

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Report: 14 March, 2016

Report of the Leader

Annual Equality Monitoring Report

Purpose of the Report

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

Recommendations

2. That the Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2014 - 15 is approved for publication.

Reasons for the Recommendations

3. 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

4. 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 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).
5. The Council may include in its annual report any other matter it feels is relevant to meeting the general duty and specific duties.
6. The Council is required to produce and publish a report on progress with equality issues annually by 31 March. The Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2014 - 15 is available to view on the Council Website via the following link:

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2016/16-03-14/Appendices/Annual-Equality-Monitoring-Report-Appendix-A.pdf](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2016/16-03-14/Appendices/Annual-Equality-Monitoring-Report-Appendix-A.pdf) and a copy has been placed in the Member's room.

Relevant Issues and Option

Progress since the last report

7. We continue to monitoring the protected characteristics of service users in the same services that we have reported in previous years. There is one exception: complaints have not been monitored during the reporting period but there is a commitment to start doing so again this year.
8. The Registration Service has started to include gender reassignment in its monitoring. It is committed to focusing on data from marriages and civil partnerships, areas where people can make choices. This will help the service identify whether people from all sections of the community are using the service. It also carried out a customer satisfaction survey and asked people about their protected characteristics, though it did not have the resources to analyse this information.
9. The Communications Team has worked with more protected groups, including young people, people with disabilities, people from the Trans community and the Youth Cabinet
10. Through Race Equality First, we set up a Taxi Drivers' Forum to address and advise on discrimination issues.
11. We achieved the Bronze standard of the Insport programme which aims to get more disabled people involved in sport. This was progress after reaching the Ribbon standard previously. We are now working towards the Silver standard.
12. The gender pay gap has reduced from last year. Human Resources continues to work on occupational segregation.
13. Human Resouces had been exploring options to support the development of an apprentice scheme. Following withdrawal of funding, it is has had to begin exploring new options for achieving this.

Areas to address

14. 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. This position has changed little from last year.
15. 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 line with Welsh government guidance.
 - To improve access to public documents, we have reviewed the guidance we have and updated it. This was published last year and plain language training is being reviewed and re-launched.

- 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 are monitoring who has participated so that we can 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 have a programme of equality impact assessment training sessions for all staff involved in the process. .
 - To encourage more reporting of harassment and discrimination, we have re-launched our hate crime helpline. We are using Victim Support's helpline number. The Welsh Government has funded Victim Support to provide a hate crime service across Wales. When this service was set up, the aim was to provide us with information on hate crime incidents and crimes in our local authority area. This does not happen yet. We have worked with Race Equality First to design a poster to raise awareness of the helpline and encourage people to report hate crime. We have distributed these posters widely with the assistance of Race Equality First. We continue with this work.
 - To increase awareness and confidence in using domestic abuse support services, we have maintained a strong relationship with Atal y Fro, the only provider of such a service in the Vale of Glamorgan. We help to promote the service through Safer Vale. We have produced a domestic workplace policy and trained managers on this policy. We continue with this work.
 - We have included actions to address the gender pay gap in our workforce plan and agreed with the unions to look at this issue in more detail. We also have a job evaluation scheme in place. 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.
16. 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.
 17. 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.
 18. 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. They have received guidance from the School Improvement Service and the Welsh Local Government Association. This is monitored by the Learning and Skills Directorate.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

19. 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

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

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

21. 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.
22. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnership.
23. 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.
24. 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

25. 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)

26. 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.
27. 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

28. It is a corporate priority, included in the draft Corporate Plan 2013 - 2017, 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 each of the three associated improvement objectives:

- to tackle those issues that matter most to local people, with customer focus at the heart of the council's service delivery;
 - to provide leadership in representing and promoting the interests of the local community and engage effectively with citizens and stakeholders;
 - to promote through partnership working greater cooperation with other organisations that deliver services in the Vale, thereby improving the quality of life of its citizens.
29. It is also a corporate priority to manage the Council's workforce, money, information and assets efficiently, effectively and securely. Equality objectives support each of the associated improvement objectives:
- to provide effective corporate management and to improve the use of resources in meeting our strategic objectives;
 - to manage, support and develop our employees to enable them to deliver and maintain the Council's services to the highest possible standard;
 - to make best use of our assets and to procure good, sustainable services and facilities.

Policy Framework and Budget

30. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

31. Not applicable.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

32. Corporate 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

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Officers Consulted

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