

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON THURSDAY, 17 JULY 2014 AT 2.00PM

Present:

Councillor D Sage - Deputy Leader and Chairperson

Councillors

H J David
M Gregory
P J White

Invitees:

Councillors

M Butcher
C A Green
C L Jones
R C Jones

Councillors

A D Owen
M Thomas
H J Townsend

Officers:

S Kingsbury - Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
E Blandon - Marketing and Engagement Manger
P Williams - Equalities and Engagement Officer
H Lewis - Marketing and Engagement Assistant
A Rees - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

71 INTRODUCTIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee was introduced to Sunil Patel, Amy Jones and Ian Simpson of Show Racism the Red Card and to Elaine Clayton Chief Executive of VALREC.

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons where stated:-

Councillor L C Morgan - Hospital appointment
Councillor M E J Nott OBE - Other Council Business
Councillor C Reeves - Holiday
Councillor M Reeves - Holiday

73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

74 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Committee - Equalities of 19 May 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the recording of the following invitees in the list of Members present:-

Councillor M Butcher
Councillor C A Green
Councillor R C Jones
Councillor A D Owen
Councillor M Reeves
Councillor M Thomas
Councillor H J Townsend

75 SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

The Committee received a presentation on the work undertaken by Show Racism the Red Card.

Sunil Patel informed the Committee that Show Racism the Red Card had commenced as a campaign in 1996 as a result of racist abuse suffered by a then professional footballer who influenced several of his fellow professional footballers to visit schools to raise awareness amongst young people about racism in society. He stated that Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racism charity and UNISON had become the first trade union to become involved in the charity. He stated that the charity produced resource material with footballers who undertake anti-racism workshops in schools, youth clubs and pupil referral units. The campaign has enlisted a number of footballers to deliver workshops and has facilitated training on the Equalities Act at Companies House and also undertook training for the Scarlets Rugby Team.

Sunil Patel informed the Committee that up until three years ago the campaign had received funding from the Council to visit schools in the Bridgend area to deliver anti-racism training. The funding had since ceased and the campaign was keen to explore avenues to work with the Council going forward.

The Committee viewed footage from a workshop it had undertaken with young people in Swansea using players and staff of Swansea City FC.

Sunil Patel highlighted to the Committee a case study involving a young person who was nine years of age at the time, whereby the campaign had undertaken a workshop at her school and two pupils had apologised for racially abusing that person. The young person had recently got in touch with the campaign as a 15 year old and her self-esteem had now risen.

Amy Jones of Show Racism the Red Card outlined to the Committee the feedback from teachers of Caerau, Pencoed and Bettws Primary schools as a result of anti-racism workshops being delivered there. The workshop undertaken at Caerau Primary School had been instigated by one of the local Councillors and Police Community Support Officers as a result of racist incidents in Caerau. An adult training session had been undertaken at the Noddfa Centre, with two more workshops to follow and an all-day football tournament would be held during the summer holidays.

Amy Jones also informed the Committee that the campaign worked with regional co-ordinators on community cohesion and outlined the outcomes of the Community Cohesion Workshops. She welcomed Councillors to attend and assist in workshops which they would deliver in the future.

In response to a question from the Committee, Sunil Patel stated that there the campaign's work in delivering workshops was directed by the funders themselves. He stated that work is easier to undertake in primary schools than in secondary schools, however its workshops were tailored to the target audience.

In response to a question from the Committee Sunil Patel stated that workshops were undertaken with parents, which was a harder audience to reach and also with teachers.

The Committee questioned whether follow-up workshops were undertaken with schools which had been previously visited. Ian Simpson stated that the workshops were directed by the funders themselves; however the organisation was keen to undertake follow-up work at schools it had previously conducted workshops to look at the positive outcomes. Feedback from school visits was stored. Show Racism the Red Card was keen to undertake workshops with parents, but it was often the case that the audience it wanted to attend did not attend their workshops.

The Committee questioned the levels of racial intolerance in schools. Sunil Patel informed the Committee that it had been identified that there are issues in schools amongst ethnic minorities where there were representatives from the travelling community attending schools, which presented a different kind of challenge for those schools. Amy Jones informed the Committee that there was more acceptance and better cohesion in schools with a higher percentage of multi-races.

Sunil Patel informed the Committee that he would encourage Members to attend their events at schools and would pass on dates of their future events to the Committee and he was also exploring working with the Council again.

The Committee considered the need to empower people and to engage with under-represented groups.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from Show Racism the Red Card for an excellent presentation.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report.

76 WELSH LANGUAGE (WALES) MEASURE 2011/WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The Equalities and Engagement Officer reported on developments with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards. He stated that the Measure will replace Welsh Language Schemes with a set of enforceable national standards, which would impact on the work of the whole Council.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer reported that the First Minister in October 2013 had announced a timetable for making the first set of standards relating to the Welsh Language, with the Welsh Government aiming to have drafted regulations for the Standards in September 2014 to be enforced by November 2014. The Council's Welsh Language Scheme would therefore come to a legal end at that point. He stated that the first set of proposed standards were published in early 2014, which the Welsh Language Commissioner used as the basis for a 12 week standards investigation, to determine whether Welsh councils, national parks and Welsh ministers could comply with the standards and, if so, which standards should apply.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer informed the Committee that the Commissioner carried out three standards investigations from January to April 2014, which formed the basis of the standards reports. The Council submitted its response by the deadline date and the Commissioner had concluded that all activities within the service delivery, policy making, operation, promotion and record keeping standards should be specifically applicable to the 26 organisations outlined and that additional standards should be specified. The Commissioner considered evidence submitted by all 26 organisations, 409 members of the public and the advisory panel. As a result the Commissioner had decided to give advice to Welsh Ministers

based on the emerging themes and respondents' views on the proposed standards and submitted a report on the standards investigation to the Welsh Ministers in May 2014.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer informed the Committee that developments in legislation offering a more consistent level of service to Welsh speakers were to be welcomed and he outlined the conclusions of the investigation. He stated that it was hoped that the Commissioner would introduce parameters within which councils will operate such as developing a Welsh intranet page instead of a fully bilingual intranet site, as to do so would not be proportionate to the numbers of Welsh speaking people in the County Borough. He stated that offering training to staff bilingually would not be feasible and bespoke Welsh sessions would be organised instead.

The Committee considered that the conclusions of the standards investigation were not feasible for implementation due to the numbers of Welsh speaking people living in the County Borough. The Committee considered that the increase in pupils attending Welsh medium schools in the County Borough would have a more positive impact on the Welsh language.

RESOLVED: The Committee received and considered the report on the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011/Welsh Language Standards.

77 EMPLOYEE DATA COLLECTION PROJECT UPDATE

The Equalities and Engagement Officer reported on an update on the work being done to capture employees' and elected Members' equality and sensitive information. He stated that the Council had published its first strategic equality plan in 2012 and its second annual report in 2014, with an objective to describe the actions the Council will undertake to address equality issues within its workforce. An objective within this action is that "a significant increase in the level of employee data collected will be available which will assist the identification of barriers and areas requiring action".

He reported that the implementation of phase 1 of the data collection exercise was planned over a twelve month period which concluded in November 2013. However, the response rate was low with 924 employees completing the survey. The project plan for phase 2 of the exercise was to be rolled out during 2014 targeted at staff in the Resources and Legal and Regulatory Services Directorates and for elected members to complete the data capture exercise. He stated that work had concluded on addressing the reasons for the original low response rate and a more engaging strategy encouraging employees to respond had been developed. The revised date for conclusion of the project is 28 February 2015.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the progress being made with the data collection project.

78 VALREC 6 MONTHLY REPORT ON CASEWORK UNDERTAKEN IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

The Equalities and Engagement Officer informed the Committee that the Council had a Service Level Agreement in place with VALREC to undertake work on its behalf and in accordance with the Service Level Agreement, the Committee would receive an update on the work undertaken by VALREC.

The Committee received a report from Elaine Clayton, Chief Executive of VALREC on the work undertaken by the organisation. She stated that VALREC is the only locally based provider of equalities services in the South Wales valleys, covering one of the greatest pockets of deprivation in Western Europe, evidenced by the continuation of European funding. VALREC had seen an increase in its casework and received funding from Bridgend County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and Caerphilly

County Borough Council, with Blaeanau Gwent, Merthyr and Torfaen Councils funding VALREC to undertake pieces of work on their behalf.

The Chief Executive of VALREC informed the Committee that it undertook casework, training and strategic work on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council and directed families who contact the organisation to the correct support.

The Chief Executive of VALREC informed the Committee that the organisation had received funding for an identity project which aimed to support and empower young people aged 14 to 25 years with the protected characteristics of race; sexual orientation and gender reassignment. The project will operate for three years and provide confidence building to enable young people with protected characteristics to gain the confidence and skills to exercise their rights and make informed choices, combatting isolation during their often difficult transition to adulthood, employment, training or further education. VALREC had also received funding for a three year Hate Crime Advocacy and Empowerment Project, to pilot the use of independent advocacy for victims of hate crime and empower communities affected by hate crime in the South East Wales area. Recruitment for the Project was due to commence shortly which had received big lottery funding. The outcome of bids for a transgender project and an advice giving project would be known on 6 August 2014 and 25 July 2014 respectively. The Increasing Black and Minority Ethnic Employment and Tackling Employment in activity project had received a further extension in funding until March 2015, whilst the Minorities are Wales Resources Project had been extended until December 2014.

The Chief Executive of VALREC outlined the case work undertaken during the last six months, wherein it had opened 35 case files as a result of supporting 21 individuals. The number of case files processed reflected resources and capacity of VALREC and was not a reflection of the extent of discrimination or of the level of demand on its services and did not include the number of people who had accessed the same services through VALREC's individual projects. She stated that the provision of case work support had had the largest impact on its limited resources.

The Chief Executive of VALREC also informed the Committee that VALREC had supported 175 people with protected characteristics through its advice and advocacy service, which helped people overcome issues that may directly or indirectly affect their ability to look for work, retain employment and access services. It had also run a number of courses from managing under-age sales prevention, health and safety to customer care courses. It had also assisted people with CV writing, job searches and in completing application forms to secure employment. VALREC had also worked with a number of organisations through training or direct guidance/support in the County Borough.

The Chairperson on behalf of the Committee thanked the Chief Executive of VALREC for her informative presentation on the work of VALREC. He stated that it had been necessary for the Council to reduce its funding to VALREC through the Service Level Agreement due to the need to adhere to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the six monthly report on casework undertaken by VALREC in the County Borough.

79 WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2013 - 2014

The Equalities and Engagement Officer outlined the Welsh Language Scheme annual monitoring report and sought the Committee's approval for its submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner. He stated that the report highlighted the Council's progress in implementing the Welsh Language Scheme during this period which had been prepared in accordance with the monitoring and reporting framework outlined in the scheme and responded to the requirements of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer provided a summary of performance during the year, highlighting progress and good practice and identifying shortfalls and mitigating actions proposed in relation to a number of projects. He stated that following a 2010 inspection of Welsh Local Government websites and on-line services, the former Welsh Language Board had identified that, at that time the majority of the Council's website pages were not available in Welsh. He outlined the progress being made on the Website Development Project. He also informed the Committee that Menter Bro Ogwr were to undertake a mystery customer exercise as part of the monitoring of the Welsh Language Scheme.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that he along with the Cabinet Member - Children and Young People had met representatives from RHAG which is a group of parents who have children in Welsh Medium Education and had complemented the Council on its positivity towards the Welsh Language.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer also informed the Committee that it had recently been announced that the Urdd Eisteddfod would be returning to Bridgend in 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Monitoring Report be approved for its submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The meeting closed at 3.56pm