

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES

29 SEPTEMBER 2010

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

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the progress that has been made by the Authority in implementing equality impact assessments.

2. Connection to Corporate Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1 This report links with the strategic theme of strong communities and assists the Authority to meet its moral and statutory duties in respect of equality and human rights.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Authority is required to complete equality impact assessments on policies and practices in respect of the general and specific equality duties. Recent court decisions confirm the Authority's need to not only carry out equality impact assessments but to also evidence the process. The current legal requirements relate to race, disability and gender, including gender reassignment, but many public authorities have chosen to extend this to other strands, in anticipation of the new public sector equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 which comes into effect in April 2011. The new duty will cover seven equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

- 3.1 In July 2010 Cabinet approved the proposal that the Authority evidence equality impact assessments by including an "Equality Impact Assessment" section in the report template, with a requirement to provide a summary of any equality impact together with any requisite mitigating measures and the listing of a full assessment, where undertaken, as a Background Document. This will ensure Members are appropriately informed of, and give appropriate consideration to, equality impact. The amendment of the report template will contribute to the evidential requirement. These measures will assist in safeguarding the Authority from legal challenge.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The Equality Impact Assessment toolkit and manager's guidance is available on the intranet. The equality impact assessments toolkit and manager's guidance have been developed to cover the general equality duties on race, disability and gender. It also covers the new grounds of age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and

transgender. The scope of the equality impact assessments has been extended to cover Welsh language and human rights.

4.2 Equality Impact Assessment training has been delivered for officers and in summary:

- 11 training sessions have been delivered in 2010.
- 121 officers have received training.
- 115 of attendees rated the course content and delivery as good or excellent, as relevant to their work and as meeting their needs.
- Presentations on the training and process have been given to Heads of Service in April and Corporate Management Board in July and August 2010.

4.4 Following feedback from Corporate Management Board the equality impact assessments toolkit and manager's guidance will be revised to simplify the template and ensure it is compliant with the new Equality Act 2010. This revision will be cognisant of EHRC guidance. The aim will be to make it easier for officers to prioritise those policies that will tackle the most significant issues in equality within their remit and identify what actions can be taken to promote equality that are proportionate to a policy's relevance to the general and specific equality duties. This is likely to involve focusing on policies that have the most effect on the public or the authority's employees.

4.3 Amendments have been made to the Authority's procedure, protocol and template for reports for Council and Cabinet and its Committees. Relevant officers have been advised of these changes.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There will be no effect on the Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 No equality impact assessment has been carried out as this is an information report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That the Cabinet Committee Equalities notes the content of the report.

David MacGregor

Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships

29 September 2010

Contact Officer: Linda Smith
Policy & Performance Management Officer (Equalities)

Telephone: (01656) 643332

E-mail: Linda.Smith@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB.

Background documents:

Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-2012.

Bridgend County Borough Council Welsh Language Scheme 2008-2011.

Equality Act 2010.