



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 11 October 2018 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L S Gibbard (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**  
E W Fitzgerald  
M Sherwood

**Councillor(s)**  
T J Hennegan  
L V Walton

**Councillor(s)**  
Y V Jardine

### **Other Attendees**

Mary Sherwood

Cabinet Member - Better Communities

### **Officer(s)**

Tracey Meredith

Chief Legal Officer

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): S Pritchard

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Sam Pritchard gave his apologies. Councillor Sykes and Fitzgerald are withdrawing from the Panel.

## **2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

None

## **3 Overview Report - Equalities**

Councillor Mary Sherwood, Cabinet Member for Communities (People) and Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer attend the Panel to present and overview of the subject. The following issues were discussed:

- The legal background including the Equality Act 2010, the three aims of the equality duty are to give due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The general duty cover the following protected characteristics: age, gender, race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, gender

reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or lack of belief), marriage or civil partnership.

- In Wales there is a Statutory Duty which takes things further in the (Wales) Regulations 2011 which place specific duties on the authority including to:
  - Produce a Strategic Equality Plan
  - Set and publish equality objectives
  - Publish a statement setting out the steps it has taken to achieve the equality objectives
  - Review the equality objectives within 4 years from when first set
  - Comply with engagement provisions
  - Identify and collect relevant information about compliance with the general duty
  - Publish information in an accessible way
  - Assess and monitor the impact of policies, and changes to service provision
  - Gather employee related data on an annual basis
  - Have due regard to award of contract conditions in procurement should include considerations to comply with general duty
  - Publish an equality objective in relation to address any gender pay difference identified and take steps to address any pay gap
- Cabinet member said that she would like the Council to go beyond our legal duty and emphasised the importance of embedded duties within the local authority.
- It was agreed that the equality objectives set by the Council must result in improved outcomes for people.
- The current Equality Plan finishes in 2020 so will be revising document, plan for it to look very different and to be streamlined. Plan to set clearer strategic directives which departments will deliver. Would appreciate the Panels views from this inquiry to help inform the revision of that document.
- Important to think about the Wellbeing and Future Generation Act 2015 and the Wellbeing Goals in particularly 'a more equal Wales'.
- Important for the Equality Plan to have political oversight to ensure it is working well and to take action when changes are required.
- A lot of work is happening around equalities matters with the WLGA and the panel are interested in keeping up to date with these as they report.
- Equality Impact Assessment may not be the best way in the future as they are done to late in the process, more co-production is key.

#### **4 Planning the Inquiry into Equalities**

The Panel discussed their Terms of Reference and programme of work which will be on the agenda for agreement at the next panel meeting on the 24 October 2018.

The meeting ended at 4.55 pm