



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25TH MARCH, 2021

PRE SCRUTINY – ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2019/2020

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet Members on the Annual Equality Report 2019-2020 following Pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 17TH March, 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- 2.2 Subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members, endorse the recommendations outlined within the Annual Equality Report 2019/20 as attached to the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to their consideration of the Council's Annual Equality Report, for the year 2019/20.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Annual Equality Report has been developed to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties.
- 4.2 The report contains progress made in year 2019/20 in meeting the equality objectives contained in Council's Strategic Equality Plan.
- 4.3 Members of the Overview & Scrutiny were provided with the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny on the Annual Equality Report in advance of Cabinet's consideration at its meeting on the 25th March 2021.

5. PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019/20

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 17th March 2021, to consider the Annual Equality Report for the year 2019/20.
- 5.2 At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed the Annual Equality Report and overall, were pleased with the content of the report and the Council's commitment to the principles of equality and diversity.
- 5.3 Members made comments and sought assurance that work was being undertaken in respect of the following areas to improve equality and diversity:
- The collection and analysis of data for bullying incidents in schools;
 - The Welsh Language;
 - The barriers of closing the gender gap; and
 - The barriers of awareness raising events given the large geographical area of the Borough.
- 5.4 It was noted from the report that moving forward, it would be important to respond to emerging issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. In view of recent events in the media, Members spoke of the need to include the emerging issues of the safety of women in public spaces. It was agreed that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, sitting in its role as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee be convened to consider the safety and inequalities experienced by women in relation to the UK justice system.
- 5.5 Referring to the Hate Crime data detailed within the report, Members stated that they would be interested to compare local figures post Covid-19.
- 5.6 The Committee spoke of the long-term dangers of emotional abuse and was pleased to note the action contained within the report, which stated that as part of Education's Well-being Strategy a programme for schools would be developed about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.
- 5.7 Members discussed the role of the Democratic Services Working Group: Diversity in Democracy, which had recently been established to support the Council in achieving diversity in democracy in line with Welsh Government's agenda; and to consider what opportunities and engagement would benefit the future of diversity in advance of the 2022 local government elections in encouraging participation in principal authorities and Community and Town Councils. It was noted that an action plan had been developed to further improve the diversity of the Council.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The report contained within Appendix B has been presented to Scrutiny for pre scrutiny prior to consideration by Cabinet.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 Any financial implications are outlined within Appendix B of the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The Council's Annual Equality Report has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10.1 Equality considerations feature throughout Corporate and National priorities and specifically the contents of this report contributes to a More Equal Wales and a Wales of Cohesive Communities.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.

11.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Committee in this area will strength accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17th March, 2021.