

CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES - MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor W R Goode – Chairperson

JPD Blundell	HJ David	N Farr	J Gebbie
D M Hughes	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	RL Penhale-Thomas	AJ Williams
E D Winstanley			

Apologies for Absence

A R Berrow, JC Spanswick, A Wathan and HM Williams

Officers:

Debra Beeke	Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Lucy King	Consultation & Engagement Officer
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Susan Roberts	Group Manager School Improvement

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ross Thomas declared a personal interest in all agenda items as he worked for a charity that specialised in equalities.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as an accurate record.

3. ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUALITY IN THE WORKFORCE (2021/22)

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report which provided the Cabinet Equalities Committee with a summary of the equality profile of the Council's workforce as at 31 March 2022.

She stated that Appendix 1 provided an equality profile of the Council's workforce as at 31 March 2022, with comparative data from the previous two years, where available. The profile included protected characteristics of the workforce (gender, disability, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation). There is 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.

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development highlighted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which was an addition in 2021/22 and aimed to reinforce the council's existing commitment and approach to equalities.

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development provided a summary of the statistics for each category in Appendix 1. Some key points were noted:

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- The council's workforce was an aging one, with the average age being 47. This reflected similar figures in other local authorities.
- Low figures were reported on sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity were new items included in the figures
- Caring responsibilities were reported by 7.5% of the workforce, an increase on previous years. This was something that the Council wanted to support the staff in doing so.

The Chairperson asked if the Council was looking at including non-binary as a figure in future reports.

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that this was something that is being built into the system to allow for reporting on, but it had taken longer than was expected. She hoped that this would be available in the next report to the Committee.

The Chairperson asked in terms of employees from ethnic minorities, did we know how this compared to the overall makeup of Bridgend County Borough. The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development believed the figure to be around 1.9%, but would clarify this at a later date.

The Leader mentioned that the number of students who were speaking Welsh in schools was much higher than that of the workforce in BCBC. In terms of succession planning and building on improving Welsh in the workforce, it may be a time to reflect on this and see what further work could be done.

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that there was a careers event approaching and we were working closely with the employability team and schools so this was an important event to raise these issues and awareness of the roles available in the Council. She added that a new apprentice appointment is planned within HR, who's role is to improve the support for current and help promote the opportunities for new apprentices, including new Welsh speaking apprentices.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities note the information contained in this report and within Appendix 1.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2021/2022

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services presented a report to provide members with an annual update 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 2021/2022.

He explained that the EIA is 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. EIAs should be carried out when making strategic decisions. EIAs help the Council make better decisions, identify how services can be more accessible or improved and consider the nine protected characteristics as well as the impact on the Welsh language.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that an EIA training module on the E Learning website was available to all employees and provided 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. He highlighted the number of staff who had undertaken training in the period Apr 2021 – Mar 2022 as indicated in 4.2.2 of the report.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services highlighted the EIA's undertaken in the year 2021/22. Four full EIAs were undertaken and accompanied Cabinet reports and these are listed in Appendix one. 33 EIA screenings were undertaken during this period and these are listed in Appendix two.

The Chairperson stated that it was encouraging to see over 250 staff undertake the EIA training. In terms of front-line services where EIA training is even more important, what was the council doing to promote the importance of EIA as well as the training modules.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that the team were closely working with HR and the Learning & Development section to promote the importance to staff and it was now included as the managers induction programme. He added that there was also an equalities officer within the team which will further look at Cabinet reports to check on the EIA's and reach out to the service areas that were lacking experience or completeness in this area.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities noted the progress made in the Council during 2021/2022 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.

5. **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY - ONE YEAR ON**

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services presented a report which provided the committee information on the Socio-economic Duty one year on from its implementation on 31st March 2021.

He explained that the Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31 March 2021 as a statutory requirement, with an aim to improve decision making and help those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, tackling inequality at the heart of decision-making, and build on the good work public bodies are already doing. The introduction of the Socio-economic Duty meant that public bodies now must think about how their strategic decisions, such as setting objectives and developing public services, can improve inequality of outcome for people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services highlighted that to ensure that the socio-economic duty is fully considered as part of the Council's governance and strategic decision-making processes, Bridgend Council has adopted the following initiatives:

- Include the Socio-economic Impact within the full corporate Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and initial screenings, to ensure Managers consider implications to the socio-economic disadvantaged.
- Produce guidance and corporate learning and development training for staff on the implementation of the Socio-economic Duty and Equality Impact assessment.

He added that a total of thirty-three EIA screenings and four full EIA's have been completed in the 2021/2022 financial year across directorates. Of the thirty-three EIA's completed, four indicated that there would be a positive impact on the Socio-economic disadvantaged, where the other ten were identified as no impact. Further details on this were at 4.3 of the report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities received and considered this information.

6. **UPDATE ON EQUALITIES WORK WITHIN SCHOOLS**

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services presented a report which provided Cabinet Committee Equalities with information on racial and/or discriminative incidents within schools, as monitored using the Racist Incident Report Form, along with initiatives to combat racism within schools.

He explained that In Autumn 2019, Welsh Government announced several grant funded streams to deal with hate crime. Amongst these was a project to work specifically in 100 schools across Wales. Its aim was to deliver critical thinking skills and raise awareness of all aspects of hate crime in schools, with a focus on pupils at Key Stage 3.

Following a series of meetings between WLGA, Community Cohesion Coordinators and preferred providers for delivering hate crime projects, a number of schools in Bridgend were identified on the basis of data on reported hate crime. Details on this were listed at section 3.4 and 3.5 of the report.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that in January 2020, WLGA commissioned Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC) as their preferred partner to deliver the project to identified schools across Wales. Further details on the project were at section 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that in the academic year 2020-21 there have been twenty-five racist incidents reported by schools across the county borough. These were listed at 4.1 of the report. with the details of these incidences being categorised as the following:

- verbal abuse or insults (18)
- racist comments in the course of a discussion (4)
- social media posts (2)
- refusal to cooperate with others because of religion, ethnicity, or language (1)
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Further information on the figures and actions taken was at section 4 of the report.

The Leader asked if we were able to identify any trends over the years on the figures provided.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services stated that the data was there showing trends and was happy to collate this and share with Committee as well provide at future meetings.

The Leader asked if the feedback received from the work that SRtRC had been doing was still positive. The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services was happy to provide data at future meetings on the feedback received.

The Leader asked if the delivery method was focusing on teachers or pupils as it alluded to both in the report. The Group Manager School Support stated that the delivery method applied to both teachers and pupils. The feedback received on this had been positive.

The Chairperson stated that the report noted that the work was focused on KS3 pupils however some of the incidences reported had been primary age. What work was being done to ensure that primary school were also receiving training. The Group Manager School Support explained that she was unsure of what additional training was being provided to primary schools over and above their normal teacher training, however would provide further details on this at a later meeting.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities received and considered this report.

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

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services presented a report which updated Cabinet Committee Equalities on the implementation of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards.

He explained 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 Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services provided details on the up to date number of complaints that had been progressed updated since the last report. Details of these were at section 4 of the report.

He advised that there was an outstanding complaint in relation to the Mynydd Cynffig school consultation, evidence had been provided to the Commissioner and we were presently awaiting the outcome of the complaint. There were no further outstanding complaints.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee Equalities received and considered this report and its appendices

8. **WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022**

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services presented a report which informed Cabinet Committee Equalities of the content and approach taken with the Council's seventh Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2021/2022.

The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that the Welsh Language Standards gave Welsh speakers improved, enforceable rights in relation to the Welsh language. The Council received its final compliance notice on 30 September 2015, which outlined 171 standards requiring compliance. Standards 158, 164 and 170 require the Council to produce and publish an annual report, in Welsh, by 30 June each year and does not require approval by the Council or the Welsh Language Commissioner prior to publication.

He advised that the Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021/2022 covered the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and was published, as required, by 30 June 2022. The report was attached as Appendix one (Welsh) and Appendix two (English). Further details on this were at 4.3 of the report. The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services highlighted key areas that the annual report covered.

The Chairperson stated that he recently emailed all Members on work that had been ongoing with the Democratic Services Team to ensure that Members had the same

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access and opportunities to learn Welsh as staff at BCBC. He added that he was starting a course shortly to further develop his abilities in the medium of Welsh and encouraged all Members who had spare time to take the opportunity to do so.

The Leader asked if it were possible to explore any available funding for the purpose of Welsh language centres for adults as this would further support the aims of BCBC in ensuring access to the wider public. The Group Manager – Transformation and Customer Services explained that we will be attending Bridgend College's Welsh Language coffee mornings to raise the profile of the Council and have discussions with the attendees there. He added that the team were looking to further build relationships with AWEN and Mentor Bro Ogwr and other companies in the borough.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee Equalities received and noted the content of this report and the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021/2022.

9. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 10:56