

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE
21 NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY COHESION SURVEY AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COHESION OFFICER WITHIN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update as requested by the Cabinet Equalities Committee on the Community Cohesion Survey and the role of the Community Cohesion Officer within Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.

3. Background

- 3.1 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
 - Deliver non Brexit activities as outlined in the National Community Cohesion Plan (2019).
- 3.2 BCBC, Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council make up the Western Bay Community Cohesion Region, which is led by a Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator based in Swansea Council.
- 3.3 The funding application for £140,000 for the Western Bay Community Cohesion Region was submitted and accepted.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A Brexit Community Cohesion Delivery Plan was developed as part of the funding application, which set out the key objectives, tasks and monitoring arrangements for

community cohesion across the region. A copy of the delivery plan is attached as appendix 1.

- 4.2 One of the key objectives in the plan was the development of a mapping exercise to better understand the impacts of Brexit on communities.
- 4.3 The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator developed a survey questionnaire which was hosted by BCBC Consultation, Engagement and Equalities team and made available both as an on line survey and as a paper questionnaire.
- 4.4 The survey link was sent to the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board and the Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum who were asked to circulate to their networks.
- 4.5 The Community Safety Team and the Police Youth Volunteers promoted the survey at engagement and awareness raising events across the County Borough.
- 4.6 A total of 183 people responded to the survey and a copy of the report can be found as appendix 2.
- 4.7 In summary, responses are as follows:
 - 183 people completed the survey, of those, 18 stated they did not live in Bridgend.
 - 71% of respondents are female, 28% male and 1% preferred not to say.
 - Only 2% of those who completed the survey stated they were EU migrants. 98% of respondents described their nationality as British.
 - 78% of respondents said they found it easy or very easy to engage with people from different backgrounds.
 - 7% of respondents stated they had been a victim of hate crime. Descriptions of incidents included 'my children are mixed race and were shouted at in the street', 'someone rude because I am a committed Christian', 'verbally abused for being gay', 'bullied and harassed by neighbours'.
 - 54% of respondents who were victims of hate crime did not report it.
 - 39% of respondents think the vote to leave the European Union (EU) has led to an increase in hate crime.
 - 7% of respondents believed the vote to leave the EU has had a positive impact on them personally.
 - 39% of respondents stated the vote to leave the EU had no impact on them personally.
 - 28% believed vote to leave the EU had a negative impact on them personally.
 - 26% didn't know what impact the vote to leave the EU would have.
 - 32% of respondents think the vote to leave the EU has had a negative impact on their community.
 - 21% believe the vote to leave the EU has not impacted on their community. 40% replied don't know.
 - 7% believe the vote to leave the EU has had a positive impact on their community.
 - 47% of respondents think the vote to leave the EU has had a negative impact on Wales generally.

- 32% don't know if the decision to leave the EU has had an impact on Wales generally.
- 16% of respondents feel that the UK leaving the EU may cause problems or tensions in their community.
- 37% of respondents don't know if the decision to leave the EU would cause problems or tensions in their community.
- 69% of respondents felt people in their area from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 60% of respondents felt people in their area treat each other with respect.

4.8 The survey allowed respondents to provide additional comments to each question, which are included in the report at Appendix 1.

4.9 **The role of the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator (the Co-ordinator) in Bridgend County Borough Council**

4.9.1 The role of the Community Cohesion Co-ordinator is to:

- Support the delivery of the Western Bay Community Cohesion Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) by working with the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator to identify and mitigate community tensions.
- Work with local partners including South Wales Police to monitor community tensions and hot spots, and co-ordinate a multi-agency response to reduce tensions and / or undertake preventative work.
- Continue the community mapping exercise to better understand the impacts of Brexit on communities, through direct engagement with local residents and communities .
- Undertake regular engagement with groups vulnerable to community tensions in relation to Brexit (EU citizens, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, and other protected characteristic groups), collating intelligence on tensions as they emerge.
- Work with community based groups to support them in building their capacity through social integration initiatives and identification of grant funding opportunities.

4.9.2 Interviews for the post were held on 3 October 2019, and a candidate was offered, subject to suitable references

5. **Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 There is no effect on policy framework and procedure rules.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no negative equality impacts. The Community Cohesion project aims to support those with protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups

7. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

7.1 The Community Cohesion project demonstrates the sustainable development principle by ensuring that by meeting the needs of the present they do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs this is evidenced through the 5 ways of working:

- Long term – the project seeks to understand and mitigate the long term implications on Bridgend residents and communities of the decision for the UK to leave the EU
- Prevention – working with partners to map and understand community tensions will help prevent serious problems occurring and mitigate existing tensions
- Integration – the project contributes to the wellbeing goals: an equal Wales, a healthier Wales and Wales of Cohesive communities and to the Wellbeing objectives Supporting communities in Bridgend to be Safe and Cohesive, and Reducing Social and Economic Inequalities
- Collaboration – the success of the role of the Co-ordinator will rely on collaboration with partners across Bridgend County and the Western Bay region.
- Involvement – a significant element of the project is based on engaging and involving residents and community groups

8. Financial implications

8.1 The proposal submitted for the region was successful and the region has been awarded £140,000 for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. This must be claimed in full by 16 April 2020. This is for year 1 of a proposed 2 year funding agreement.

8.2 BCBC costs for Year 1 are set out below and will be funded in full from the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Grant:

Community Cohesion Officer (new Post)	25 hours per week at Grade 8	£21,408
Travel Expenses		£1,000
ICT bundle		£1,336
Community Projects		£6,420
Total		£30,164

8.3 There is no additional financial contribution from BCBC.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Equalities Committee note and accept the contents of this report.

**Mark Shephard
Chief Executive
November 2019**

Contact officer

Martin Morgans

Email:

Martin Morgans@bridgend.gov.uk

Level 4,

Bridgend County Borough Council

Civic Centre

Angel Street

Bridgend

CF31 4WB

Tel:

01656 642154

Background documents: Welsh Government Community Cohesion National Deliver Plan