

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON MONDAY, 19 MAY 2014 AT 10.00AM

Present:

Councillors

M E J Nott MBE  
H J David

Councillors

M Gregory  
L C Morgan

Officers:

S Kingsbury - Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development  
M Wilkinson - Group Manager - Wellbeing  
M Dixon - Project C.O.A.S.T. Manager  
T Newth - Bridgend Youth Service  
P Williams - Equalities and Engagement Officer  
M A Galvin - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

63 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON FOR THE MEETING

In the absence of the Deputy Leader, and Chairperson of the Committee, it was necessary to appoint a Chairperson for the meeting.

Following a motion that was supported by Members of the Committee, it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor H J David be appointed Chairperson for the Committee in the absence of the Deputy Leader.

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Councillor D Sage - Holiday  
Councillor P J White - Holiday  
Councillor C Reeves - Work Commitment  
Councillor C L Jones - School Governor Commitment  
E Blandon - Other Council Business

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

66 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee - Equalities dated 13 March 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record.

67 BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH C.O.A.S.T. PROJECT

The Corporate Director - Wellbeing submitted a report that updated the Committee regarding progress and achievements made through the above project.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing confirmed that the C.O.A.S.T.AL Project was a Regional Strategic Project covering six local authority areas of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

The Project aimed to promote vocational guidance, employment, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities for individuals who are currently economically inactive as a result of:

- Illness
- Disability (Mental Illness, Learning Disability)
- Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment)
- Substance misuse problems
- Serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood

Swansea City Council is the lead authority for C.O.A.S.T.AL and had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Welsh European Funding Office (W.E.F.O) as part of the convergence programme.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing stated that Bridgend C.O.A.S.T. had delivered a £2million training and employment project to participants across the County Borough over the last three years. One million pounds was funded by ESF convergence grant funding and the balance was provided as “match funding” by Wood B, B Leaf and Environmental Projects managed by Bridgend County Borough Council (B.C.B.C.) The main aim had been to raise levels of employment and economic activity, and secure higher participation in the labour market.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing referred Members to the information at **appendix 1** to the report, that showed in graphical format, a report of outcome data regarding the project to the end of April 2014. These graphs showed targets for the number of people enrolled on to the project; the number of people entering employment; the number of people gaining a qualification; the number of people entering further learning, and the number of people gaining a positive outcome. A positive outcome would constitute the following: an interview, non-accredited training, work placement or volunteering opportunity.

The data in the graphs was explained in more detail in Paragraph 4.2 of the report, and covered:-

1. Information regarding participants enrolled onto the Project.
2. The number of participants claiming a qualification.
3. The number of participants entering further learning.
4. The number of participants entering employment.
5. The number of participants achieving a positive outcome.

The Project C.O.A.S.T. Manager then, for the benefit of Members, expanded upon the data detailed in the reports appendix.

She added that all targets set for Bridgend C.O.A.S.T had been achieved and exceeded with the exception of the further learning target.

The Project C.O.A.S.T. Manager further added that at the end of the project, all participants still active will be sign posted to the most appropriate employment or training organisation. Also, Bridgend was working very hard to achieve a Social Enterprise from the current work related projects that we provide at B Leaf, Wood B and the Environmental Project.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing advised that the C.O.A.S.T.AL project has been part funded via the European Social Fund, which had met all the additional costs of delivering the outcomes identified in the report. Match funding had been provided to the scheme through

the use of existing provision within the Day Services work related projects. The Council will receive £1m in grant monies covering the period 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2014 and has provided an equivalent amount in match funding. He added however, that European funding would soon be coming to an end.

Notwithstanding the fact that the project would soon no longer be funded, the Group Manager - Wellbeing confirmed that consideration was being given to developing a Business Case with the view of transforming the Projects of B Leaf and Wood B to a self-standing social enterprise, to provide a type of work experience training organisation. He added that the establishment of this would be for a two year Project, and that a bid would be made through the European Convergence Fund to set-up this with assistance from other organisations in Bridgend.

The Project C.O.A.S.T. Manager, then read out for Members, a case study from an individual that had benefited from the C.O.A.S.T. Project.

“Since I have been going to C.O.A.S.T. for the last two years I have completed courses which are Health and Safety, Food Hygiene and First Aid, which I enjoyed doing when I first started C.O.A.S.T. I was shy and nervous about meeting new people. This year I have built up my confidence by learning new skills about how to cope with different things like meeting new people and completing all of my courses which I have achieved. This year I was selected to do my work placement in Bridgend County Borough Council for administration and reception, plus I have completed my NVQ level 2 in Customer Service which is dealing with customers, solving problems and answering the telephone, which I completed in three months. When C.O.A.S.T. finishes in June I will carry on with everything which I have learnt in the last two years since I have been with C.O.A.S.T. Plus it would be nice if I could get a part time job as a receptionist.

I just want to say a very big thank you to everyone in C.O.A.S.T. for having me here, it has been a pleasure for me taking part on the courses and doing different things”.

In terms of paragraph 4.1 of the report, a Member asked if there was any data available to confirm that of the number of participants entering employment as a result of becoming involved in C.O.A.S.T., and, if so, how many had entered into private sector employment compared to how many had entered into that of the public sector.

The Project C.O.A.S.T. Manager confirmed that the majority of employment opportunities that arose for participants in C.O.A.S.T. were in the private sector.

A Member felt that it would be worthwhile to look to advertise projects such as C.O.A.S.T. widely, with a view to reaching out to as many people as possible who would find projects such this beneficial. He added that this could be achieved for example through sharing these with other organisations and Business Forums and Bridgend County Borough Council Newsletters.

The Leader added that projects like C.O.A.S.T. could also be shared with the Council's Economic Development Section in terms of both advertising and drawing up potential suitable candidates to give individuals the confidence to participate in projects such as these, that would in turn, give them the confidence to progress into other similar training initiatives prior to hopefully securing employment.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing advised that the Business Plan for B-Leaf/Wood B Project would bring in income as the project would effectively be a business, rather than just a training initiative. Used as a social enterprise, he added that this would open-up avenues for grant funding and the buying in of places would also allow for a number of income streams to be generated.

A Member asked if the Project could involve individuals with mental health issues as well as people with learning disabilities.

The Group Manager - Wellbeing replied that the B Leaf/Wood B collaboration would primarily be aimed at people with learning disabilities, but in terms of catering for people with mental health problems, there were opportunities to support these people and help them cope more in society including the prospect of gaining employment, through the Arc facility in Bridgend.

In response to a Member's question, the Group Manager - Wellbeing confirmed that a high percentage of participants in the C.O.A.S.T. Project managed to secure employment opportunities. However, the Authority would have no control over the continued support of these individuals in maintaining employment when this Project soon comes to its end.

The Chairperson concluded debate on this item by commending the Project.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted with pleasure the success of the Project and the information contained in the report, including future ESF funding initiatives.

#### 68 WELSH LANGUAGE PROVISION IN YOUTH SERVICES

The Corporate Director - Children submitted a report, that updated the Committee on the delivery of youth services through the medium of the Welsh language.

By way of background information, the Youth Service representative advised that Bridgend County Borough Council's Youth Service delivered many Welsh language medium services. An analysis of this provision was provided in the 2012/13 Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring Report, which was approved by committee on 12 June 2013. Members also requested that a further report be presented at a future Cabinet Equalities Committee to explore this provision in more detail.

She confirmed Bridgend County Borough Council Youth Service undertook a consultation in September 2013 with young people accessing clubs and projects in order to identify gaps and ensure the needs, in relation to Welsh, were being met.

Of the 153 young people who chose to respond to the consultation, 57 young people attended a Welsh speaking school, 93 young people did not want to access activities in Welsh and 83 young people stated that they were happy accessing the activities already in place but did not want any additional activities delivered through Welsh in relation to Welsh culture. Activities delivered by centres and projects included Welsh cookery, Welsh culture, incorporating IT research, arts and crafts centred around Welsh heritage, off site activities to venues such as the Welsh Mining Museum, St Fagan's and the Millennium Stadium.

The Youth Service representative advised that over a seven month period, from September 2103 to February 2014, 64 Welsh activity sessions were delivered within youth centres.

A further training event for staff was scheduled for the end of May 2014 to continue to develop and raise awareness of delivering Welsh in English speaking clubs and projects.

BCBC Youth Service had also developed the Youth Inspire Awards which is an informal Youth Service accreditation recognising the skills and knowledge young people gain from taking part in a range of curriculum activities, with the award having three different levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The Youth Service representative added that the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme actively encouraged young people to develop an awareness of the diversity in the topography of

Wales by the utilisation of National Trust areas when undertaking expeditions. 6 young people completed their Duke of Edinburgh Award in Welsh through the online eDofE model last year.

She further added that the Youth Service has developed three new volunteer packs supporting the development of volunteering programmes for young people through to adulthood. The volunteering packs incorporate Junior Leaders aged 14-16 years, Senior Members training 16 - 18 years and 18 + volunteering. The packs have been developed in collaboration with The Vale Youth Service and are currently being translated into Welsh. These can be utilised in both statutory and Third Sector organisations so all young people have the same opportunities to participate in standardised progression routes.

The Youth Service representative confirmed that the BCBC Youth Service offered a counselling service through the medium of Welsh at YGG Llangynwyd via a bilingual therapist, although over 90% of young people accessing this service within the Welsh school chose English as their first language.

She confirmed also that the Bridgend Youth Service continues to develop opportunities for young people through the use of social media and these were detailed in the report.

Finally, the Youth Service representative confirmed that the Service, as lead provider for Families First Programme 1 Family Learning Programme, commissioned services to deliver family support, linked to schools, delivered through the medium of Welsh, as well as employing an administration assistant who is a fluent Welsh speaker able to provide paperwork and verbal communication through the medium of Welsh.

A Member noted from the MTFs that the Youth Service like other areas of the Authority had been the subject of re-structuring. She asked to that end, how many of the 30 staff that we trained within the service had been retained this current year and how many of these would be retained next year.

The Bridgend Youth Service representative confirmed that arising from the restructure, 70% of staff had been retained this financial year although 16 of the universal provision clubs had been closed.

She added that although Welsh language provision in Youth Services was continuing to be advocated for and encouraged, there had not been very much interest in young people taking up these opportunities.

The Youth Service representative added that it was not only about encouraging engagement in terms of Welsh speaking, but also about the service ensuring there was a change of delivery and focus in place with regards to our Welsh heritage and culture.

She further added that the above was not easy to achieve, given that even though a considerable number of young people emanated from families where their parents used Welsh as their first language, the children often chose to access websites and other information in English, particularly when it came to social activities.

A Member noted the above, and stressed the importance of giving individuals the opportunity to access services bi-lingually such as those that comprise the Youth Service, then the Authority was continuing to fulfil its role.

She further added that Mentor Bro Ogwr intended to approach the Authority for funding in the future in order to provide a primarily Welsh speaking social club facility.

**RESOLVED:** That the information noted in the report be noted.

69 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate Director - Resources submitted a report, that provided the Committee with a proposal for a Forward Work Programme (FWP) for Committee for the ensuing year, Appendix 1 to the report referred.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer, then expanded upon the items that were contained in Appendix 1 for the benefit of Members.

In terms of any amendments or additions to the FWP, Members were asked if consideration could be given to the following items being added to the FWP, and being included as agenda items for a future meeting:-

- Autism
- Support avenues for immigrants living in South East Wales

The Chairperson suggested that if Members have any further items than those contained in the FWP and/or detailed above, then these be raised with either the Chairperson of the Committee, or alternatively the Equalities and Engagement Officer.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the FWP subject to the additional items specified above.

70 6 MONTHLY REPORT ON EQUALITY IN THE WORKFORCE

The Corporate Director - Resources submitted a report, the purpose of which was to provide the Cabinet Equalities Committee with data on the council's workforce, together with comparative information and an update on employment related developments.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer gave some background information, namely that reliable workforce data enabled the Council to:-

- assess our performance in relation to the statutory duties set out under the Equality Act and the council's Welsh Language Scheme;
- work within the WLGA's Equality Improvement Framework;
- provide meaningful information aiding decision making.

He then confirmed that Appendix 1 provided half yearly profiles and a data analysis of the contracted workforce from 30 September 2012 until 31 March 2014. From 31 March 2014, the profile now included data relating to the number of employees disclosing as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender captured following the recent data collection exercise and also a more detailed breakdown of employees' Welsh speaking, reading and writing skills.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer then confirmed that a revised data capture project is underway with a fresh approach to "marketing" the project to employees. The revised focus is on the benefits to employees of completing the questionnaire and disclosing sensitive information. The project would be re-launched in the summer and have an end date of 30 September 2014, and had a number of benefits to the council and its employees and these were shown in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report.

He then added that four employee information packs had been developed and published on the council's intranet site. The packs comprised of:-

- Pregnancy and maternity including partners and adoptive parents;

- Support for employees who are carers;
- Retirement, and;
- Domestic abuse/Sexual violence.

Additionally, edited versions of these packs (for use by the general public) have been published on the council's public facing website and made available on the screens in the Customer Contact Centre.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer then stated that work is underway to meet the four actions in the "Council's role as an Employer" objective which are due for completion in 2015. Information on this was included in paragraph 4.2.3 of the report.

Following Council's appointment of the Deputy Leader as Mental Health Champion, work was now underway to raise awareness of mental health issues amongst employees. Talking about mental health in the workplace helped to tackle discrimination which can have a significant effect on workplaces and employees. More information on this initiative was shown in paragraph 4.2.4 of the report.

A Member noted that in terms of employees who are bi-lingual within the Council, the Appendix to the report reflected that as at 30 September 2013 there were 622, when six months previously to that there were 251. He asked Officers for an explanation on this significant increase in a relatively short space of time, further asking if this figure included staff in the Education Department.

The Equalities and Engagement Officer advised that this figure was a total figure that included staff in all Council services. The reason for the increase in the above period of time, had been due to the data collection exercise that had been conducted referred to earlier in the meeting.

The Member asked if the data for this could be split in future such reports to include staff in Education and then the remainder of staff within the Authority and Officers replied that this could be accommodated.

In response to a further question from the floor, Officers also confirmed that in terms of age profiles for all data shown in the Appendix, in future such reports these could be broken down in age group blocks of five years, as opposed to age group blocks of ten years as was specified in the data.

A Member noted that the age profile for staff aged 56-65 plus employed within the Authority was quite high. He wondered if this was a bit too high and asked Officers if it was possible to make comparisons regarding this with other authorities.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that this Authority had a commitment to employ young people, i.e. aged 16-25, by the way of introducing apprenticeships. The new pension regulations that came in recently meant that employees could now retire at 55 if they so wished without the employers consent and could then gain access immediately to their pension.

She added that there was no retirement age as such now, so employees could stay with the Authority beyond the age of 65. She would investigate if there was comparable data in other authorities however, and if this was available she would advise Committee Members/Invitees accordingly.

The Chairperson asked how information, available via the I.T. System and intranet etc regarding Council policies was made available to manual workers, e.g. litter pickers and carers etc, if they did not have access to a PC and if the information also applied to staff in schools, as strictly speaking their employer were school governors, rather than Chief Officers. The Head of Human Resources and Organisation and Development confirmed that the above type of information applied both to schools and other office based staff, and in terms of manual workers, information regarding policies of the Authority was made available to them through various avenues, one of which was via their pay slips which they always looked at as they usually worked overtime or shift work (that did not mostly apply to white collar staff) and their net pay therefore differed from month to month.

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

The meeting closed at 11.36pm.