

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2014 AT 10.00AM

Present:

Councillor D Sage - Chairperson and Deputy Leader

Councillors

M E J Nott OBE
H J David
M Gregory

Councillors

C E Smith
P J White

Invitees:

Councillors

M W Butcher
M Thomas
H J Townsend

Officers:

R Rees-Jones - Marketing and Engagement Manager
P Williams - Equality and Engagement Officer
H Coatsworth - Marketing and Engagement Assistant
R Hassan - Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator
G P Jones - Head of Democratic Services
M A Galvin - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

80 CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENT/INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairperson of the Committee invited to his first meeting the new Member of Cabinet, Councillor C E Smith.

He also asked all those present to introduce themselves to other Members/Officers.

81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Councillor L C Morgan	- Unwell
Councillor A D Owen	- Other Council Business
Councillor C A Green	- Holiday
Councillor R C Jones	- Holiday
Councillor C L Jones	- Prior Commitment
Councillor C Reeves	- Holiday
Councillor M Reeves	- Holiday

82 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Committee - Equalities of 17 July 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record.

83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

84 DEMOCRATIC DIVERSITY

The Member Diversity Champion and the Head of Democratic Services jointly presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform Cabinet Members of the action plan being developed by the Diversity Champion to take forward the diversification of democracy initiated by the Expert Group and set out in *On Balance: Diversification Democracy in Local Government in Wales*, published in March 2014.

The report contained some background information, and confirmed that on 27 May 2014 Cabinet appointed Councillor H Townsend as the Diversity Champion. She had met with Welsh Government representatives to discuss plans for progressing the aims of a report entitled the “On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales”.

The “On Balance” report identified a number of recommendations for a variety of bodies including The Welsh Government, Political Parties, One Voice Wales and Local Authorities. The intention is to ensure that the people who make decisions on our behalf are in tune with their local communities and reasonably reflect the diversity of the people that they represent. A full list of the Expert Panel recommendations could be seen in Appendix 1, to the report.

The Member Diversity Champion, advised that there were several recommendations that are likely to require involvement of local authorities. Some of these were detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report, upon which she elaborated.

She explained that discussions had been held with the Head of Democratic Services and the Equalities and Engagement Officer to determine possible courses of action which could facilitate these aims.

The Member Diversity Champion added, that an initial action plan has been developed and was shown at Appendix 2 to the report. Key actions of this would include:

- the collection and analysis of current diversity information;
- the recruitment of suitable Elected Member mentors;
- identifying appropriate mentees to shadow elected members;
- identifying members to participate in secondary school briefings

Further work would be undertaken to develop the action plan and the Diversity Strategy to meet the requirements of the “On Balance” report and improve the Democratic Diversity within the County Borough.

Some of this work had commenced, in that she together with Officers had visited the Mosque in Aberkenfig to meet with some of the Muslim community.

On 22 October next, a meeting would also be convened with Member Diversity Champions from other local authorities, to discuss how further work could be developed and taken forward.

A training programme would be developed for these Members, to be undertaken in January 2015, and a Forward Work Programme would then be rolled out by April 2015

Finally, she explained that the Authority has not received any funding from the Welsh Government to progress the recommendations of the “On Balance” report. Following

consideration of this report and confirmation of the proposed plans, appropriate levels of funding would be pursued through the Welsh Government.

A Member asked for clarification upon how potential would-be Councillors standing in the next local election would be mentored to become possible Diversity Champions.

The Member Diversity Champion, referred to Page 16 paragraph 1.2 of the report, and explained that work would be undertaken through the four main political groups both individually and collectively, and this would also form part of the introduction and induction process to becoming a Councillor, and form part of the next term of office Member Canvassing Programme. Individuals from under-represented groups in any community would be particularly encouraged to participate in issues of a diversity nature she added.

The Member Diversity Champion stated that she had also been involved recently in attending conferences in respect of the disabled to look for mentors in relation to diversity, and that future work would include visiting secondary schools and actively negotiating with bodies such as the Youth Council. The work was more about going into the community rather than the community coming to us she added.

A Member asked if the exercise also involved liaising with private businesses and the social enterprise.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this would be the case as part of the Action Plan through the Marketing and Communications Team. It was planned to have a series of small events in towns within the County Borough to engage with the public on the democratic process and initiate a campaign promoting the benefits of being a Councillor, including other issues such as encouraging involvement in key topics such as diversity.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People stated that it could be beneficial to engage with the Bridgend Association of Section Heads rather than individual schools, to advocate briefings regarding the democratic process and role of a councillor, in conjunction with Local Democracy Week, that was planned for some time next year. Older pupils in schools should also be reminded that they now have to register to vote when they reach 18 years of age. Work could also be initiated through bodies such as the Citizen's Panel he added.

The Deputy Leader concluded debate on this matter, by applauding the Diversity Champion for the hard work she was committing to this important topic, and to the Officers who had supported her to this end.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee Equalities noted this report.

85 COMMUNITY COHESION

The Corporate Director - Resources submitted a report, which informed Members of the work undertaken by the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator for Bridgend County Borough.

The Chairperson then introduced the above Officer to give a power point Presentation.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator explained that Community Cohesion, was a term to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect.

This was developed to promote a common sense of belonging; positively value diversity; tackle disadvantage and inequalities, and promote interaction in the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods.

By way of background information, he advised that Community Cohesion is a Welsh Government Initiative which started with 'Getting Together' - A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales (launched on 3 December 2009). This was developed through the following three phases:-

Phase 1 : Funding towards Community Cohesion initiatives;

Phase 2 : 2012, Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinators employed to mainstream Community Cohesion;

Phase 3 : 2014-16, Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan with seven key outcomes.

The Getting on Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales explained that we lived in increasingly diverse communities which face challenges such as economic migration, intergenerational differences, the impact of poverty, growing influence of extremism, integration, valuation difference and, focussing on the shared values that join people together.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator explained that we were living in a changing world, whereby in 1965 75m people lived outside the home country, now this was 200m, 600,000 British people live in Spain, many more from other countries; and other parts of the world (e.g. 200,000 NZ); or, with second homes. In terms of travel, 25m tourists visited the UK in the course of a year, added to 70m visitors from within the UK. Globalisation in many forms that included international students, business and finance.

There were therefore some key challenges to meet, with impacts on our neighbourhoods, for example

- Broader diversity: Over 300 languages in London schools; 150 + in other cities;
- Rural areas becoming more diverse too;
- Changing population composition: e.g. schools becoming more diverse.

In terms of managing the interface, the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator confirmed this included:

- Between and within black minority ethnic communities;
- Recognising it was no longer a black v white issue;
- Between generations;
- Dealing with the extremism issue - and understanding diversity within communities

With regard to a measured approach being taken to Community Cohesion, he explained that this was done through the Welsh Government Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan; Supported by the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator. It also involved practices such as the Local Delivery and Governance of Community Cohesion.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator then referred to the CoCo National Delivery Plan. The aim here was to continue to strengthen, mainstream and sustain both local and regional CoCo approaches and support high level outcome communities across Wales, to ensure they are safer, cohesive and resilient (Future Generation Bill). He went on to explain of the need to tackle the greatest cohesion challenges in Wales across communities, and of the need for implementation of the delivery plan via regional co-ordinator posts across Wales.

The aim of the Strategy was to provide seven key outcomes. These were:

- To understand hate crime, victims make reports/get appropriate support;
- To understand modern slavery, victims reports/get appropriate support;
- Increased awareness and engagement across G&T communities;

- Increased awareness and data established on immigration;
- To ensure C1st staff are knowledgeable about CoCo issues and communities across the protected characteristics are involved in the C1st programme;
- To ensure key policies and programmes are evidencing delivery against coh priorities;
- Ensuring policies and services are responsive to changes in communities.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator then referred to the following in some more detail.

Hate Crime:-

- Welsh Government - tackling hate crime and incidents: Introducing A Framework for Action;
- The introduction of an all Wales Hate Crime Reporting Centre and Support Service;
- To encourage an increase in the number of reported hate crime/incidents;
- Staff and Members accessing Hate Crime training and E-learning resource (including third sector organisations);
- Increase multi-agency approaches to address high risk levels of hate crime (MARAC)

Modern Day Slavery/Human Trafficking:-

- The illegal trade of human beings mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and less common but human tissue (organ harvesting);
- A significantly low level of awareness around modern slavery/human trafficking was a barrier;
- Establish a focal point for the organisation;
- Establishing a WB Regional Anti-Slavery/Human Traffic Multi-Agency Forum;
- The introduction of a victim pathway process to support the development of MARAC approach;
- To train the trainer sessions - Awareness sessions to staff/Members and key agencies;
- With regards to safeguarding and exploitation, there was a need to review the current governance arrangements;
- Strengthening the existing arrangements and assess how we share and record relevant information and undertake trend analysis and take necessary actions, if and when needed.

Gypsy and Traveller Communities:-

- This is a complex and challenging area due to strong public attitude towards the Gypsy and Traveller community;
- To raise awareness via training, and collaboration amongst key service providers;
- To establish a regional gypsy and traveller multi-agency forum;
- The new Housing (Wales) Bill places a duty on local authorities to provide sites for gypsies and travellers where such need has been identified;
- No local authority gypsies and traveller sites in Bridgend County Borough Council, but the accommodation need of neighbouring Neath Port Talbot could affect demand for pitches in Bridgend County Borough due to cross-boundary migration;
- To note that residents from Cae Garw site in Neath Port Talbot currently access Health and Education Services in Bridgend County Borough.

Immigration:-

- Estimated population is 140,480 (30 June 2013 ONS), increase by 2% (2,697 people), in the last five years. International net migration between 2005-2010 were -230 (1,020 in and 1,250 out);
- 97.8% people were white, 1.1% Asian (British), 0.7% mixed and 0.2% black African/Caribbean British. Anecdotal evidence suggest the Eastern European population is increasing.
- 62.9% are belonged to 16-64 and 18.9% were in the age group 65+;
- There remains no accurate method of calculating the number of people including migrant workers in the UK, Wales or Bridgend. Contact/Customers services to start recording ethnicity and nationality monitoring process;
- Myths and rumours remains a key concern. To dispel myths about immigration it would be beneficial to have a co-ordinated multi-agency approach.

Communities First and Engagement:-

- Residents engagement and participation can promote positive relations e.g. special schemes - church/mosque visits, living libraries, cooking together, cultural, faith and community facilities;
- Establish the numbers and profile of people belonging to different groups and communities;
- Communications programme, to dispel myths, to provide information and to tackle real concerns;
- Clusters to develop equality and diversity monitoring systems;
- In partnership with Clusters, develop best practice of engagement across PC communities across three themes;
- Support the Community Involvement Plan and Cluster Delivery Plan.

Mainstream:-

- Local Authorities to understand which key policies and programmes are relevant to community cohesion;
- The Single Integrated Plan to reflect and deliver against local cohesion priorities;
- The Strategic Plan being able to demonstrate priorities through promoting Good Relations to reflect this element of Equality Act 2010;
- To explore and develop community cohesion training as part of core Equality and Diversity Training within local authorities;
- To raise awareness, engage and support Third Sector Organisations to develop cohesion related projects and work.

Changes in Communities:-

- The Local Authorities to recognise changes to community demographics through Community profiles and mapping;
- Bridgend population rose by 10,500 between 2001 and 2011, higher average age in Porthcawl, the second largest religion after Christianity is Islam, followed by Buddhists and Hindus, Bridgend also has a large Polish group.
- The Local Authority to understand which key policies and programmes are relevant to community cohesion;
- To ensure tension monitoring systems are sustainable and responsive to emerging tensions when they arise;
- To fully take account of the impact of welfare reform on most vulnerable groups.

With regard to Community Cohesion and Equality Duty, the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator explained that this duty clearly overlaps with the aims and ambitions of the community cohesion agenda. The equality duty places a legal requirement on local authorities to address matters critical to community cohesion (equality, tackle discrimination/inequality and promote good community relations),

He added that equalities was important to community cohesion, as equality and freedom from discrimination were pre-requisites for community cohesion, actual/perceived inequalities and unfairness undermine cohesion. He further added, that the equality duty requires local authorities to remove/minimise disadvantages suffered by protected groups, taking steps to meet their needs and participation in public life.

In respect of community cohesion, and the role of Elected Members, the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator advised that Members had a very important role to play in championing community cohesion. This included to make sure how the Council went about its day to day business, and not to consider community cohesion to be just another initiative. There was also a need he felt, for allocating Member responsibility for championing community cohesion as part of mainstreaming. However, Members may need support in order to fulfil their role here through Member training and awareness sessions.

In conclusion of his submission, the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator advised that whilst prioritising work, Members may wish to consider the following areas of focus:-

- The effects of these key challenges and the subsequent impacts on policy, service delivery and decision making;
- To assess current CoCo structure and Governance arrangement, and see if it is fit for purpose;
- To check to see if procedures and mechanisms are robust? For example, would the Authority's designated child protection lead officers know what to do? Are children's Social Services specifically highlighting concerns for child trafficking;
- How the Council measures and identifies potential incidents;
- Establishing the make-up of the different communities and finding out just who is using Council services.

The Chairperson thanked the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator for his submission.

A Member was concerned with regard to immigration and how this was interpreted and publicised by radical groups. He felt there was a need to engage within social media to publicly emphasise the true facts regarding this and to dispel misinterpretation by some of the public at large.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator agreed with this, and this was compounded by the fact that some political parties such as UKIP were anti-immigration and this was being actively published through the national press and news media. The immigration population in the UK was just 3%, however, a poll undertaken with the public would reflect that they believe this figure to be far more than this, at around 30%.

He added that key staff such as Equalities, Marketing and Communications staff, needed to get out to members of the public through door to door leaflets or via the Bridgend County Borough Council website the true facts relating to matters such as immigration laws, and human trafficking, racism and other related issues referred to in his presentation. It would be worthwhile he felt, for elected Members to receive relevant training in mainstreaming community cohesion work in committees comprising the Bridgend County Borough Council, and to get the right messages out through engagement with the public. He offered to provide awareness raising sessions to this end.

A Member also felt it would be worthwhile to target certain problem areas in the County Borough, where racism was targeted against individuals from Eastern-block countries such as Poland, and to educate people with a view to breaking down animosity between neighbours.

The Leader confirmed that he agreed with the points made by Members, and that the national press were pointing the wrong picture. He pointed out that people from certain other European countries were entitled to reside in the UK due to European law and guidelines and that they embraced this opportunity fully by not just being here but working also. He also felt that laws needed to be firmer in respect of human trafficking, and that the Courts needed to consider issuing stiffer sanctions to offenders of this.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator advised that there was training planned for the Crown Prosecution and Police in relation to dealing with individuals who break the law through human trafficking.

A Member advised that Officers were also undertaking work through Projects such as "Show Racism the Red Card", where this would be shared with pupils in schools at Pyle where children of gypsy travellers were being educated. Members would also receive a Member Development session on this topic, as a number of them were school governors, and this would allow them to get the message over to schools with regard to problems of racism and hate crime etc. It was crucial she felt to educate people especially those of a young age.

The Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator further added that a Victim Reporting Centre was going to be established, in order where people subjected to various forms of abuse could go to seek guidance and support.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Equalities Committee received, considered and noted the report and accompanying Presentation.

86 SIX MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ACTION PLAN

The Equalities and Engagement Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide Members with an update on the implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality objectives.

The background to the report, highlighted that the Equality Act 2010 introduced a general duty for public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, absence of equality of opportunity and to foster good relations in relation to certain protected characteristics. These were outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Arising from the above Act, there was a requirement for bodies such as local authorities, to produce a Strategic Equality Plan supported by an Action Plan that was introduced in September 2012. Progress on this Action Plan was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer reminded Members that in April 2012 the Strategic Equality Plan was approved and published, and as a result of this, equality objectives had since been mainstreamed into Directorate Business Plans which would be monitored by the Cabinet Committee.

The revised Action Plan would be updated six monthly where objectives would be included therein, under a RAG type status, Red (not achieved) Amber (ongoing) Green (fully achieved). He pointed out to Members that a lot of objectives in the Action Plan were now showing green ahead of time.

In terms of a few notable headline achievements, he confirmed these to be as follows:-

- (1) Visiting the Mosque in Aberkenfig and introducing Awareness Raising Sessions regarding their religious beliefs.
- (2) Introducing a "Stamp out Bullying calendar competition" where pupils within 12 different schools have been invited to give their interpretations surrounding a certain topic. This would culminate in an Awards event in November 2014.
- (3) "Show Racism the Red Card" training, to be rolled out to schools and the subject of an elected Member training session, to be held probably around January 2015.
- (4) The Holocaust Memorial Day - as a result of the 70th Anniversary of the Auschwitz Liberation next January, where a Holocaust survivor would be speaking.
- (5) The introduction of a LGBT Forum. There was also planned for some time in November, a LGBT Network meeting.
- (6) The re-launch of an Employer/Member Data Collation exercise, under a new and revised marketing campaign.
- (7) To undertake a process of community engagement on the topic of Community Cohesion, particularly addressing some of the important issues raised in the presentation made earlier in the meeting.

Members also felt that it would be beneficial to include within the Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan, plans for proposals to more effectively integrate individuals and families from countries such as Poland into the Bridgend County Borough Community as part of a push to increase and enhance diversity.

The Deputy Leader closed debate on this item, by thanking the Equality and Engagement Officer and Members of his team for the achievements that had been made as identified in the Action Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Equalities Committee considered the progress being made in relation to the Strategic Equality Plan 2013 - 2016 Action Plan.

87 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Equalities and Engagement Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which was to provide the Cabinet Committee with an update on equality and diversity learning and development for Council staff, Elected Members and citizens.

Following some introductory background information, he confirmed that the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme outlined a commitment to implement, evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of equality, diversity and Welsh language training for staff covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation related to job roles.

A 3 year learning and development plan had been developed outlining the level and type of training, together with targeted numbers of staff.

The delivery of equality and diversity training would be a mix of E Learning packages, in house provision, and with partners covering the topics such as those listed in Paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The Equality and Engagement Officer added that, specific, targeted training would also be considered, such as British Sign Language and Mental Health Awareness, where there is a clear business case for these.

There was for these training proposed for Members as specified in Paragraph 4.3 of the report, whilst Equality and Diversity training would also inform the ongoing development of the Council's Workforce Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Equalities Committee received, considered and noted the above progress report.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm