

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES**

**13 MARCH 2014**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES**

**DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2012 / 2013 ON THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

**1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the work being done to develop the council's second annual report (2012 - 2013) on the strategic equality plan (SEP).

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 The Equality Act 2010 sets out both general and specific duties for local authorities in Wales. The specific duties include the development of a SEP to identify the council's equality objectives and the publication of an annual report.

2.2 The strategic equality plan also supports the council's following corporate priorities:

- working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- working with children and families to tackle problems early
- working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent
- working together to make the best use of our resources

**3. Background**

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new general duty for public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age (Act applies to over 18yrs)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to eliminating discrimination)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

- Sexual orientation

3.2 In addition to the above, Welsh Government (WG) introduced specific duties for public authorities to meet the general duties under the Equality Act 2010 (statutory duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 which came into effect on 6 April 2011. One of these duties was to publish equality objectives and a SEP by 2 April 2012.

3.3 The equality objectives set out how the council will address the most pressing issues for each of the protected characteristic groups.

#### **4. Current situation / proposal**

4.1 *'The essential guide to the public sector equality duty: An overview for listed public authorities in Wales'* published in June 2011 provides an overview of all of the specific duties that apply to listed public authorities in Wales.

4.2 This draft annual report covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

4.3 The SEP annual report gives the council opportunity to include 2012/13 updates relevant to required information, detail on equality impact assessments, procurement arrangements and training. Also it allows the council to outline work that has been taken forward under the previous Corporate Equality Scheme or linked in to the SEP.

4.4 The SEP Annual Report 2012/13 is currently in draft form and attached as appendix 1. It must be finalised and published by 1 April 2014.

#### **The purpose/detail of the annual report**

The purpose of the annual report is to assist public authorities in meeting the aims of their own specific equality objectives as well as the three aims of the general duty which are:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The annual report provides an opportunity to:

- Monitor and review progress ;
- Monitor and review the effectiveness and appropriateness of arrangements;
- Review objectives and processes in light of new legislation and other new developments;

- Engage with stakeholders around these issues, providing partners and the public with transparency.

The value of the annual report is in placing an emphasis on evaluating progress over the reporting period, rather than reproducing information included in the SEP.

Specifically the report must set out:

- The steps taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- How this information has been used to meet the three aims of the general duty;
- Any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- A statement on the effectiveness of arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- Progress towards fulfilling each of the equality objectives;
- A statement of the effectiveness of the steps taken to fulfil each of the equality objectives;
- Specific employment information, including information on training and pay.

The annual report covers a wide range of issues of interest to multiple audiences, including:

- School staff
- Local Education Authority
- Elected members
- Members of the community and community groups
- Parents
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Welsh Government

The style of writing has been carefully considered to tailor the report accordingly. Therefore, extending the scope of the content beyond compliance will ensure the annual report is interesting and useful to a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Progress made by the council on each of the equality objectives and themes is included in the report. These are:

- Transportation
- Fostering good relations
- The council's role as an employer
- Equal pay
- Consultation, engagement and communication
- Mental health
- Leisure
- Benefits
- Data

**5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.**

5.1 As this is an information report, there are no proposed changes to the policy framework and procedure rules.

**6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 The report provides the committee with information which will positively assist in the delivery of the authority's equality duties.

**7. Financial Implications.**

7.1 There are no financial implications identified as this is an information/update report.

**8. Recommendation.**

8.1 That the Cabinet Committee notes the progress being made.

**Ness Young  
Corporate Director Resources**

**31 January 2014**

**Contact Officer:** Paul Williams  
Equalities and Engagement Officer

**Telephone:** (01656) 643606

**E-mail:** Paul.williams2@bridgend.gov.uk

**Postal Address:** Ravens Court, Brewery Lane, Bridgend. CF31 4AP

**Background documents:**

None