

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE**

**14 JULY 2016**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES**

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2016 – 2020 ACTION PLAN**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update members on the development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 action plan.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016 - 2020 is a statutory plan that impacts on the whole of the council. The SEP outlines seven equality objectives which are:

1. Transportation;
2. Fostering good relations and awareness raising;
3. Our role as an employer;
4. Mental health;
5. Children;
6. Leisure, arts and culture and
7. Data.

2.2 The report also supports the following corporate priorities:

- Priority 2: Helping people to be more self-reliant
- Priority 3: Smarter use of resources

**3. Background**

3.1 The SEP 2016 – 2020 was approved by Cabinet on 15 March 2016. A draft action plan was developed to include actions on all seven of the strategic equality objectives outlined in the SEP. Key / lead officers from across the council and other partners were consulted regarding the development of meaningful and achievable actions within their respective services.

**4. Current situation / proposal.**

4.1 Between 12 May 2016 and 22 June 2016 the council consulted with the public on the actions that will sit under each strategic objective. The consultation also involved meetings and engagement with local equality and diversity groups including:

- Glamorgan Muslim Association;
- Stroke Association;
- Bridgend People First;

- Bridgend Deaf Club;
- Bridgend Youth Council;
- Bridgend Shout Group;
- Bridgend Visually Impaired Society (BridgeVIS);
- Bridgend LGBT Forum;
- Bridgend council LGBT staff network;
- Parc Prison LGBT network;
- Mental Health Matters Wales;
- Bridgend Equality Forum;
- SACRE and
- Bridgend Carers Centre.

Council officers were scheduled to meet with the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People (BCDP). However it was not possible for them to accept our invitation.

- 4.2 The council received 184 survey completions and engaged with 133 people across nine engagement events.
- 4.3 In summary the 47 actions under the seven objectives were widely supported. Of the seven objectives, transport (26%), mental health (21%), our role as an employer (19%) and children (17%) were the most popular objectives when considering any gaps in the proposed actions. The percentages below reflect only those respondents who have identified such gaps in that objective. The subsequent amendments to the SEP Action Plan are:

**a) Transportation:**

- **Work towards a more integrated bus network (20%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has been amended to reflect this gap under the Action “Work towards a more integrated bus network by supporting the provision of community transport”;
- **Increase disabled access within public transport (20%);**  
No amendment was required to the action plan as disability access is already covered in the actions on increasing the number of wheelchair accessible taxis and community transport;
- **Increase staff to provide/carryout safe routes eg street lights, wider paths etc (15%);**  
No amendment was required to the action plan as this relates to service arrangements within the Communities directorate’s Neighbourhood Services. This gap/suggested improvement will be passed to the team responsible;
- **Improve road safety/reduction in traffic surrounding schools (10%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has been amended to reflect this gap under “Assess routes to school as part of our Learner Travel Safer Routes work and work towards improving road safety around schools”;

b) **Our role as an employer:**

- **Up to date training for all staff (30%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has not been amended to reflect this gap as training provided to employees will be up to date;
- **More support in the workplace for all employees (22%);**  
This gap is reflected in the amended SEP Action Plan under:
  - i) Increasing support for all employees in the workplace by continuing to develop information packs for employees with protected characteristics;
  - ii) Take a range of actions to ensure that employees have an awareness and understanding of the variety and extent of support available through the Employee Assistance Programme, available from Care First;
  - iii) Increasing support for employees by developing further staff networks for those employees sharing a protected characteristic.

c) **Mental Health:**

- **Increase support mechanisms/counselling (48%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has been amended to reflect this gap in the action “Improve the provision of multi-agency support for people in the county borough including provision for people (including carers and family) experiencing mental health issues”;
- **More support provided for people with mental health issues (17%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has been amended to reflect this gap under the action “Continue working towards increasing the level of support for people with mental health issues by supporting the Time to Change Wales project and the Western Bay Action Plan”.

Some references were made to children not meeting criteria for mental health support and the waiting times for children to be assessed by CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). These gaps have been passed to then relevant service within the Education and Family Support Directorate.

d) **Children:**

- **Have systems in place for all forms of bullying not just protected characteristics (22%);**  
All school children have one or more protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The SEP Action Plan has, therefore not been amended to reflect this gap as school bullying monitoring systems are in development.
- **Provide suitable education for all (22%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has not been amended to reflect this gap as this is covered in four separate actions within the objective;
- **Establish impartial support in school that is not geared towards targets (13%);**  
The SEP Action Plan has not been amended to reflect this gap which relates to children not always being able to speak to a teacher. Schools have confidential pastoral systems in place to assist and support pupils.

4.4 Feedback received on all actions was agreeable with only five actions disputed by more than 7.5% of respondents. The qualitative data is as follows:

Objective	Action	Number of respondents	Respondents disagreeing with action
Fostering good relations and awareness raising	Develop a library of publicity images displaying local people	182	14.8%
Fostering good relations and awareness raising	Raise awareness of relevant awards and achievements	181	11.1%
Fostering good relations and awareness raising	Continue with promoting awareness campaigns around protected characteristics	181	9.4%
Transportation	Increase provision of raised kerbs at bus stops	182	8.2%
Our role as an employer	Review our pay and grading structure every three years	179	7.8%

In response to the disputed actions above, the SEP Action Plan has been amended as follows:

- i) **Develop a library of publicity images displaying local people**  
This has been removed from the SEP Action plan as it is considered to be business as usual for the council;
- ii) **Raise awareness of relevant awards and achievements**  
This has been removed from the SEP Action Plan as it is considered to be business as usual for the council;
- iii) **Continue with promoting awareness campaigns around protected characteristics**  
This action is integral to the council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty which is to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and to
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

and has, therefore been retained within the SEP Action Plan.

- iv) **Increase provision of raised kerbs at bus stops**  
Provision of raised kerbs at bus stops is included within any relevant infrastructure development. This action has, therefore been retained.
- v) **Review our pay and grading structure every three years**  
A three year review of the council's pay and grading structure must be undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose. This review will be undertaken by an independent body and will be retained within the SEP Action Plan.

4.5 The full consultation report is included as appendix 1.

4.6 The final SEP action plan, amended in line with the consultation is included as appendix 2.

4.7 Cabinet Equalities Committee will receive annual progress reports on the SEP action plan.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

Following the consultation a Full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the SEP which highlighted that the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 and associated action plan will have a positive impact on most of the protected characteristic groups. Paragraph 4.3 above outlines the amendments made to the action plan as a result of the consultation. The Full Equality Impact Assessment is attached as appendix 3.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

7.1 Any financial implications described within the SEP action plan will be met from within existing directorate budgets.

## **8. Recommendation.**

8.1 That Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report and appendices.

**Andrew Jolley**

**Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services**

**Date: 29 June 2016**

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**Background papers: None.**