

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

**9 March 2017**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND  
PARTNERSHIP SERVICES**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2016/17**

**1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with a background to the requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), an overview of the council's approach to EIAs and an outline of EIAs undertaken in BCBC service areas in 2016/17.

**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 - one of which relates to assessing the impact of policies.

2.2 Undertaking EIAs also supports the council's following corporate priorities:

- Priority 2: Helping people to be more self-reliant;
- Priority 3: Smarter use of resources.

**3. Background**

3.1 In its publication, "The essential guide to the public sector equality duty: An overview for listed public authorities in Wales" The Equality and Human Rights Commission outlines the requirements for local authorities to:

- a) assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices (and those to be reviewed);
- b) publish reports of assessments showing a substantial or likely impact and monitor the impact of policies and practices.

Reports on assessments must set out in particular:

- a) the purpose of the policy or practice that has been assessed;
- b) a summary of the steps taken to carry out the assessment, including engagement;
- c) a summary of the information used in the assessment and the results;

d) any decisions taken in relation to those results.

In addition, when assessing the impact on protected groups, listed authorities must:

- a) comply with the engagement provisions;
- b) have due regard to any relevant information held.

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

##### **EIAs – an overview**

- 4.1 An EIA is a tool to assess whether new (or changes to existing) policies/services/functions could impact on different sectors of society in different ways. EIAs help the council make better decisions, identify how services can be more accessible or improved and consider the protected characteristics of race/ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, age, disability, faith/religious belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and civil partnerships and marriage.
- 4.2 Assessing the impact of proposed changes to policies and strategies is not just something the law requires, it is an opportunity to ensure decisions are based on robust evidence and that they:
  - include a consideration of actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any unfair impact on individuals or groups;
  - are based on evidence;
  - are transparent;
  - record the equality considerations which have been taken into account.
- 4.3 The council's EIA toolkit satisfies the EHRC requirements guidance and references the European Convention on the Rights of the Child. The online toolkit includes guidance for managers at each stage of completion.
- 4.4 The Welsh Language Standards require EIAs to consider:
  - whether a policy-related decision could have a positive or negative impact on opportunities for people to use Welsh;
  - treating Welsh and English equally;
  - ways to demonstrate how positive effects could be increased;
  - how any identified adverse effects could be decreased.
- 4.5 **Initial Screening EIAs** are undertaken to identify those policies and decisions requiring Full EIAs. The screening form enables the council to get a sense of whether a particular policy is likely to have a differential impact on any group of people, and whether mitigating action needs to be taken or a Full EIA carried out. An Initial Screening EIA must be carried out as part of the development of any new policy

or decision making process. This should happen early enough in the process to enable a Full EIA to be carried out (if required) before the policy or decision is approved.

4.6.1 **A Full EIA** is a systematic process of evidence gathering and analysis to ensure the council is meeting its equality duty. Full EIAs follow the same format and process as Initial Screening EIAs but require greater resources in terms of time and commitment to gather and analyse a wider range of evidence than would be required for an Initial Screening EIA.

4.6.2 A Full EIA must be undertaken if:

- that is the recommendation from a screening EIA and /or;
- the policy or strategy is a major one in terms of scale or significance to BCBC’s activities and there is a clear indication that it is likely to have an impact upon people who share a protected characteristic;
- despite the policy or strategy being minor, it is likely to have a major impact upon people who share a protected characteristic.

4.7 The lead person drafting or reviewing a policy or strategy within the service area is responsible for conducting the EIA. Involvement/consultation with the council’s Equality Officer and Consultation and Engagement Officer is critical to ensure compliance.

### **EIA Training**

4.8 An e-learning module is available for staff which provides an overview of EIAs, their role in improving services and a guide to conducting them. At the end of the module, staff have an opportunity to complete an EIA and compare this against an already completed version to assess how the module has assisted in terms of knowledge and understanding. By the end of December 2016, 108 council employees had completed this module as per the following table:

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>No. identified as requiring training</b>	<b>No. Completions</b>
SS & WB	29	25
Communities	43	28
Education and Family Support	29	26
OAPS	26	24
Finance	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>108</b>

26 employees have yet to complete the module. A Bridgenders e mail was issued in February 2017 encouraging more staff to complete this.

## **Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in 2016/17**

4.9 Between February 2016 and January 2017, 9 Full EIAs were undertaken and accompanied Cabinet reports. Please see appendix 1. 42 Initial Screening EIAs were also undertaken during this period (appendix 2) which were referenced in the relevant Cabinet report/s and indicated that the policy/ies being assessed could either be “screened out” or would require a Full EIA to be undertaken:

- a) Within 6 months or before approval of policy (high priority);
- b) Within 1 year of screening (medium priority);
- c) Within 3 years of screening (low priority).

## **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 Equalities Committee notes the progress made in the council during 2016/17 with the completion of Equality Impact Assessments.

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**Date: 27 February 2017**

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**Background papers: None.**