



**To/
Councillor Mary Sherwood
Cabinet Member for Better
Communities (People)**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People) after a meeting of the Panel on 27th September. The letter relates to the Equality Review Report 2017/18.

Dear Councillor Sherwood,

On the 27th September 2018 the Panel met to discuss the Equality Review Report 2017/18.

The Panel are grateful to both you and the Corporate Performance Manager for attending the meeting and providing information.

We felt that the report was comprehensive and took much effort to prepare. There is a wealth of information under the objectives and we compliment the staff for preparing it.

During the meeting, we heard that more diverse groups of policy makers, staff and volunteers lead to better decision making. That broader experience of those involved brings different perspectives to planning projects and therefore is more robust and successful.

We also heard about the many active forums which are ongoing such as the Disability Liaison Group who contribute to planning and consultation which we feel is very important.

It is clear that work is also being done to engage the third sector and find out how easy it is for people to access our 'front door' looking at physical, social and language barriers. This is positive and will give us an accurate view of how residents see us and how we can continue to improve.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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We also heard about the appointment of new Councillor and Staff Champions and the intention to get a consistent approach across the services. We will be interested to see how this develops.

We discussed how the third sector views the work which is being undertaken by the Council in relation to equalities. You explained that you recently contributed to a Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) enquiry about this. WLGA will be asking the third sector how they see us and we can then use this to develop our policies and actions.

You mentioned that, when this current plan is set for review, there would be an update of the current objectives and an effort to create a more cohesive and overarching plan with relevant actions.


Despite the breadth of information in the report, we do have some general observations on the report content;

1. There is a lack of numerical data and statistics particularly in relation to staff. This does not allow for a baseline to track progress year on year. We understand this information is volunteered by staff and therefore more difficult to obtain.
2. We agree there are too many objectives – these could be streamlined to make more meaningful and strategic ones which have more impact across the organisation.
3. There needs to be good quality and regular diversity training for managers on an ongoing basis.

We have asked that the revised plan come to the Panel once developed so we can provide some feedback on the new objectives and will look forward to the developing work in this area.

There is no requirement for you to respond to this letter but we would welcome any feedback you may wish to give.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
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