

**CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES - TUESDAY, 27 JULY 2021**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 27 JULY 2021 AT 10:00**

Present

Councillor D Patel – Chairperson

SE Baldwin  
DG Howells  
RE Young

TH Beedle  
JE Lewis

NA Burnett  
CE Smith

HJ David  
HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

SK Dendy, J Gebbie and E Venables

Officers:

Debra Beeke	Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development
Nicola Bunston	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Riaz Hassan	Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

103. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 08/03/2021 be approved as a true and accurate record

104. ALL WALES RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE REPORT

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated Cabinet Committee Equalities on the All Wales Race Equality Action Plan and consultation.

She provided background on the All Wales Race Equality Action Plan which was at section 3 of the report. She added that the plan was a large complex document at 147 pages with around 64 goals and approximately 340 actions. It covers 13 policy themes and 5 cross-cutting themes.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager stated that a public consultation for the Welsh Government Race Equality action closed on 15 July 2021, and the Council Equality team sought responses from Corporate Directors to fully understand the operational implications of implementing the proposed actions before submitting a formal response to the consultation on behalf of the Local Authority.

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator highlighted the key areas within the Action Plan at Appendix 1 of the report. He drew attention to the diagram in Appendix 1 which summarised the whole approach towards the development of the REAP and that how the Vision-setting and the Goals fit together. He also outlined Local Government Commitment to Zero Racism and were summarised as follows:

- Local government in Wales has always stood firmly against racism and discrimination and is committed to promoting equality and fairness for all communities.
- There is widespread recognition that inequalities remain embedded in Wales and in its communities and that councils, the Welsh Government and public services need to do more individually and collectively to address entrenched inequalities.
- Councils responded to COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement during the summer of 2020, with several establishing race forums or task and finish groups to tackle racism or to undertake reviews of statues or street names.
- The WLGA contributed to several Welsh Government convened groups including the BAME Socio-Economic Advisory Sub-Group and the Welsh Government's Audit of statues and street names.
- The WLGA is coordinating the Welsh Government funded Hate Crime Project in schools, working with partners such as the North Wales Race Equality Network Ltd, Race Council Cymru, Race Equality Wales and Show Racism the Red Card and SAPERE: Philosophy for Children (P4C), to deliver the Hate Crime in Schools project across Wales, which will deliver training and produce resources on critical, collaborative, creative and caring thinking skills to teachers and others around tackling hate crime.
- Local authorities have a proud record in supporting and welcoming refugees and asylum seekers and in supporting their integration into local communities. All Welsh authorities participated in the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme and the majority have committed to continuing their participation in the further settlement of refugees across Wales. Four local authorities have also accommodated dispersed asylum seekers in their areas and more recently the majority of authorities also agreed to their participation in the future.
- The WLGA Council recently made a commitment to deliver an ambitious 'Diversity in Democracy' programme ahead of the 2022 elections to seek to encourage more diverse candidates to stand for election.
- The WLGA and each of Wales' 22 councils signed the #ZeroRacismWales pledge in advance of the publication of the draft REAP and to mark UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21st March. The pledge sees all councils commit to:
  - take a stand against racism and promote a more inclusive and equal society for all.
  - not tolerate racial prejudice, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, abuse, or violence against any individual.
  - stand in solidarity, come together, and say no to racism, in all its forms.
  - promote good race relations between people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in organisation.
  - promote equal and fair opportunities for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds to attain promotion.
  - eliminate unlawful race discrimination, harassment, victimisation and abuse

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator highlighted the following sections of Appendix 1:

- Leadership and Representation
- Local Government
- Social Care
- Education
- Housing

The Chairperson welcomed the report and iterated that Welsh Government had put a lot of work in this as could be seen from the level of detail provided in the report which showed the commitment from them in eradicating racism from Wales.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help echoed the comments made and said that it was pleasing to see the detail provided and the commitment from Welsh Government. She stated that social care staff were always needed in Bridgend and anything that can be done to encourage ethnic minority groups into our workforce was a welcomed.

A Member stated that there were a large number of complaints being made with underlying racism and this was something that as a society needed to be dealt with. He believed that a race equality commissioner, similar to that of a Welsh language commissioner, would be beneficial in tackling racism throughout the public and private sector.

The Leader welcomed the report and stated that it was a landmark initiative from Welsh Government. There were a significant number of action points to digest and it was important that this report came back to the Committee on a regular basis. He added that as communities across Wales differ greatly, it was important to tailor the plan to be specific to the Bridgend area to ensure the most is achieved from it.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities manager agreed that a report in March of 2022 would be beneficial to review the progress.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee considered the report and the attached appendices.

105. **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY 2021-2026**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities manager presented a report which updated the Committee on the development of the BCBC draft 5 year promotion strategy from 2021 – 2026.

She explained that the Welsh Language Standards placed a requirement on the council to produce a Five year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This was the Council's second strategy aimed to build on progress made over the last five years. She highlighted the Welsh Language Standards section at 3.2 of the report and the six objectives of focus that were part of the first strategy, this was listed at 3.3 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities manager explained that in devising this strategy, consideration had been given to the policy context and created a language profile of Bridgend County. Six overarching objectives have been developed and used information gathered from the consultation to work with services across the council to develop an action plan to achieve these aims. The Draft five-year Welsh Language Strategy was at Appendix one of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that A public consultation had been carried out, where key stakeholders including Welsh-medium schools in the county borough, and members of the WESP forum were engaged. The consultation received a total of 439 completions, and the responses were used to develop the Five-year Welsh Language Strategy 2021- 2026 action plan. This meant that our strategy used established national criteria but localises the information and targets. Details of the consultation were at Appendix two of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager stated that following the information acquired from the consultation and local and national developments, the following overarching objectives have been developed:

- Promote the use of the Welsh Language within the workforce
- Increase awareness of the Welsh Language and opportunities to use Welsh within Bridgend County Borough Council
- Support and promote the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Promote the use of Welsh Language and culture in town centre businesses and charities
- Participation and engagement
- Implement the new early years settings in Bridgend County Borough

Further details of these objectives were at 4.5 of the report.

She added that in addition to these objectives, a target had been set to increase the Welsh speaking population of Bridgend, in line with the Welsh Government 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers. The Welsh Government's strategy, Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, notes the Government's ambition of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. She provided statistics of the projected number of Welsh speakers by 2050 as well as the current Welsh speakers identified in the consultation. Figures of these were at 4.6 and 4.7 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that the survey responses received and the feedback gained was used to support the final development of the Draft five-year Welsh Language Strategy. A detailed action plan will now be developed during July and August 2021. The action plan will outline the specific tasks and actions to be undertaken over the next five years and will be outcome focused.

A Member was pleased with the report and positive engagement with the consultation. He added that the announcement from the Cabinet Member on developing Welsh medium primary education was very pleasing to see and believed that this would contribute to the 2050 goal. He added that some members of the public had issues with signage not being bilingual. He asked that we ensured future signage created was bilingual.

The Chairperson was pleased that we were going to promote the Welsh language within town centre and businesses and it was important to encourage the use of Welsh language outside of schools.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration agreed with the points made about using the Welsh language outside of schools and ensuring that it was practiced in all settings. He said that regular use of the language would also ensure that people did not forget how to use it from inactivity and to achieve the 2050 goal we cannot just focus on schools.

The Leader added that the proportion of Welsh speakers in the Bridgend area differed greatly and that the number of Welsh speakers in the highest speaking area was almost double that of the lowest speaking area. He believed that this needed to be considered when making plans on increasing the usage of the Welsh language in Bridgend.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet Committee Equalities approved the draft Five-year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and endorsed the development of the action plan.

106. **EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement and sought approval by the Committee.

She explained that an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement had been developed which demonstrated the council's existing commitment and approach to equalities. The policy statement provides the foundation for all policies, strategies and schemes and links directly to the council's Strategic Equality Plan. This policy statement was attached at Appendix 1 and reinforces the council's position on:

- Eliminating direct and indirect discrimination
- Harassment and victimisation
- Promotion of equality of opportunity
- Developing relations between people from different groups

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager added that as an employer and provider of services within our communities, the policy statement outlines the council's commitment to not discriminate against people on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity/reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or, belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is also recognised the importance of achieving a diverse workforce and the importance of recruitment practices being fair and consistent.

She advised consultation has taken place with the recognised trade unions and schools Governing Bodies will be encouraged to adopt this policy statement.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisation Development added that the policy statement could be seen as a practical step to reinforce what the Council already had in place. The Policy Statement added an additional document in conjunction with the Council's strategic equality plan.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement. He asked in relation to page 89 under the responsibilities section, if that could be reworded to include all staff so that it was clear that all members of staff had a responsibility to implement. He believed that it also made sure that staff felt that they could speak out against inequalities that they saw or heard.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisation Development added that all employees of the Council had a section in their job description that outlined their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding and upholding equality. The Leader followed on from this stating that it was important that the leaders of the authority were held accountable, but equally as important as the Cabinet member raised that all staff had a level of responsibility. He suggested that when communicating the implementation of the strategy that it was made clear on the responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement in Appendix one.

107. **ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUALITY IN THE WORKFORCE (2020/21)**

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisation Development presented a report, which summarised the equality profile of the council’s workforce as at 31 March 2021.

She advised that appendix 1 provided an equality profile of the council’s workforce as at 31 March 2021, with comparative data from the previous two years. The profile included protective characteristics of the workforce (gender, disability, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation); details of those in the workforce with caring responsibilities and Welsh language skills. There was a full data set available on gender and age although it is not mandatory for employees to disclose their sensitive personal information for equality monitoring.

She added that the equality information gathered for monitoring purposes has been reviewed to ensure that data collected will enable a better understanding of the council’s employment profile. Going forward this will mean employees will have additional options in relation to Gender, Transgender/Gender Identity, and Marital Status. Employees are encouraged regularly to provide and/or update their sensitive information and further promotion will take place once the system has been revised.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisation outlined some key areas of the trend analysis for the previous 2 years as of 31/03/2021 which included the overall headcount and gender, disability, minority groups, age, sexual orientation and others.

The Cabinet Member Communities mentioned that there was a slight increase in data for other groups other than straight, but wondered if there was any indication as to why there was not more data for these groups. He also asked about the layout and headings used in the tables if this could be made clearer.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisation noted the comments as something they were going to look in to in future reports.

The Chairperson added that in terms of gathering more statistics on groups, we needed to work together to ensure that people felt comfortable in talking about their sexuality and would value the comments and experiences of the Cabinet Member Communities and other staff wished to share their experience. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help agreed with the comments made but wanted to assure others that they were not being pressured to talk about something that they did not want to.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the information contained in this report and within Appendix one.

108. **STRATEGIC EQUALITIES PLAN ACTION PLAN REPORT (UPDATE ON WORK UNDERTAKEN BY DIRECTORATES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS)**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated the committee on the progress made in delivering the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 - 2024 during 2020 to 2021. She advised that this was the first review for this plan.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained that the 2020-2024 SEP was a statutory plan that impacted the whole of the council. It outlined the six overarching equality objectives as listed below:

- Education:
- Work

- Living standards
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety and respect
- Participation

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager highlighted the background at section 3 of the report and directed members to the progress for 2020-2021 attached at appendix 1. She highlighted the key points to note from the appendix which were listed at section 4.1 of the report and in detail in appendix 1.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and stated that this was evidence of the commitment of BCBC and its staff and Elected Members and thanked everyone involved and for the continued hard work in making progress.

The Chairperson echoed these comments and believed that the report showed the hard work that had been put in while helping to raise awareness on issues. She added that the report shows the level of engagement within the Council as well as outside organisations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet Equalities Committee received and considered the report and appendix

109. **WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which informed Cabinet Committee Equalities of the content and approach taken with the council's sixth Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2020/2021.

She advised that the council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2020/2021 covered the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and was published, as required, by 30 June 2021 and was also available on the BCBC website as of this date. The report was attached as Appendix one (Welsh) and Appendix two (English)

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager stated that as part of the report, we were required to report specifically on the following information:

- the number of complaints received by the council during the period;
  - the number of employees who disclosed Welsh language skills as at 31 March 2021;
  - the number of employees attending training courses offered in Welsh during the period;
  - the number of new and vacant posts advertised during the period categorised as posts where either:
    - Welsh language skills were essential;
    - Welsh language skills were desirable;
    - Welsh language skills need to be learnt;
    - Welsh language skills are not required.
- In addition to the information specified in section 4.2, updates on Equality Impact Assessments, customer contact and promotional activities have also been included.

A Member was pleased with the report and the progress that was being made by BCBC. He agreed with the commissioner in relation to the language used but did not believe this to be a major issue.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help was pleased to see that the resourcing was there to support Welsh language calls incoming to the Council but noticed that the demand had dropped. She believed that we needed to promote the service to the Welsh speaking community to reassure them that BCBC was equipped to handle calls in Welsh and to ensure that people are using the language in day-to-day life.

The Leader asked if the drop in Welsh medium calls had been reflected in other figures, for example, had there been more uptake in the chatbot or emails. The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager did not have the breakdown figures for emails or the chatbot but could provide those to the committee at a later meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet Committee Equalities received and noted the content of this report and the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2020/2021.

110. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated the committee on the council's requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), an overview of the council's approach to EIAs and an outline of EIAs undertaken in Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) service areas in 2020/2021.

She provided an overview on the Councils EIAs and the training that was provided to Officers to enable them to complete them. Further information was at section 4 of the report.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager provided figures on the EIAs undertaken in 2019/2020. She stated that between February 2020 and March 2021, four full EIAs were undertaken and accompanied Cabinet reports and these are listed in Appendix one. 26 EIA screenings were undertaken during this period and these are listed in appendix 2. These screenings 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.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the progress made in the council during 2020/2021 in the completion of Equality Impact Assessments, the progress made with training - e-learning and the development of face-to-face training and workshops in preparation for the implementation of the Socio-Economic Duty.

111. **UPDATE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS**

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report which updated the Cabinet Committee Equalities (CCE) on the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

She advised that since the council received its compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2015, progress towards implementing the 171 assigned standards has continued. Updates on compliance had been provided at every CCE since 28 April 2016.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager provided key progress/updates with compliance since the last update report which were detailed in section 4 of the



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report. She added that no new complaints had been received since the last update report.

The Chairperson was pleased to see that there were no new complaints since the last meeting as well as no outstanding complaints.

A Member echoed this comment and said that it was a learning experience for everyone involved and a great amount of progress had been made.

The Leader expressed his appreciation for the team over the years and their ongoing hard work since the departure of a former officer. The Chairperson agreed and said that BCBC was in a positive position and was proud of the progress made.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Committee Equalities received and considered the report

112. **URGENT ITEMS**

None