

**CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES - THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2018**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2018 AT 14:00**

Present

Councillor D Patel – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	HJ David	SK Dendy
J Gebbie	DG Howells	JC Radcliffe	SR Vidal
PJ White	HM Williams	RE Young	

Apologies for Absence

JE Lewis, KL Rowlands, CE Smith and E Venables

Officers:

Emma Blandon	Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager
Nicola Bunston	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Daniel Cook	Licensing Policy Officer
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Bethan Lindsey-Gaylard	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Yvonne Witchell	Team Manager Licensing

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee Equalities dated 23 November 2017, be approved as a true and accurate record.

19. DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: UPDATE ON SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to inform Committee of the issues faced by victims of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence in BCB communities, and to outline support avenues available for such victims.

The Chairperson introduced to the meeting, the Regional Business Manager from Calan DVS and the Council's Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, who gave a joint power point presentation on this important topic.

The presentation covered the following issues:-

- Background and aim
- Domestic Abuse in Bridgend
- How is Bridgend responding
  
- Victims
- Perpetrators

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- Children
- Assia Suite (One-Stop shop of support)

The avenues of assistance provided by the introduction of the 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015' – Royal Assent for which was given on 29 April 2015.

The above Act was also supported by certain other key pieces of legislation, such as The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, amongst others.

The aim of the first mentioned Act above, was to prevent, protect and support victims.

The provisions of the Act will ensure each relevant authority works to a shared, collective strategic vision, leading to improved more consistent services for those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Act also creates high profile leadership on the various issues, to ensure they are prioritised at a local and national level.

The Officers explained, that the Act also introduced requirements for:

- a) Welsh Ministers to:
  1. Prepare and publish a National Strategy;
  2. Appoint a National Advisor on Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- b) Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, Fire and Rescue Authorities and NHS Trusts (the relevant authorities), to prepare and publish strategies to contribute to the pursuit of the purpose of the Act
- c) Local Authorities to report on how they are addressing GBV, DA, SV matters within their educational functions, including any action taken within schools.

How is Bridgend Responding?

- National Training Framework – to ensure all members of staff are trained appropriate to the roles and responsibilities (through Welsh Government guidance powers)
- IDVA?IDSVVA and MARAC
- Refuge (female)
- Refuge (Male) (presently at the stage of exploration)
- Assia Suite
- Support Avenues for children and young people
- Support Avenues for victims
- Assessment for Families
- Intervention methods for perpetrators

The Presenting Officers in turn, expanded upon each of the above mechanisms of support, for the benefit of Members.

The report (and presentation) advised that the topic subject of debate, was collectively defined as:

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“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.”

This could encompass but was not limited to abuse categories such as, for example, the following:-

1. Psychological
2. Physical
3. Sexual
4. Financial
5. Emotional

Persons affected by Domestic Violence etc, were women, men, disability, ethnicity, age, and groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT).

The Members made the following points as part of their observations on Domestic Abuse and Violence etc:-

1. The importance of early intervention and prevention mechanisms being put in place;
2. The importance of all contributing agencies working cohesively and at the same pace and with the same common goals;
3. Developing further Domestic Violence preventative and control measures etc, against men as well as women;
4. A request for further data (above that contained in the report and presentation) detailing the number and different types of Domestic Violence that occurs across different groups of society, including for transgender (further including those in refuge);
5. There is enough support in place for elderly people who may suffer from Domestic Abuse;
6. That adequate measures of control are in place to support any new partners of high risk perpetrators.

The Leader and Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help closed debate on this item, by applauding the amount of work that was being done by the relevant partner organisations who worked together to provide support to victims of Domestic Violence, and welcomed further increased data, such as the evaluation of different trends; who was most at risk; and further information regarding positive outcomes for victims, etc.

He felt that information along the lines of this could be incorporated in a report at a future date to Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **20. ISSUES FACING DISABLED PEOPLE IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH - TAXIS**

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, which gave the Committee feedback with regard to wheelchair accessible taxis in the County Borough.

The Team Manager – Licensing advised that as a result of a request from Committee at its meeting of 13 July 2017, specific questions on wheelchair accessible taxis were added to the licensing consultation on taxis.

She then outlined certain information with regard to the consultation of the Licensing Authority, and the various outcomes of this, as was detailed in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report.

The Team Manager – Licensing emphasised that there was a small percentage of responses to the consultation, ie which numbered only 35 in total, and also the lack of further qualifying comments. However, she added there were some common themes that arose from the consultation, as follows:-

- Older purpose built vehicles (eg London Cabs) were available on the market and should be considered for licensing;
- Balancing the higher cost of purchasing a wheelchair accessible vehicle with for work for this type of vehicle;
- Other wheelchair accessible providers are available outside the taxi sector, and
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles should be easily identifiable to the public.

She continued by advising Members that in order to ensure that wheelchair passengers do not face discrimination when travelling, the Licensing Committee had approved the proposal to publish and maintain a list of 'designated vehicles' in accordance with provisions of the Equality Act 2010. A provision of the Act, placed a legal requirement on drivers of all licensed and 'designated' hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, to carry passengers in their wheelchairs, to provide reasonable assistance to those passengers, and prohibits taxi drivers from charging extra for the fare.

A further provision of the Act provided local authorities with powers to publish a list of 'designated vehicles' ie taxi's, that are wheelchair accessible, and the Licensing Section had written to all such proprietors of vehicles with this provision, advising them of their intention to include their vehicle on the list and that no appeals had been submitted. . There was also provision in the Act added the Team Manager – Licensing, for certain drivers of these 'designated vehicles,' to be exempt from these requirements of the Act, for example if they had a medical condition preventing them to do so.,

The Team Manager – Licensing, added that all hackney carriage/private hire drivers had been notified of these new requirements, and that they could request an exemption on grounds such as those mentioned above, if this was necessary.

She then further added, that a list of designated vehicles would be published on the Council website on 1 April next, and then updated as appropriate, on a monthly basis.

The Team Manager – Licensing concluded the report, by reminding Members that they had also been previously advised of the Welsh Government Consultation on reforming taxi legislation in Wales. A further report on this, would be provided once it had published more detailed proposals on the same.

A Member noted that only 35 taxi drivers had responded to the consultation. She asked what the percentage of this was when compared to the total number of drivers who had been contacted, (but had not responded).

The Team Manager – Licensing confirmed that 400 – 500 letters had been sent out to the trade, to which there had been 35 responses, which was approximately 7 to 8%.

A Member asked if any thought had been given to a training session being put in place for taxi drivers, in order that following this they would be in a position to cater for different passengers varying disabled needs and requirements.

The Team manager – Licensing confirmed that this formed part of the Driver Awareness Course (DAC) that all new taxi drivers had to attend (as new drivers).

A Member suggested that it should also be incumbent for existing drivers as well as new drivers to attend a DAC.

The Licensing Policy Officer confirmed that some research could be undertaken, in order to establish which existing drivers had completed the DAC, and those that had not, could be invited to a future(s) session, including those who had wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The Leader was disappointed with the level of response to the Licensing Authority's consultation. He added that he felt it would be helpful if the list of 'designated vehicles' to be published on the Council's website, could also be publicised. This would both increase public awareness and help with the engagement process with taxi drivers.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

21. UPDATE REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE (WALES) MEASURE 2011 AND WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager presented a report, that updated the Committee on the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

She advised that since the last meeting of Committee, an audit of the remaining 11 standards had taken place in order for the Authority to propose new compliance dates to the Welsh Language Commissioner's office.

Since this had been completed in February, the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager reported that the Commissioner's office had now been advised that two further standards had been complied with in respect of training. A meeting had also subsequently taken place with the Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services earlier this month, to discuss the Council's position on the 9 remaining standards. A further meeting in respect of these would be arranged with the Commissioner she added.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager had taken place on 5 December last, to discuss the Council's performance against the standards, successful practices, risks and challenges, as part of their ongoing review process of local authorities across Wales.

As part of this, they also carried out a mystery shopper exercise between April 2016 and March 2017, which also included standards that we were not required to comply with at the time. This section of the report also contained certain observations from the standards that the Authority were complying with at the time. These were in the form of feedback in respect of telephone calls, the Council's website and a few 'Other' issues.

On more general issues, the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager advised that staff continued to receive regular updates and reminders via email as well as being able to access a suite of Welsh language training.

All Welsh local authorities had also been contacted by the Commissioner's office with regard to the receipt of their compliance notices, relating to their draft Code of Practice which accompanies the Welsh Language Standards, in order that the interpretation of the Code was consistent for both the Commissioner's office and each local authority.

This would allow for local authorities to be clear on each standard in terms of what the Commissioner expected of them in the successful delivery of these. All Council's across Wales she added, would be held to account with regard to the differing standards each had to comply with.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager continued by stating that no formal complaints had been received since the update report in July 2017. She added that work was still ongoing in relation to the investigation into availability of swimming lessons through the medium of Welsh.

She concluded her submission, by advising that generally BCBC matched the interpretation of the Commissioner's office on the standards, though there was more work required by us on Compliance level 4 that relating to certain standards.

When the consultation was fully completed, the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager confirmed that these would be shared in the first instance with the Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee Equalities and the Leader.

A Member felt that it was encouraging to see that existing staff of the Council were looking to be trained in the use of the Welsh language, particularly those whose position within the Authority involved dealing with members of the public.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager advised that this was work ongoing, and that some employees had completed Level 1 of the Welsh Language Standard, and were looking to progress to Level 2. 400 staff had been trained since 2016, but further staff who dealt with customer services did need to undertake some training.

The Leader advised that apprentices and trainees should be encouraged to take up training in the medium of Welsh.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

22. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Members with an update of the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016-2020 for the period 2016-17, and the accompanying Annual Report for 2016-17.

The report outlined certain background information, and confirmed that the Annual Report 2016-17 attached at Appendix 1 to the report, covers the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, and must be published/made available by 1 April 2018.

The 7 strategic equalities objectives for 2016 – 2020 are as follows:-

- Transportation;
- Fostering good relations and awareness raising;
- Our role as an employer;
- Mental health;
- Children
- Leisure, arts and culture;
- Data

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager advised that Action Plans supported each of the above objectives.

She then referred to paragraph 4.3 of the report, which contained some key points to note from the Annual Report, including some key actions that had been taken, and she gave a resume of these for the benefit of the Committee.

A Member was pleased to see from the report that the Council had continued to mark, support and raise awareness of LGBT Fostering and Adoption Week, and he asked what level of interest there had been in this, ie including how many website hits, etc.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager confirmed that she would undertake some research on this, and come back to Members outside of the meeting.

A Member referred to page 32 of the Annual Report, and advised that he was sure that the situation with regard to information in respect of the number of employees within the Council, and the breakdown of these by gender and pay grade was required to be shared with Welsh Government, as we were a public body.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement Manager confirmed that she would need to check this point with the Human Resources and Organisational Department, and once more come back to Members as part of feedback from the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Committee noted the progress being made, and approved the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2016/17.

**23. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2017/18**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Members with an annual update on the Council's requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's), an overview of the Council's approach to EIA's, and an outline of EIA's undertaken in BCBC service areas in 2017/18.

The report gave some background information, following which it advised that an EIA was a tool to assess whether new (or changes to existing) policies/services/functions, or the removal of services, could impact on different sectors of society in different ways. An EIA also assisted the Council in making better decisions; identified how services could be more accessible or improved, and consider the 9 protected characteristics as well as the impact on the Welsh Language Scheme and associated Standards.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager continued by confirming that the Welsh Language Standards required BCBC 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, and
- How any identified adverse effects could be decreased.

The EIA toolkit was revised and updated in February 2018, including the EIA screening and full assessment forms.

She added that the ongoing administration of the EIA processes would be reviewed later in 2018 by the Equalities team, in order to support service areas in their management of the process.

The next sections of the report alluded to EIA training for staff through an e-learning module, and the number of employees who were identified for training in this area, including the number (and percentage) of those who completed this.

Paragraph 4.9 of the report then outlined further and more in-depth training that had been looked at for development, to be delivered by external trainers 'Red Shiny Apple'. There had been some take-up for this training during the months of February and March, with feedback from those who undertook this having been positive. The number of employees who had been trained had also increased from 17, which was the number who had attended at the time the report was written, to a current total of 46. This section of the report, also detailed the objectives that participants would secure as a result of the above training session.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager then gave details of the number of full EIA's that had been completed between February 2017 and January 2018, and these were listed in Appendix 1 to the report, and had previously accompanied Officers reports considered by Cabinet.

Appendix 2 then outlined the number of EIA screenings carried out for the same period, which totalled 42 in number.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager concluded her report, by advising that the information contained therein, would positively assist in the delivery of the Council's equality duties and aspirations.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Equalities Committee noted the progress made in the Council during 2017/18, regarding the completion of Equality Impact assessments (EIA's); the review of toolkit and forms, as well as progress made with training (ie through e-learning and the development of face to face training).

24. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018-2019

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report, that attached as Appendix 1 a draft Forward Work Programme (FWP) detailing items up and coming to be considered at future Committee meetings.

A Member felt that a further item should be added to the FWP for consideration at a meeting sometime next year, namely an update on Domestic Violence/Abuse (to include violence/abuse of the elderly).

Members and Officers agreed with this suggestion.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and the proposed Forward Work Programme for 2018/19 (containing the above additional item), be approved.

25. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 16:00