

## **Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Cabinet Meeting: 19 March, 2018**

#### **Report of the Leader**

### **Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016 - 2017**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report ([Appendix A](#)).

#### **Recommendation**

1. That the Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2016 - 17 is approved for publication.

#### **Reason for the Recommendation**

1. So that progress towards meeting the public sector equality duty and the specific duties for Wales can be published and is available for scrutiny by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and others.

#### **Background**

2. The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty (the 'general duty') as well as specific duties for Wales. The specific duties include the requirement to publish an annual report for the previous year by 31 March each year. The annual report must set out:
  - the steps the Council has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
  - how the Council has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty;
  - any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
  - a statement on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
  - progress towards fulfilling each of the Council's equality objectives;
  - a statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the Council has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives;
  - specified employment information, including information on training and pay (unless it has already published this information elsewhere).

3. The Council may include in its annual report any other matter it feels is relevant to meeting the general duty and specific duties.
4. The Council is required to produce and publish a report on progress with equality issues annually by 31 March.

## **Relevant Issues and Option**

### **Progress since the last report**

5. We continue to monitor the protected characteristics of service users in the same services that we have reported in previous years as well as additional ones. Last year, we were unable to report information from Shared Regulatory Services. This was because the service had to focus on its restructure during the reporting year. This year, it has been included again. We have also included for the first time, information from the 'Achievement for All' Service in the Learning and Skills Directorate.
6. We continued to use the form that was introduced last year to gather the data and information needed for the report. The format encourages services to show how they have used the data gathered to make improvements to services.
7. The Youth Service identified that it needs to train staff to obtain equality information and record it on a new management information system to improve the quality of the data. It also identified that it should increase opportunities for the older age groups of young people and young people with additional learning needs. The service has been involved in developing guidance for schools on transgender issues, creating Super Ambassadors and a Rights Ambassador, and delivering training sessions on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
8. The Children and Young People's Partnership Team discusses data with each school every term. It has identified a need to better co-ordinate its data and is looking to improve on this. It has increased counselling hours within Bryn Hafren to help reduce waiting lists as it is aware that females are more inclined to access talking therapies. It has also requested information from projects on data collected on protected characteristics and will use re-commissioning requirements to ensure it gets feedback on how they are using this information. At a national school based counselling level, it has ensured that a category for transgender has been added to the school base counselling data collection. It has a young person on the school based counselling management board.
9. The Homes 4U, Housing Advice and Homelessness Services provide services to many vulnerable people including people with mobility challenges, learning disabilities, mental health, drug and alcohol issues, domestic abuse, older people, young people, and ex-offenders. It analyses information so that it can tailor services to meet the diverse needs of the service users. This is particularly important when placing people in temporary accommodation, much of which is shared accommodation with shared facilities, so that it can maintain safety for service users.
10. The Supporting People Team identified a demand for a domestic abuse service that was accessible to male and transgender victims. It subsequently launched the first gender neutral dispersed housing scheme in Wales based on the needs data collected.
11. The Regeneration and Planning Service found that the profile of its users align with the Vale of Glamorgan demographic. The Planning Policy team sought the views of

protected and hard to reach groups as part of the adoption of the Local Development Plan.

12. The Corporate Complaints Service surveys people who make a complaint and analyses feedback by protected characteristics. It identified that only 4% of the people who returned them were between the ages of 17 to 36; and 1% between the ages of 17 and 26. Therefore, it promoted its Mobile App as a way in which younger people might be encouraged to make a complaint.
13. Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction has put more frontline staff on equalities training and has a member of staff who has British Sign Language skills.
14. The Shared Regulatory Service collects data on Communicable Diseases and Licensing, and Private Sector Housing. For Communicable Diseases, the data identified certain risk groups and target interventions accordingly. It produces its documents in different languages, such as Arabic, Polish, Chinese and collects details of first language during food inspections. Where an issue is identified, it accommodates the needs of its service users in various ways including: visiting service users at their home or alternative location if they have a disability or difficulty in visiting the office; assisting service users who are unable to read or write by reading literature, or providing a DVD rather than sending a letter.
15. The Communications Team has included a performance measure to try to increase responses from the Black and Minority Ethnic community. It is also updating its database of organisations representing protected groups to try and increase representative responses.
16. The 'Achievement for All' Service in the Learning and Skills Directorate uses data to monitor attainment levels, including those in protected groups, those entitled to free schools meals and looked after children. It also monitors the number of incidents of bullying. It has identified that: this has decreased by 43%; the number of pupils responsible has reduced by 8%; the number of victims has reduced by 23%; the number of incidents related to disability has reduced from 35 to 6; schools are reporting that the numbers of verbal and emotional bullying have decreased considerably; the numbers of reported homophobic bullying incidents are very low; and the numbers of incidents of racial bullying are low and have also decreased. Additionally, it has: put in place model anti-bullying policies for schools; commissioned the organisation "Bullies Out" to lead and developmental work with schools; run Show Racism the Red Card workshops in schools; developed draft transgender guidance; hosted a well-being conference; and involved community police officers to work with schools on a range of issues.
17. The Library and Information Service identified that the age, gender and language preference of users are particular factors to take into account when selecting library stock and targeting library events and activities. The service is mindful of the need to provide information and resources for people with disabilities and also provides a wide range of material from different cultural backgrounds. During 2016-2017, five libraries were transferred to community groups to be run as community supported libraries. This development led to the training of over 100 volunteers in all aspects of library work including the equal opportunities role of libraries in providing a free and welcoming service to all.
18. Children and Young People Services identified that the age of the young person and whether or not they have a disability are particular factors in identifying workforce capacity.

19. Adult Services use data to plan service provision and to identify gaps for specific groups of individuals. The ageing demographic of our population causes issues for both the increased numbers of people requiring care and support and the numbers of the population able to support – either informally as carers or as part of the social care workforce.
20. The Registration Service continued to survey its service users and this helps it to identify whether there are issues for protected groups. It identified that some people confused the birth and death questions on its forms. To make this simpler for people, it has now produced separate forms.
21. The Equality Team and Human Resources Team worked to identify what needs to improve to make the Council more inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.
22. In Human Resources, work continues to reduce the gender pay gap. It has further reduced. We are using apprenticeships to attract more younger people to work for the Council to reflect the age profile of our community.

### **Areas to address**

23. The extent to which data is analysed and used to improve services continues to be variable. This is for a variety of reasons including systems that do not support the analysis of information, gaps in staff knowledge, reluctance of service users to complete more forms, and concern that a survey of users may not reflect a true picture. We need to continue to work on this but we do have more services reporting on their data in this monitoring report.
24. We continue to make progress with equality objectives as described in the bullet points below.
  - A number of services continue to collect data and monitor access to services. We continue to use the corporate form so that there is a more consistent approach to gathering information and it is in line with Welsh government guidance. We encourage services to analyse the data they collect and think how they can use it to improve services to meet the needs of a diverse range of service users.
  - To close education attainment gaps, we have used data to improve attendance which impacts on attainment and looked at outcomes for vulnerable learners, identifying that pupils with special educational needs performed particularly well. In general, girls continue to outperform boys in most areas. Whilst in many cases the difference in performance is comparatively small, there are a number of significant differences that need to be reduced. Challenge advisors are working with individual schools to identify specific strategies to further reduce this gender gap.
  - To make public documents easier to understand, we promote our plain language guidance and remind staff about using it. As part of the review of the learning offer, we will look at how we can provide plain language training and incorporate it into other types of training such as report writing.
  - We have been raising awareness of equality responsibilities and the needs of protected groups. We run a training programme for staff, tailored where necessary to the needs of particular teams. This is supplemented by the availability of e-learning modules. We will work with Organisational Development so that we can more easily monitor who has participated in equality training. We can then liaise with managers to ensure that as many staff as possible have received at least basic awareness raising training. We also raise public awareness through a notice board in the Civic Office

reception area, use of social media and participation in other appropriate events or campaigns. This work continues.

- To involve a diverse range of people in policy and service development, we have produced guidance on engagement to ensure we have feedback that will help us understand the impact of our work. There is an e-learning module on equality impact assessment which covers the need to engage with people. This year, we reviewed and updated our equality impact assessment process to include guidance, examples, and links to research to help managers undertake this process effectively. This guidance includes the need to engage with stakeholders.
  - To encourage more reporting of harassment and discrimination, we have re-launched our Community Cohesion Group. It has a renewed focus on community membership. We have established links with the Police Youth Volunteers to promote a youth voice in the Group's work. This helps to ensure that we can keep a check on tensions in the Vale and that we can respond effectively if they arise. The Hate Crime Officer has delivered outreach sessions in schools and prisons to promote awareness of hate crime and how to report incidents.
  - We have also carried out anti-bullying work in schools to reduce bullying with a focus on vulnerable groups who are more likely to be victims of bullying. We have achieved this by: the monitoring of bullying incidents school by school; sharing this information with Challenge Advisers; the monitoring of bullying incidents by protected characteristics; the development of model bullying policies; support and challenge visits to schools as a result of data analysis followed up by review visits if necessary; the provision of model anti-bullying policies; suggestions for activities for anti-bullying week.
  - With regard to domestic abuse, we work closely with Specialist Domestic Services and Supporting People to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to help support and protection. This work includes signposting to specialist services such as BAWSO, DYN Project, Rainbow Bridge and Live Fear Free; arranging training and awareness raising days and activities; advertising Atal y Fro services through social media, press, and awareness training events; running campaigns and raising awareness throughout the year, targeting events such as the White Ribbon campaign, International Women's Day, 16 days of action, and PRIDE; holding two conferences in respect of domestic violence and abuse, to understand what works well. As a result of these events, we have developed training in respect of domestic violence and substance misuse. We work with the Older Person's Co-ordinator, the Vale 50+ Forum, the Community Safety Partnership, and Atal y Fro to increase visibility and services across the Western Vale.
  - To reduce the pay gap and improve employment opportunities for people in protected groups, we have a workforce plan to help ensure the Council's employees reflect that of the community. This includes actions to reduce the gender pay gap. We look at data to check on progress and the pay gap has reduced. The employment information section of the report shows that the gender pay gap is less than it was in 2011. We will continue to monitor this.
25. Equality maintains a high profile as we progress the Strategic Equality Plan and work to ensure that we carry out equality impact assessments of the budget cuts and the 'reshaping services' agenda. From time to time, we attend departmental management team meetings to remind them of their responsibility to undertake equality impact assessments of proposals, budgets, and changes to policy and practice.

26. The Council does not have comprehensive information on all the areas that it must report on but the report explains what we are doing to address this.
27. Schools are listed public authorities under the Public Sector Equality Duty specific duties in Wales. As such, they are responsible for producing their own annual equality monitoring reports. When the duties were introduced, they received guidance from the School Improvement Service and the Welsh Local Government Association. The work of schools is monitored by the Learning and Skills Directorate.

### **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

28. Officer time is needed to collect, analyse and report on equality and employment information on a regular basis. The benefit is a better understanding of how to target resources to deliver services which best meet the needs of users.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

29. The equality duty contributes to the sustainable development principle of ensuring a strong, healthy and just society.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

30. The Equality Act 2010 created a public sector duty, replacing the race, disability and gender equality duties. The duty came into force in April 2011. The duty covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Under the general duty, public sector organisations must have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - advance equality of opportunity between different groups;
  - foster good relations between different groups.
31. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnership.
32. The Equality Act gives Welsh Ministers the power to impose specific duties through regulations. The specific duties are legal requirements designed to help public bodies meet the general duty. These were published in April 2011.
33. The Equality and Human Rights Commission published guidance on the public sector equality duty for Wales on 8 June 2011. It performs a regulatory role to ensure that listed bodies comply with the duty. If the Equality and Human Rights Commission believes that the Council has not complied with a public sector equality duty, it has the power to seek compliance.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

34. The work reported upon in the Annual Equality Monitoring Report will assist in promoting community cohesion by meeting the diverse needs of local people and improving equality of opportunity.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

35. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report sets out how the Council has been working to meet the general duty and public sector equality duty for Wales.

36. The Council is required to collect, use and publish equality and employment information to help understand how its policies, practices and decisions affect individuals who share one or more of the protected characteristics. This process is essential if the Council is to comply with the requirements of the public sector specific equality duties in Wales. The information is required to accurately inform the equality impact assessment process, the Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives.

### **Corporate/Service Objectives**

37. It is a corporate priority, included in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020, to work with partners to promote good governance and ensure a coordinated approach to delivering the shared vision for the future of the Vale. This plan and its objectives support this.
38. It is also a corporate priority to manage the Council's workforce, money, information and assets efficiently, effectively and securely. Equality objectives support this.

### **Policy Framework and Budget**

39. This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

### **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

40. Not applicable.

### **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

41. Corporate Performance and Resources

### **Background Papers**

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance: [Annual reporting, publishing and Ministerial duties: A guide for listed public authorities in Wales](#)

Stonewall's ['What's it got to do with you?'](#) leaflet.

Welsh Government ['2012 - Collecting Equality Data and Harmonised Standards Best Practice'](#) guidance.

[Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty Wales](#)

### **Contact Officer**

Nicola Hinton, Corporate Equalities Officer

### **Officers Consulted**

Head of Performance and Development  
Corporate Management Team

### **Responsible Officer:**

Rob Thomas, Managing Director