kingsbury on her return from leave, to discuss a timeline for the linguistic needs assessment, and the possibility of incorporating this into another assessment such as that of training needs.
- Any further comments on the report or appendix to be forwarded to SK by Wednesday 16 September.

## **6. Reports due to Cabinet Equality Committee**

Agreed actions:

- Report on consultation on the Equality Bill to be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the CEC.

- Report on equality monitoring in customer services and measures to improve access to services to be removed from the agenda for the next meeting of the CEC.

## **7. Terms of reference of the Corporate Equality Management Group**

LS confirmed that feedback from CEMG had been received and incorporated into the terms of reference, which had now been approved in principle.

## **8. Corporate Equality Training Programme**

LS informed CEMG that she has met with N Flower with regards to developing a training needs survey. CEMG agreed that they need to approve the contents of the survey before it is distributed, and that the survey needs to be directional, as staff 'don't know what they don't know'.

With regards to identifying an appropriate tool to devise the survey and analyse the results, it was suggested that consideration be given to consulting a best practice authority / WLGA / IDeA to seek advice during the research process.

It was noted that the survey will need to manage expectation, and be clear about the types of training that can be offered – as the authority won't necessarily have the resources to deliver all the training that is requested or identified as being beneficial.

It was suggested that a sample survey could be conducted, looking primarily at frontline service areas, rather than a whole authority survey – though it was agreed that if each of the Group Managers were responsible for collating information relating to the posts within each of their areas, the data capture shouldn't be such a great issue for PPMU or Organisational Development.

It was queried how school staff - governors in particular - would be reached by the survey, and how it could be ensured that they receive the appropriate training. Concerns were expressed about difficulties in communication between schools and the rest of the authority.

Agreed actions:

- Draft version of the survey to be circulated amongst CEMG and comments on this to be returned by the end of September.
- Finalised survey to be circulated to Directorates via CEMG representatives rather than via Heads of Service.
- DRM to follow up on the issue of communication with governing bodies, and the importance of ensuring training is delivered to them, by meeting with M Beauchamp along with LS and YS.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessments**

It was clarified that Wellbeing has offered to be an EIA pilot, which will involve the training of a cross section of approximately 20 managers. However, it

was noted that other directorates could continue to carry out their urgent EIAs as necessary.

Agreed actions:

- Report and appendix to be discussed and revised in line with the current organisational structure.
- LS to keep a central record of what EIAs have been completed along with a copy of each assessment.

#### **10. Update on Equality Improvement Framework**

LS will report back on the WLGA event that she is to attend on 21 September.

#### **11. Update on community cohesion developments**

LS informed CEMG that new terms of reference for the BEF have been agreed. It was further noted that the Community Cohesion Group will be a sub-group of the CSP, and will be the main mechanism for reporting on counter terrorism and .....

It was reported that the Community Strategy now includes specific reference to community cohesion.

#### **12. Update on customer services and access to service improvement**

It was noted that the report on equality monitoring in customer services and measures to improve access to services will not go to the next meeting of the CEC, as a similar report will be going to Cabinet the next day.

#### **13. Briefing on Equality legislation**

LS reported that she attended a consultation event on 1 September with WAG and the Equalities Office in relation to the Equality Bill and specific duties to be introduced.

CEMG was informed that the emphasis in the Bill had shifted to a more proactive stance – focussing on advancing equality and fostering good relations.

LS reported that the Bill also placed emphasis on procurement being used to drive forward equality issues.

Agreed actions

- This briefing is to go to CEC – LS to link with Legal Services about this.

#### **14. Any other business**

YS confirmed that a PI was needed to measure the success of the EIAs, and asked for any suggestions to please be forwarded to her.

**Meeting closed at 11am**