

CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES - MONDAY, 20 MARCH 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB / REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 20 MARCH 2023 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor – Chairperson

A R Berrow	HJ David	M J Evans	J Gebbie
W R Goode	D M Hughes	M Lewis	RL Penhale-Thomas
JC Spanswick	A Wathan	AJ Williams	HM Williams
E D Winstanley			

Apologies for Absence

JPD Blundell and N Farr

Officers:

Zoe Edwards	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Stephen Griffiths	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Emily Longley	Equalities & Welsh Language Officer
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Lara Rowlands	Community Cohesion Officer
Lois Sutton	Children's Rights and Participation Worker

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JP Blundell and N Farr.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Gebbie declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5, as Chair of the School Governing Body at Mynydd Cynffig Primary school.

Councillors R Penhale-Thomas and R Goode declared a general personal interest in the agenda as a whole, in that they were both employed through a Welsh Housing Charity which campaigns on Equalities issues.

19. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee Equalities dated 23 November 2022, be approved as a true and accurate record.

20. REPORT ON RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE EQUALITIES AGENDA ACROSS BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (BCBC)

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report, the purpose of which, was to update Cabinet Committee Equalities on plans to raise the profile of Equalities and build an action plan that will shape the Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP) objectives for 2024-2028.

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By way of background information, she advised that the Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty which states that the Council, must consider the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other behaviour that is not allowed under the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people with and without protected characteristics, for example by removing or minimising disadvantages, meeting the needs of people who have a protected characteristic or encouraging participation in public life and activities.
- Encourage good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager reminded Members, that the council is committed to helping ensure that people of all protected characteristics can participate fully in our community as equal citizens. The nine protected characteristics here were:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

She explained that BCBC's Strategic Equality Plan sets out how equality objectives will be met, making services accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of those who live, work and visit the county borough.

She further added, that Equality is diverse and the Authority needed to include people and their representative groups in its planning and decision making processes to help them unlock their potential. The Council also needed to engage appropriately with people to help us meet our duties in the Public Sector Equality Duty in order to:

- Set future equality objectives;
- Review our Strategic Equality Plan;
- Identify how our work and activities may contribute to meeting the general duty;
- Assess the likely impact on protected groups of our policies and practices being proposed or reviewed.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager concluded her report by advising, that in order to achieve these objectives, the aim is to explore ways of raising the profile of equalities across the organisation by reviewing the current Strategic Equality Plan and exploring the opportunity to establish a corporate working group to review the current Strategic Equality Plan and to discuss and create relevant objectives to form the new actions for the SEP 2024-2028.

The Chairperson considered that the Cabinet Committee could be used more effectively to drive its agenda forward and look for members of Groups and Associations to play an active part in issues of equality and diversity as part of future agenda business, under legislation such as the Future Generations Act.

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The Deputy Leader confirmed that BCBC's Procurement and Commissioning Strategies could also support the above aims and objectives, as well as a Bill passed recently in the Senedd, entitled Social Partnership. This could be used to commission provision, as BCBC were one of the largest employers in Bridgend.

The Leader gave his support to the introduction of a corporate working group and hoped that this would include a role for our key partners, for example, the South Wales Police, Health Board, Fire Authority, Probation Service etc.

It was further added that representation from schools and the School Consortia would be beneficial, in order to have an input from the youth within the Borough. The YPOP group was given as an example

The Chairperson advised that it would also be positive to see joining up of proposals within the Health Board's Wellbeing Plan to that of the Council's Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality Plan.

A Member also felt that it would be beneficial if those with a learning disability receiving support, could also play some part in the business of future meeting agendas and this was supplemented by another Member, adding that involvement from people with 'lived experience' with issues and problems they had been through in life that others in society may not have experienced.

The Deputy Leader stated that she would like to see on the agenda at the next scheduled meeting, a Race Action Plan, as well as future reports relating to groups in our society with protected characteristics.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee noted the report.

21. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE REPORT

The Children's Rights and Participation Worker submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to update Cabinet Committee Equalities on the work done in recent months by the Youth Council and Young People Of Pride (YPOP).

In order to give Members some outline information, she explained that the Bridgend Youth Council consists of a mayor, cabinet members and teams of youth councillors. The body was set up and run by local young people and is an entirely separate entity from Bridgend County Borough Council.

The main priorities highlighted by the Youth Mayor and Deputy are as follows:

- The Sustainability for the future;
- Education of Democracy and UK politics in schools;
- Tackling Youth Violence through prevention programmes;
- Youth mental Health Awareness and support in schools;
- Educational prevention to bring an end to racism and injustice;
- Supporting LGBTQ+ Rights

The Children's Rights and Participation Worker confirmed that The Youth Council now had two sessions a month. One online session, 'Chat and Chill', that allows members to log onto zoom/online to chat to a Youth worker and take part in some quizzes and games. Another session is a formal face to face Youth Council Meeting, which happens on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The Youth Council meet in Evergreen Hall and take part in workshops, training, debates and consultations.

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They have worked with Bridgend County Borough Council staff and outside organisations such as Barod, the Police and Crime Commissioners Team, Cwm Taf Health Board, plus more besides, she added.

During the last few months, the Youth Council given a contribution to the consultations outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

They have also highlighted national events on social media such as:

- #wearyellowforyouthmentalhealth Day;
- International Women's Day;
- The Youth Mayor and Member of Youth Parliament Aspen took part in the annual Remembrance Day events in Bridgend;
- Members also took part in sessions through our Safeguarding week, highlighting information around substance use, domestic violence and mental health support.

The Deputy Youth Mayor, Gwion has been busy delivering his Trans Awareness training to the Youth Development Team and Senior Management Team in Bridgend. Gwion has been recognised for his service to the community through winning a High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan's Award.

The Children's Rights and Participation Worker then outlined some of the work and progress of the Young People Of Pride (YPOP) LGBTQIA+ Youth Club. More details regarding this were detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The Chairperson asked if there was membership on the Youth Council from all areas of the County Borough.

The Children's Rights and Participation Worker responded by saying that there were 10 members in the Youth Council at present, though there was a recruitment drive currently ongoing to increase this, including through schools. Representative groups from Heronsbridge and Welsh Language groups were being explored also to become involved with the Youth Council agenda. She added that work was also in progress with School Councils, in order to build a network of them feeding into higher Corporate Plans.

The Cabinet Member – Communities felt that the Youth Council and other groups could be involved in working with him on projects such as the Waste Contract, the Net Zero carbon agenda and the Green agenda, etc.

A Member felt that promotion of the Youth Council and how to become involved in it, should be made more aware in the valley areas of the County Borough, as there was no representation from the Ogmores Valley on there.

The Children's Rights and Participation Worker took this on board and added that further promotion of Youth Voice events could be explored, particularly as now there was extra support from two new Digital Youth workers that had recently been recruited.

The Leader and Deputy Leader in turn, also felt that the Youth Council could have some future involvement in the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the update report.

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22. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager gave a report, seeking Cabinet Committee Equalities (CCE) approval for a proposed Forward Work Programme for 2023–2024.

The Forward Work Programme was outlined annually in March, setting out a proposal for the Committee's key equality issues to be considered within the next financial year. The proposed Forward Work Programme was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Chairperson felt that Trans Lives in the County Borough should be considered as a future agenda item. He also felt that more work was required in respect of looking to establish Working Groups for certain individuals within the County Borough.

Officers stated that this would be considered as part of the wider Programme.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities approved the proposed Forward Work Programme 2023-24.

23. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 11:30