

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2013 AT 1.00PM

Present:

Councillors

M E J Nott
H J David
M Gregory

Councillors

L C Morgan
P J White

Invitees: Councillor M W Butcher Councillor M Thomas
Councillor C L Jones Councillor C L Reeves
Councillor R C Jones Councillor H J Townsend

Mrs K Carter - Group Co-ordinator - Bridgend Stroke Association

Officers:

P Williams - Equalities and Engagement Officer
B Neville - Community Occupational Therapist
J Monks - Democratic Services Officer - Committees

37 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

RESOLVED: That in the absence of Councillor D Sage, Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee - Equalities, Members elected Councillor Gregory as Chairperson for the meeting.

Councillor Gregory took the Chair.

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor C A Green - Hospital
Councillor D M Hughes - Work Commitments
Councillor D Sage - Unwell

The Leader gave Members an update on the Deputy Leader, Councillor Sage, who had sustained injuries following a fall whilst on a fishing holiday. He informed Members that Councillor Sage had been discharged from hospital and was now recuperating at home.

39 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee - Equalities held on the 12 June 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

41 STROKE ASSOCIATION - PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND ADVICE FOR STROKE SURVIVORS IN BRIDGEND

The Chairperson introduced Mrs Karyl Carter from Bridgend Stroke Association.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer presented a report to inform Members of the support and advice offered by the Stroke Association to stroke survivors in our communities.

He reported that it had been agreed in 2010 that community representatives would present overviews of their available services and support, relevant to members' remits, in their communities. He introduced the Group Co-ordinator for the Bridgend Stroke Association to explain to Members the support services the Bridgend Stroke Association had on offer.

The Group Co-ordinator – Bridgend Stroke Association explained that she had run classes for three community groups for stroke survivors at the Evergreen Hall for the past 21 years, and her colleague, the Information Officer for the Association, based at the Princess of Wales Hospital, passed on referrals to her. She informed the Committee that she ran the classes single-handed. She described the activities the different groups participated in, which included the project, Rubicon Dance; a form of music and movement which had proved beneficial in empowering stroke survivors. She also ran an ICT class to help the group with internet shopping and keeping in touch with families. There were currently around 34 regulars who attended the different classes, and she went on to inform Members of the repoussé classes and showed some examples of work created by that class. She explained that repoussé is a metalworking technique, where pewter or copper is shaped and hammered to create a design. She also ran an art class and advised that one stroke patient had won a "Life after Stroke" award for his artwork and had become a judge on the Panel; some of his art is displayed in the First Minister's office and the Welsh Assembly.

She then described the speech therapy class for those who had suffered speech problems following a stroke. The class had carried out some work with the Customer Services Team in Civic Offices, to test its interaction with people who were unable to hold a conversation. The Customer Services Team was then given strategies to support those people with speech problems. One of the other activities taken up by some of the stroke survivors included shooting at Tondy Shooting Club. Support was also provided to the carers of stroke victims. She informed Members that the Association had held a Council Service Level Agreement with the Authority since 2009, as well as an agreement with the Stroke Trust for the past 21 years. She reported that unfortunately, the budget did not stretch to providing transport and getting clients to community groups was a mammoth task. She advised that although Ogwr Transport for the Elderly and Disabled (OTED) had recently set up a transport scheme, it was only able to assist those people who had a degree of reasonable ability. She informed the Committee that around 25 children a week suffered a stroke, and more women in Wales died as the result of a stroke as opposed to breast cancer. She advised that if everyone carried a card on how to spot a stroke, more people's lives would be saved.

She explained that it was important to partnership work and to share information, with direct referrals from social workers, and she visited Bridgend College every year to inform the social work students of her work with stroke victims. She reported that this year the Association had been well supported by the Council's Community Fare during May this year which was attended by Huw Irranca-Davies MP. Other organisations her group were involved with were the Sandeville and Glamorgan Holiday Home, both based in Porthcawl, where the group had undergone a social enterprise project. Next May the Stroke Association's Head Office in Cardiff would be holding an event "Step up for Stroke" to coincide with the Stroke Awareness Day on the 12th May, and she also hoped to hold a similar event at Newbridge Fields in recognition of the day.

She advised that the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board (ABMU) had an obligation to work with stroke victims and reported that some work had been carried out with the Community Health Council where concerns of stroke victims had been discussed, which would be included in the consultation document. She commented that her clients could become a consultation group representing people with disabilities. She concluded by saying that her biggest issue was that although heart patients were offered psychological support

following a heart attack, the same support was not provided for stroke victims. To compensate for that, the group provided that support to each other; as such support very often prevented inappropriate re-admissions to hospital.

One Member asked whether the group had arranged an art exhibition to display their work and raise funds.

The Group Co-ordinator - Bridgend Stroke Club advised that the group's artwork was always at events held by the Association and also in the art gallery at Porthcawl. She suggested that it would be beneficial to the group if they had wi-fi connection in Evergreen Hall to assist her groups. The Chairperson advised that he would look into that issue.

The Chairperson thanked her for her presentation.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee - Equalities noted the report.

42 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate Director - Resources submitted a report the purpose of which was to propose a Forward Work Programme for the Committee, Appendix 1 to the report referred.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer informed Members that as requested, VALREC would be presenting to the Committee in December 2013.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee - Equalities approved the proposals outlined within the Forward Work Programme attached to the report.

43 SIX MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Equalities and Engagement Officer presented a report to provide Members with a progress report on the objectives within the Strategic Equality Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report. He advised that the Action Plan was the third to come before the Committee since the Plan's inception in March 2012. The revised Action Plan was approved in September 2012, and included performance indicators and target settings. The council is now in discussion with Bridgend College to develop a project to develop a bank of published images which reflected the diversity of the Council.

He informed Members that the rainbow flag had been flown outside Civic Offices on a number of occasions, and the last time was on the 23rd September, 2013 which was "Bi-visibility Day". He further informed Members of various events which had been held during the year which included a stand at the Mardi Gras celebration in August, where staff had given out leaflets and talked to members of the public about the Council's adoption and fostering service which had attracted a lot of interest. Also Holocaust Memorial Day was remembered each January with a service held in the Council Chamber.

He further reported on a survey which was circulated to all Council employees, to gain sensitive data on all of the protected characteristics such as sexuality, race and disability. Unfortunately only 975 replies were received out of a workforce of approximately 8,000. Due to the poor response, a project had been planned to redevelop the survey with assistance from the Marketing and Communications Team. Another project being worked on was an LGB & T Staff Network and it was hoped that Stonewall Cymru

One Member asked whether other staff networks were being considered, such as disability and race.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer explained that, depending on the level of interest, he planned to develop staff networks for all groups such as disability as well as one for LGB and 'T' staff. These groups would be expected to be active within the council on areas such as policy development.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet-Committee Equalities considered the progress being made on the implementation of the Strategic Equality Action Plan.

44 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Equalities and Engagement Officer presented a report to provide Members with an update on the equality and diversity training plan for Council staff and elected Members. in line with the Authority's statutory duty to provide training under the Equalities Act. He informed Members that a considerable amount of training had been carried out over the last six months particularly with schools, and Appendix 1 to the report outlined the required training which the Authority would be able to carry out under a no cost/low cost arrangement, in view of the tight restraints on budget in the current financial climate.

He highlighted the importance of raising awareness in the use of Welsh in the workplace, which had produced a positive response from some business managers in the Authority. This could be carried out through an e-learning package, which all elected Members and some staff would have access to. The data collection project would inform on the number of employees who are fluent in Welsh and those who wished to improve their Welsh.

He described the opportunities to work collaboratively with the WLGA who had training packages in place; also a project within the HR Directors network on equality training across Wales, which would allow the opportunity to carry out some training with Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Vale of Glamorgan Councils.

As part of community links, the Equalities and Engagement Officer advised that he hoped to invite community based groups such as the Bridgend Visually Impaired Society to work with those staff who had a public interface to help them better understand the needs of for example people with disabilities; however this could involve a nominal fee.

Finally, the Equalities and Engagement Officer then informed Members on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), and advised that they could expect to see more EIAs accompanying reports presented to Cabinet. He reported that he was keen to ensure that Officers who were required to review strategy and policy fully understood the need for EIAs, and he had proposed setting up workshops. He stressed the need to carry out training with as little cost implication as possible. Targeted Equality and Diversity training had been sourced for elected Members via the WLGA who have a member development programme in place containing an in-depth equality and training element.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee – Equalities noted the progress report.

The meeting closed at 2.50pm.