



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**21st MARCH 2022**

#### **PRE-SCRUTINY – ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2020/2021**

#### **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the feedback and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Annual Equality Report 2020-2021 at its meeting on the 28th February, 2022.

##### **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 2020/21 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 2020/21.

##### **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 2020/21 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 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

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

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, to consider the Annual Equality Report for the year 2020/21.
- 5.2 At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members welcomed the Annual Equality Report and commented that it had successfully captured a wide range of issues and actions that had and were currently being undertaken, despite the high level of demands on the service area, which demonstrated the Council's commitment to the principles of equality and diversity.
- 5.3 Members were pleased to see that their comments from last year had been incorporated into the report to include the emerging issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement as part of the future work.
- 5.4 Referring to section 7 of the report, Equality Impact Assessments, it was proposed that in future policy be updated to include a 'Children & Young People's Rights Scheme' which would ensure that all children are consulted on all aspects of the Council's services and reflect the 5 key principles of policy development for local authorities by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.
- 5.5 Members considered that the following areas within the report required strengthening to improve equality and diversity:
  - Special Education needs provided through the medium of the Welsh Language;
  - The barriers of closing the gender gap (specifically to remove the word "**whether** barriers exist") and;
  - Equal access to Services.
- 5.5 Members were pleased that "the Council continues to be recognised as an inclusive employer by ranking in [Stonewall's Top 100](#) employers in 2020" , demonstrating its commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusivity and applauded the "Women in Leadership Programme" which they considered to be critical in developing positive role models across the local authority.
- 5.6 The Committee spoke of the difficulties faced by some residents with disabilities manoeuvring around the county borough and was pleased to hear that the Disability Forum (which is looking to be regionalised) does consider highways issues such as dropped kerbs and is encouraging residents to voice their concerns with regards to these issues.
- 5.7 In conclusion, Committee requested that future work also includes reference to the Ukraine crisis and the potential impact the threat of war is having on children and the level of support they are receiving in schools. Committee also sought to include a table of compliments to balance the 'complaints and service improvements' table which would also support future service improvements.

## **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/INVOLVEMENT**

- 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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**CABINET**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

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COMMUNICATION**

Item: **PRE SCRUTINY – ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2020/21**

**Background Papers**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.