

Meeting of:	CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES
Date of Meeting:	6 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	ANTI RACIST WALES ACTION PLAN UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	KIRSTY WILLIAMS PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	THERE IS NO IMPACT ON POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE RULES
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) was published in June 2022 and set out a purpose to collectively make a measurable difference to the lives of Black, Asian and Ethnic minority people. • A national review has taken place to assess the impact being made by the ArWAP. • Updates on the recommendations of the review are due this autumn. • Local implementation of the Plan has followed the national approach across identified areas of leadership and policies and will be influenced by the findings of the review.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide an update to Cabinet Committee Equalities on the work to deliver the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) for Bridgend.

2. Background

2.1 In early 2020, the Welsh Government started work on an action plan for race equality, following calls by the Wales Race Forum, and other grassroots organisations.

2.2 The killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people from ethnic minority communities reinforced the need for

action. This is underscored by social and structural differences, leading to health disparities and a range of other inequalities.

- 2.3 The Welsh Government and others in the public and third sectors have previously pursued approaches such as ‘equality of opportunity’, ‘managing diversity’, ‘integration and assimilation’, ‘multiculturalism’ and race equality to tackle institutional racism. These approaches had good intentions but were often neutral in their execution. They failed to take enough account of unequal power structures, especially in relation to racialised power in our society.
- 2.4 A national consultation was undertaken in 2022 on a race equality action plan that will help make Wales anti-racist.
- 2.5 The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) was published in June 2022 and set out a purpose to collectively make a measurable difference to the lives of Black, Asian, and Ethnic minority people.
The vision is for Wales to be an anti-racist nation by 2030.
- 2.6 The commitment to eliminate racism focuses on six areas where ethnic minority people experience racism:
 - Everyday life.
 - Service delivery.
 - Workplace inclusion.
 - Employment opportunities.
 - Representation in power.
 - Refugees and Asylum Seekers or other intersectionality.
- 2.7 Welsh Government and Criminal Justice Wales collaborated to host a summit in May 2023 on ‘One Welsh Public Service Approach to Anti-Racism’. Key aims for the summit were around committing to action to implementing the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and enabling leadership from across the Welsh public sector to share the vision of Wales becoming anti-racist by 2030.
- 2.8 Welsh Government published an annual report ‘Anti-racist Wales Action Plan – A Year On’ updating on the progress being made nationally in December 2023.

3. Current situation

- 3.1 Section B of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan details actions for different areas of leadership and policies.
- 3.2 These same eleven themes have been considered locally and a desktop exercise has been undertaken to map out what is already in place locally.
- 3.3 In March 2024 the Welsh Parliament’s Equality and Social Justice Committee published ‘[Action not words: towards an anti-racist Wales by 2030](#)’. The document

commends the scale and ambition of the aim to be an anti-racist nation by 2030 but states the Plan “will struggle to make meaningful progress unless the complexity of its governance arrangements are simplified and the role of partner organisations are better explained and clarified”.

- 3.4 Of the recommendations in ‘Action not words’, there are two of particular note for Bridgend County Borough Council to consider:
- The Welsh Government should conduct a rapid review of the structures established to facilitate collaboration and oversee implementation of the ArWAP
 - The Welsh Government should consider utilising the expertise of an external organisation to examine the Strategic Equality Plans (SEPs) of each public body in order to identify improvements as part of the setting of new Plans in April 2024 and report back by October 2024.
- 3.5 The Committee asked for feedback from public sector bodies. Several Councils and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) said they were not clear in their role and responsibilities in delivering the actions in the ArWAP.
- 3.6 The Future Generations Commissioner noted that “integration of anti-racism measures into all strategies and plans is critical to ensuring all actors and departments in public bodies are delivering against them”. This approach has been considered by the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager and the Community Safety and Partnerships (CSP) Manager to identify how delivery of the ArWAP can be taken forward within Bridgend.
- 3.7 Most notably, the work to develop the new Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and its Action Plan have been carried out through an ‘anti-racist’ lens and recognising the need to change and be more active in tackling engrained racism. Consideration has been given to how the aims of the ArWAP can be incorporated into service level objectives from the SEP.

Human Resources (HR) have been engaged to consider how delivering the Plan will impact on existing and future workforce and policies.

Within education, a new equality group has been set up and there is an identified intention to work more with Diversity and Anti-Racism Professional Learning (DARPL) to become anti-racist and understand what that means for our schools.

Closer working between departments to learn from experiences and improve understanding will also be important.

- 3.8 A clearer understanding on expectations for delivery is hoped for following the updates on the recommendations of the Welsh Parliament’s Equality and Social Justice Committee review expected this autumn. Once known, this will allow the findings of the desktop review to be taken forward, particularly around addressing gaps.
- 3.9 Whilst the updates are awaited, work carried out which is aligned to local ArWAP delivery includes:

- Community Safety and Regional Cohesion held a 'drop in' clinic for staff and Members during Hate Crime Awareness week covering issues around community cohesion and diversity, and officers also attended the 'Anti slavery conference'.
- Activities for that same week included youth workers holding relevant sessions and talks across youth club provisions and with year seven groups across secondary schools.
- The Cohesion Officer and CSP Manager have also been taking part in themed monthly seminars hosted by the ArWAP team at Welsh Government and participated in the Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equalities Forum.
- Projects with Bridgend College have been successful in Bridgend town centre, creating a more vibrant space and promoting visuals and messages on the theme of diversity and inclusion. Further work with the College is planned as part of 'Black History Cymru 365' (BHC365).
- Alongside community and stakeholder engagement, work continues on tension monitoring within local communities and schools. Monthly updates are sent to Welsh Government on community tensions and hate crime incidents. Updates are all fed into Bridgend CSP through the regular strategic meetings, with a specific cohesion update. Rates of hate occurrences are covered in the Community Cohesion Annual Report.
- Bridgend was the pilot area for the 'StreetSnap' app and drew a lot of media interest. This App is helping to identify and report hateful graffiti, stickering and images in the county borough and collect accurate data on hot spot areas and graffiti trends. It is proving a useful engagement tool across the council and partners, with South Wales Police being particularly strong advocates. A training module is being prepared that will be available to all staff as e-learning, and there are supporting documents available, such 'Signs and Symbols' reference sheet.

3.10 Partners such as South Wales Police have been engaged to understand how they are adopting and taking forward ArWAP.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The work to locally deliver the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan demonstrates the sustainable development principle by ensuring that by meeting the needs of the present we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is evidenced through the five ways of working:

- **Long term** – the work seeks to understand and mitigate the long term implications on Bridgend residents and its diverse communities, as a result of ongoing changes to the social and political climate.
- **Prevention** – working with partners to understand the different experiences those in our communities have faced and the impact this has will help prevent serious problems occurring and mitigate existing tensions.
- **Integration** – the project contributes to the national well-being goals: an Equal Wales, a Resilient Wales, and a Wales of Cohesive Communities and to the Well-being objectives of 'Protecting our most vulnerable', 'Creating thriving valleys communities', and 'Making people feel valued, heard and part of their community'.
- **Collaboration** – successful delivery of the Plan relies on collaboration with partners across Bridgend County and the wider partnerships, such as Western Bay Community Cohesion and Bridgend Community Safety Partnership.
- **Involvement** – the consultation with partners, stakeholders, local residents, communities and elected members will help us to achieve the national vision of becoming an anti-racist Wales.

6. **Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no Climate Change implications linked to this report.

7. **Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 In considering how we deliver against the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan Bridgend County Borough Council is ensuring that all people living in the county borough are safe and protected.

8. **Financial Implications**

8.1 This is an increased requirement on the Council which is not funded and therefore having to be met within existing resources.

9. **Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Committee Equalities note the content of this update report.

Background documents

None