



City and County of Swansea

Notes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Equalities**

Room 235 (Councillors Meeting Room) - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 24 October 2018 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor L S Gibbard (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

T J Hennegan

Councillor(s)

E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

S Pritchard

Officer(s)

Rhian Millar

Catherine Window

Richard Rowlands

Consultation Co-ordinator

Equalities Officer

Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): Y V Jardine and L V Walton

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

2 Terms of Reference and Programme of Work

The Panel agreed the Terms of Reference and early work programme.

3 Swansea Equalities Review 2017/18

The Panel took a look at the Swansea Equalities Review for 2017/18 with Richard Rowlands the Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager. The following points were noted:

- That the Equalities Review report is the seventh review under the Public Sector Equality Duty and main purpose to report progress in meeting the regulations for Wales, which were introduced in 2011. Swansea's plain is roughly similar to that of other local authorities across Wales.
- Analysis of equality information has been maintained and developed in the last year, with additional and updated demographic information included on the Council's statistics web pages. This include local social and demographic data from Census and other official sources.
- Also a range of analysis, in part linked to protected characteristics, was included in the Public Service Board's Assessment of Local Well-being, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This assessment was finalised and agreed by the PSB in April 2017, and this in turn informed the Board's Local Well-being Plan and objectives. In future, further analysis of equality information will

be required as part of the well-being measurement framework being developed by PSB partners.

- That monitoring and analysis of available statistics around people with protected characteristics also continues to be undertaken for the Welsh Government's community cohesion programme.
- New versions of the local area profiles were completed in January 2018 including for Wards, Community Areas (WFG Act) and Delivery Areas (former Communities First).
- The Children and Young People super survey has come to an end, currently looking at the best ways and opportunities to identify opportunities and mechanisms and feedback from this group of people about the decision being made that will have an impact on them.
- Employment and Training information is appended to the report but the panel did feel that this was not very useful as firstly the training information does not breakdown the type of training and because much of the employment information is not compulsory for staff to complete the data is therefore meaningless as data is incomplete and not reflective of the workforce. Panel members considered how this could be improved including how regularly information was collected and when etc.
- Councillors heard that most of the recommendations contained in the review are in progress or complete. The Panel will speak to each director for more detail about the ones within their remits.
- The Panel noted that there is no overall assessment of success of the plan or judgement on it, this is only done via things being completed or milestones.
- The Panel heard about the Councillor Champions that cover a wide range of equality issues in addition to wider themes like health and wellbeing, carers and domestic abuse. The role of these champions is to provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups or issues, which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business. The panel felt that this role could be developed more and that Councillor Champions could be used more across the council in developing and championing that group/issue. The Panel felt that there could be a better defined role for Councillor Champion's as there is not much communication at present with departments. They think they should also be kept better informed about any aspects in that area. This was possible recommendation.
- Councillors also heard about the recently allocated staff champions they will be called Departmental Staff Equality Representatives. They are staff who have volunteered to do this role in addition to their current job. They have met once so far and have received their initial training. A terms of reference of the role is in the process of being produced. The Panel would like to speak to them once they are more established. They will attend a roundtable meeting with the Panel on 31 Jan 19.
- Relationships with Community Groups have continued including:
 - The Swansea Bay LGBT Forum which is run by Swansea Council in partnership with South Wales Police. Membership includes employees or volunteers form local and national organisations who represent the interests of LGBT citizens.
 - BME Forum which is a regional BME Network which was introduced last year. It is led by EYST as part of the Welsh Governments Equality and

- Inclusion Programme. The Council provides support to the EYST as the network progresses.
- Disability Liaison Group, this group was established to enable two way dialogue between the Council and disabled people and/or disability groups/organisations. Carers also part of the forum and attend when they feel it is relevant. Works well and functions as it should. Get good attendance but resources within the council have made it hard to continue, the last meeting was May 18.
 - Co-production, a Co-production Development Officer, based in the third sector has continued to promote awareness, knowledge and support to Council, health, western bay, third sector and citizens. The panel would like to invite this Officer to a future meeting and would also like to see further information about co-production in Swansea. This will be provided at panel on 30 Nov.
 - Links and involvement of local business community mentioned.
 - The council has been involved in a number of other programmes/projects and activities including for example:
 - Swansea Hate Crime Stakeholder Action Plan
 - Community Cohesion Programme
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - My Concern in Schools
 - Aging Well Plan, 50+ Network, events and engagement activities
 - Tackling Poverty
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Welfare Reform
 - Easy Read, the annual review was produced in Easy Read and many other key council documents. It was noted however that Easy Read is a specific way of producing a document and is different for example from Plain English which is encouraged across the council. The Panel were informed that there is not the resources for all documents produced to be Easy Read but that key documents are produced that way.
 - Translation services. Council has its own internal Welsh Translation Service and for all other translation use the Council's membership of the WITS partnership. Councillors questioned whether all staff now about our access to this.

4 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Process

The panel met with Rhian Millar and Catherine Window about the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process. The following was noted:

- Purpose of EIA is to assess the impact of council decisions on equalities matters. It is also the way we play due regard to the Public Sector Duty (Wales) Act.
- EIA's are a legal requirement within the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Measure. The Duty puts a specific requirement on us to undertake equality impact assessments as a way of examining whether a new or existing function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project affects any person or group of persons adversely.
- EIA are an integral part of any decision making process and should be undertaken as early as possible during any initiative, ideally at its inception. Failure to undertake one or doing so after a decision has been made may

invalidate the decision, or at the very least leave it open to challenge or judicial review.

- An EIA screening and/or full report must accompany any report presented to Committees, Executive Board, Corporate Briefing, Cabinet or Council.
- The EIA process also takes into account other key issues and priorities such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers and UNCRRC.
- All forms and reports along with specific guidance is available to staff on staffnet webpages.
- A screening EIA is completed initially which is a slimmed version, this will identify whether a full EIA is required or not at that point. Any full EIA has to be approved by the Head of Service
- Important that EIA process is consistently applied and done well.
- Must demonstrate consultation and accessibility (Gunning Principles). A Toolkit is available. Circulated to panel members after the meeting.
- Must demonstrate how engagement has been taken on Board but does not stop a decision but to have due regard to the engagement outcome. Mitigation is key when negative outcome, putting things in place to reduce/reduce affects.
- Completion and process of EIA can be time consuming and complex to write. Resource centrally now limited to review and advice. New network of Departmental Equality Representative have been nominated to assist departments in completion. Legal check those EIA's that are more contentious.
- This process has been in place for a number of years, embedded in reporting process, not all LA's in Wales do this. Basically a decision cannot go through the Council/cabinet cycle if it has not had its EIA signed off.
- An EIA is a living document, can be open and continuously updated if appropriate like for example City Centre.
- Panel felt that the profile of equalities needed to be raised. How important is equalities within the LA, it should be high priority and this inquiry will help to push it up the agenda. Important to have visible leadership from the top.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm

Chair