

CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES - THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2020

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD IN REMOTELY VIA SKYPE FOR BUSINESS ON THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2020 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor D Patel – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	NA Burnett	HJ David
J Gebbie	DG Howells	JE Lewis	JC Radcliffe
KL Rowlands	CE Smith	SR Vidal	HM Williams
RE Young			

Apologies for Absence

SK Dendy and E Venables

Officers:

Nicola Bunston	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Riaz Hassan	Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator
Judith Jones	Partnership Co-ordinator
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Susan Roberts	Group Manager School Improvement
Andrew Thomas	Group Manager Sports & Physical Activity
Elizabeth Walton-James	Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

85. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the 07/10/2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

86. ANNUAL REPORT ON COMMUNITY COHESION

The Partnership & CSP Manager presented a report which provided an update on the work of the Welsh Government funded Community Cohesion officer and the community cohesion work of Bridgend Community Safety Partnership.

In December 2018 Welsh Government issued their 'intention to fund' email to all Regional Community Cohesion Co-coordinators in Wales. Welsh Government indicated that each region would be allocated £140,000 to:

- Identify and mitigate community tensions (hate crime, extremism, anxiety, anti-social behaviour) relating to Brexit;
- Improve community cohesion communications;
- Organise events/activities to promote social inclusion; and

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- Deliver non Brexit activities as outlined in the National Community Cohesion Plan (2019)

At that time Bridgend County Borough Council, (BCBC), Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council made up the Western Bay Community Cohesion Region, led by a Regional Community Cohesion Co-coordinator based in Swansea Council.

She added that a Community Cohesion Officer in September 2019. The post was funded until 31 March 2021. She outlined the role of the Community Cohesion Officer as indicated in section 4 of the report

The Partnership & CSP Manager outlined the hate crime figures for the period April to September 2020 with a comparison to the previous 2 years. These were labelled as chart 1 and chart 2 in the report.

The Partnership & CSP Manager outlined the progress to date stating a large amount of work relating to Brexit being carried out. She explained that a key area of the Brexit work had been engaging with individuals and communities to ensure maximum uptake of the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS). More information on the EUSS was at Appendix 1.

She added that in the summer of 2020 an additional language skills survey was undertaken among BCBC employees. These were identified as follows:

- French 4
- Italian 3
- German 3
- Russian 2
- Polish 2
- Spanish 2
- Japanese 1
- Mandarin 1
- Sinhala 1
- Creole 1
- Slovak 1
- Cantonese 1
- Czech 1
- Ukrainian 1

Of the respondents to the survey, 59% agreed they would volunteer to support residents with specific language needs. Further progress to date was listed at 4.2 of the report.

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator outlined key points of the report relating to the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and the total people that applied to the scheme on a local and national level. He provided figures on this as well as a breakdown of figures for the Local Authorities in the Western Bay Region and the nationality of the applicants. These were listed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator also provided figures on the ethnicities of pupils in schools in Bridgend which covered EU and Non EU ethnicities.

A Member asked in relation to the applications that were completed by Italian nationality, what the general age profile of these residents were and how long had they been in Bridgend before going through application process.

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The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator explained that the figures provided did not include Italians who had applied for a British nationality, but rather people who had kept their nationality as Italian, so there may have been many more in total, but he did not have data on the age profiles of these residents.

The Cabinet Member Communities thanked the Officers involved in this report and the research and work carried out in the community. He added that it was a shame that hate crime was an issue and there had been a spike during the times of Brexit, but the work carried out by our Officers had been welcomed.

The Partnership & CSP Manager added that it had been a difficult year as a whole, with Covid19 as well as Brexit coming to an end. There had been some work with regards to dealing with right wing extremism but with such uncertainty on what exactly will happen on January 1st 2021, it had been hard to focus on any one issue.

The Cabinet Member Communities added that there was a large amount of work being carried out by SWP also. He stated that there were lessons learned from 2016 during the spike in hate crime and these lessons were being implemented now to try and mitigate it.

The Chairperson stated that she had recently spoke with the Chief Executive, the Leader and the Young Mayor about issues surrounding news shared on social media and the importance of questioning the source of the information, to ensure that misinformation was not being spread. She added that this could be something that the Council looks at promoting. The Partnership & CSP Manager agreed that this was a subject worth promoting to raise awareness.

The Leader empathised the importance and value of everyone who lived, worked, and raised their families in Bridgend, and they were always welcome.

The Leader asked if a need for support or services to be provided through the process of the settlement scheme had been identified, particularly in relation to three largest groups identified.

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator explained that many of the communities had a champion or an establishment that people could reach out to. This was not the case for EU communities previously so this was something that was being worked towards.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration thanked the team for their hard work on the report in identifying the range of groups from EU communities. He explained that a visit to Pen Y Bont Primary School may be beneficial as the school is one of the most diverse in Bridgend. He added that further collaboration from himself would be provided where possible.

The Chairperson added that it was inspiring see us go from having no data on EU Nationals, to having all the data included in the report and thanked everyone who worked on achieving this.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and accepted the contents of the report.

87. ANNUAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE WITH MEETING THE OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated the Committee on the work undertaken to meet the objectives within the Welsh Language Standards Five Year Strategy (2016 to 2021), during the fourth year since its introduction.

She explained that the council's final compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner included two standards (145 and 146) that required the council to have produced and published a Five Year Strategy by 30 September. The strategy was attached at Appendix 1 of the report and set out how the Council promotes the Welsh Language and facilitates its use in Bridgend County Borough.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained it was agreed that the strategy be split into two sections, section one to address the employees, and section two for the public. Further details on the objectives for these sections were at 3.3 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager outlined what developments have occurred in the last 12 months. She explained that Officers attended the launch event for the 'Closing the Gap' Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report on 15 September 2020. This was the sixth assurance report published by the Commissioner. The report addressed the issues on which organisations need to take action over the coming months. It included evidence on:

- organisations' performance in providing Welsh language services and encouraging people to use them
- compliance arrangements – what organisations do to ensure their provision is compliant
- workforce capacity – ensuring that there are enough Welsh speakers in the right roles
- promoting the Welsh language – contributing to the future of the Welsh language by considering the impact of policy and grant decisions on the language
- implementing Welsh language promotion strategies.

A copy of the concise version of the report was at Appendix 2 (Welsh) and 3 (English).

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that following the Welsh Government consultation seeking views on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 and Guidance, new regulations came into force at the end of January 2020, with the guidance published in February 2020. WESPs would become 10-year rather than 3-year plans and annual work plans and progress reports will be required. Further information was at section 4.1 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager outlined the employee developments which set out to:

- identify the capacity in service areas to deliver services in Welsh
- provide appropriate learning and development solutions at various levels to meet identified needs within budget allocation.

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- Establish arrangements in recruiting to positions where Welsh language skills are essential

Details on these developments were at 4.2 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager outlined the public developments which set out to raise the profile of the Welsh language, culture and local activities and events organised by the council and our partners in a structured way, as well as Increase promotion and awareness of the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) particularly in relation to objectives one, two and four of the WESP plan. Details on these developments were at section 4.3 of the report.

The Group Manager – School Support outlined the £2.6m Capital Grant plans for the provision of four early years settings to feed current Welsh-medium primary schools in Bridgend and any future provision. She added that work had been undertaken to promote welsh language education to new parents also in hopes to provide them with benefits of undertaking the welsh language at home and the benefits for their child to be bilingual.

The Group Manager – School Support outlined the progress on Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. She stated that Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) data was the current method of monitoring this data as opposed to the date of birth data previously used. She presented a table which indicated the number of 7-8 year olds since 2016 who undertook welsh language education. Further details on objective 2 and outcome 1 were at 4.3 of the report.

The Group Manager – School Support explained that the admissions team had indicated that Ysgol Bro Ogwr was at capacity, therefore a number of pupils had not been admitted and joined an alternate school which may not have been a Welsh Medium school. This had resulted in a number of missed opportunities for more welsh medium pupils.

The Group Manager – School Support also provided figures on the progress on Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school as well as pupils taking Welsh as a GCSE and/or A-level subject. These figures were included in the report at 4.3.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained the current situation surround the public and measuring success in terms of percentage of Welsh speakers in Bridgend County Borough as well as measuring the success of individual activities undertaken which aim to maintain the numbers of Welsh speakers. The three objectives and the methods of measuring their success were listed at section 3 of the report.

A Member commented that there are a number of nurseries that are attached to a school and there are some welsh medium nurseries that were not. He asked if there was any work being done to ensure the availability of children continuing on to welsh medium primary schools after nursery and was there a particular trend of children who dropped off from welsh medium education.

The Group Manager – School Support stated that in the past there were patterns in regards to children not continuing welsh medium education but that did not seem to be a major issue now and the drop offs from welsh medium education was consistent among all welsh medium schools, although higher than we would like.

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She added that the Headteacher of Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd was very proactive and visited primary schools to work with parents to establish a clear line of sight for their children.

She added that we had suggested the idea of an all through school, whereby children of ages 3-19 could go, which would help parents commit to welsh medium education for their children.

The Group Manager – School Support explained that the Early Years and Childcare team worked closely with the non-maintained nurseries which had shown an improvement in the continued education of welsh medium over the past few years. She added that the work of the School modernisation programme to ensure more provision was in place was an important piece of work, as well as ensuring that the provision in place was of high quality.

A Member mentioned that on the strategy it stated ‘this document is available in Welsh’ but was written in English. He suggested that going forward, we include that sentence in Welsh.

The Leader asked what the effect of the opening of Ysgol Gynradd Calon y Cymoedd at its new location had on the Welsh Language uptake.

The Group Manager – School Support explained that it was consistent with previous years in terms of increased uptake of Welsh Medium Education when a new Welsh Medium school was opened.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented that the annual assessment undertaken next year on the school would be interesting to see. She asked if there were any early indications on the effects of the pandemic on children regarding welsh medium education.

The Group Manager – School Support explained that the authority had been proactive in ensuring effective delivery of welsh language to children which had been particularly helpful for families where parents did not speak welsh. This was achieved with the help of multi-agency work.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked for information regarding customer services and what a resident calling in to the authority with the aim to converse in welsh should expect.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services stated that there was a dedicated phone line for welsh speakers which historically customers would need to go through the English route before they could opt to speak in Welsh. This has now changed so that the main BCBC phone number asked whether the person would like to speak in English or Welsh, and directed them accordingly. In addition, there were 3 welsh speaking staff members employed in customer services. As the take-up was fairly low, these staff were also used for the English calls, but offered a call back service whereby if a Welsh speaker was unable to get through, they could leave a voicemail and they would be contacted back shortly after by the Welsh speaking staff member. He stated that there was no feedback from this service as of yet.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked if there had been any ‘mystery shopping’ work being undertaken to see how the welsh services were being provided.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that this was something they pursued a while ago, but ultimately came across barriers and had not

managed to undertake this work, but it was something they wished to continue by liaising with a number of Welsh Medium schools post Covid-19.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee Equalities received, considered and noted the report

88. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN ON PEOPLE WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Corporate Director Social Services presented a report which updated Cabinet on the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on people with caring responsibilities and the additional support that has been available during the pandemic.

She provided background on the situation in Bridgend and the challenges faced on a local and national level and the work that had been carried out to support carers in Bridgend. She added that Carers Trust research identified the following challenges to unpaid carers identified across Wales: -

- Not being able to take time away from caring 74%
- Managing stress and responsibility 73%
- Negative impacts on physical and mental health 73%
- Impact on other personal relationships 65%
- Financial impact of additional care costs 53%
- Negative impact on ability to do paid work 50%
- Not having anyone to talk to about caring challenges 46%

The Corporate Director Social Services explained that to support the three ministerial priorities for carers, a £1 million allocation was made to regional carer partnership boards and for 2020-21 an additional £1 million Covid Support Fund for carers had been established.

The Corporate Director Social Services provided a summary of the support that had been provided by BCBC as well as partner third party organisations which included telephone support service extended to cover seven day, 24 hours with staff available on a rota basis, financial support of up to £300 through the carers emergency grant scheme and over 7000 PPE items distributed to carers throughout the borough. Further information on support provided was listed at section 4 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help thanked all the officers and teams involved who had provided support to carers during the pandemic. She asked if the pandemic and lockdown had affected the communication methods towards carers and if so, what could be done to improve this.

The Group Manager – Integrated Community Services explained that at the start of the pandemic, the authority began contacting carers to ensure that they did not feel isolated or unsupported. The Group Manager – Sports & Physical Activity also highlighted a number of support services that had been provided which helped with day-to-day issues.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations was pleased to see the work that had been carried out by the teams in BCBC to support carers. The Leader echoed this and stated that it was important that carers were made aware of the support available and could not thank our carers enough for their work in the borough. The Leader asked what work could be done with schools to support young carers.

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The Corporate Director Social Services explained that the connection with schools was important and we needed to work closely with them in identifying young carers and the support they need. She stated that the pandemic was likely to continue for at least a few more months and therefore the wellbeing and mental state of young carers was particularly vulnerable during these times and as such some focused work was being carried out to ensure understanding of the impacts for young carers and managing them.

RESOLVED: That the committee noted the information contained within the report.

89. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF BRIDGEND COMMUNITY COHESION AND EQUALITY FORUM

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager provided an update on the work of the Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum (BCCEF). She advised that this was the third report that had been presented to Cabinet Committee Equalities on the progress and work of BCCEF. The Forum was currently chaired by Cllr Dhanisha Patel – Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations. The meetings were held quarterly, with June and Septembers being held remotely due to Covid-19.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager outlined the following presentations that were given in 2020:

- BCBC Strategic Equality Plan Consultation
- BCBC Budget Consultation Feedback
- Community PREVENT
- BCBC Strategic Equality Plan Consultation feedback
- The barriers that people with sight loss face and the impact of COVID-19

She advised that each organisation involved was provided an opportunity to update the forum on their work and any partnership opportunities for engagement or training. She added that South Wales Police provide an update at each meeting on hate crime figures, use of force, figures on violence against women and girls, stop and search and complaints raised against the police and police misconduct. The role of the group is to receive this report and provide scrutiny to it.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager was pleased that during the pandemic the BCCEF was able to meet and continue to share information.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked Members to provide any items for the BCCEF should they have any through their various roles as Cabinet Members.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities considered and noted the report.

90. UPDATE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which provided an update on the stance of implementation of Welsh Language Standards.

She explained that Officers attended the launch event for the 'Closing the Gap' Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report on 15 September 2020. This was the sixth assurance report published by the Commissioner. The report addressed the issues on

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which organisations needed to take action over the coming months. It included evidence on:

- organisations' performance in providing Welsh language services and encouraging people to use them
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- promoting the Welsh language – contributing to the future of the Welsh language by considering the impact of policy and grant decisions on the language
- implementing Welsh language promotion strategies.

A copy of the concise version of 'Closing the Gap' Welsh Language Commissioner assurance report can be seen in Appendix one (Welsh) and Appendix two (English).

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that there had been no new complaints received since the last update report, and a previous complaints update was listed at section 4 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations was pleased to see a reduction in complaints overall, with no new complaints being received showed our proactive work on improving welsh language services.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities considered and noted the report.

91. USE OF THE NAME OF PICTON IN STREET NAMES AND BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT THE BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated the committee on the research taking place into the use of the name Picton in street names and buildings across Bridgend County Borough.

She provided the various street names and buildings that had been identified using the name Picton within Bridgend, Porthcawl, Kenfig Hill and Nantyffyllon. These were detailed at section 4 of the report.

She added that work was progressing and had included to date:

- Identifying the first appearance of relevant places on official maps
- Establishing the types of buildings to help narrow dates
- Identifying collections of records that may give further details within the archives' collection

She advised that there were financial implications related to changing the street names which would include changing street signage, legal fees and consultation costs. Glamorgan Archives had been commissioned to carry out research on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council up to a maximum value of £3,000.

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The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that within the Welsh Government Audit of statues, street and building names a traffic light system had been used to give distinction in terms of certainty and culpability of General Thomas Picton (and others listed within the audit)

She explained that a link could be provided for Members to allow them to give feedback or comments relating to this subject to Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked if any deadline was given by Welsh Government to provide feedback. The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager was unaware of a deadline or timeframe for their next steps.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration thanked the Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager for the report and for making use of the Glamorgan Archives service. He looked forward to the information that was to be provided by them and iterated that not all street names and buildings were named after General Thomas Picton and it was important to await further information from the archives service before taking the next steps.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee Equalities considered the update report and awaits research from a local historian and the outcome of the Welsh Government audit before further consideration be given to actions that may need to be taken within Bridgend County Borough.

92. URGENT ITEMS

None