

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

20 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT ON RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE EQUALITIES AGENDA ACROSS BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (BCBC)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet Committee Equalities on plans to raise the profile of Equalities and build an action plan that will shape the Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP) objectives for 2024-2028.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty which states that the council, must consider the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other behaviour that is not allowed under the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people with and without protected characteristics, for example by removing or minimising disadvantages, meeting the needs of people who have a protected characteristic or encouraging participation in public life and activities.
- Encourage good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The council is committed to helping ensure that people of all protected characteristics can participate fully in our community as equal citizens. The nine protected characteristics are:

- age

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

4.2 **Strategic Equality Plan**

BCBC's Strategic Equality Plan sets out how equality objectives will be met, making services accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of those who live, work and visit the county borough.

4.3 Equality is diverse and we need to include people and their representative groups in our planning and decision making processes to help them unlock their potential. We also need to engage appropriately with people to help us meet our duties in the Public Sector Equality Duty in order to:

- Set future equality objectives.
- Review our Strategic Equality Plan.
- Identify how our work and activities may contribute to meeting the general duty
- Assess the likely impact on protected groups of our policies and practices being proposed or reviewed.

4.4 In order to achieve these objectives, the aim is to explore ways of raising the profile of equalities across the organisation by reviewing the current Strategic Equality Plan and exploring the opportunity to establish a corporate working group to review the current Strategic Equality Plan and to discuss and create relevant objectives to form the new actions for the SEP 2024-2028.

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

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but it enables us to effectively implement the Council's statutory duties in relation to Welsh Language Standards.

6. **Equality Act 2010 implications**

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

Long-term – Ensuring that the council is able to deliver bilingual services now and in the future.

Prevention – Improving services and upskilling staff will ensure that everyone regardless of language choice has equal access to services and thus preventing complaints and Welsh Language Commissioner Investigations.

Integration - By providing bilingual services to the public we make everyone feel equal and valued.

Collaboration - Partnership working assists the council in meeting its duties under the Welsh Language Standards. Working in collaboration with partners is further evidenced in the Five-Year Welsh Language Strategy.

Involvement - Publication of the report ensures that the public and stakeholders can review the work that has been undertaken.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Cabinet Committee Equalities notes this report.

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Background papers: None