



Ein cyf/Our ref SF/FM/0051/10

Ann Jones AM
Chair of Equality of Opportunity Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

9th March 2010

Dear Ann

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2010, requesting a written response to the questions that were not reached in the Equality of Opportunity Committee held on 9 February 2010. I have altered the running order of the questions to align with the responses. The first three questions are answered by the two case studies:

Questions 1-3

- 1. Can you give an example of how the information contained in Equality Impact Assessment reports, such as the one produced on the National Transport Plan, has been used to inform changes to a draft policy?*
- 2. Can you give us an example of where a mainstream Welsh Government policy, for example, relating to the economy, transport, health or education, has resulted in a reduction in inequalities between different groups of people?*
- 3. Why did this policy work well in reducing inequalities and what scope is there to apply the approach to other policy areas?*

Inclusive Policy Making – Equality Impact Assessment

“Inclusive Policy Making” (IPM) is the Welsh Assembly Government model of equality impact assessment. It ensures the diverse needs of citizens and their communities in Wales are considered as policies and practices of the Welsh Assembly Government are undertaken. Policies and practices are the functions, or activities, that are undertaken daily as a government.

Guidance on how to use IPM is made available to all staff within the Welsh Assembly Government. All are encouraged to use the process when policies are developed and practices are undertaken. Strategic policies and some high level practices considered by the Welsh Assembly Government's policy gateway process must undertake the Inclusive Policy Making process. The policy gateway is the trigger for the first stage equality screening to be undertaken.

Case Study 1 of Inclusive Policy Making

Forestry Commission Wales and *Woodland for Wales*.

In 2008, on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, Forestry Commission Wales undertook a review of *Woodlands for Wales* – the Wales Woodland Strategy. The process involved the preparation of a consultation paper, undertaking a 12 week public consultation, writing and publishing the revised strategy.

An initial equality impact assessment was undertaken as part of the Policy Gateway process. At this stage FCW considered the potential impact to be medium to high across a number of diversity strands including age and disability. It was considered appropriate that a full equality impact assessment be undertaken as part of the Inclusive Policy Making process.

The 12 week public consultation was widely publicised through features in national newspapers, specialist magazines and on the Welsh Assembly Government and the Forestry Commission Wales websites. Organisations and individuals representing a wide range of sectors and interests including equality and diversity groups were contacted directly. Forestry Commission Wales staff also attended meetings on request. In all 231 responses were received.

After the consultation closed, taking account of the responses received, a draft of the new strategy was written and made available for consideration as part of the full equality impact assessment. The strategy is set out in chapters which cover 5 key themes relating to trees and woodlands. Each theme has an associated set of outcomes. The themes are: *Welsh Woodlands and Trees, Responding to Climate Change, Woodlands for People, A Competitive and Integrated Forest Sector and Environmental Quality*.

It was apparent that the *Woodlands for People* section was the focus of inclusive and equitable delivery of the strategic aims and its content had the greatest potential for equality impact across all sectors of the community. The subsequent full equality impact assessment focussed particularly on this section.

Welsh Assembly Government officials have been involved from the initial stages of the equality impact assessment process.. A meeting was arranged, facilitated by an experienced consultant, to which representatives from diversity groups and a number of WAG departments were invited.

In advance of the meeting the draft strategy and background information was circulated which allowed responses to be submitted by those who were unable to attend. Feedback identified a need to make some minor changes to some of the wording. It was agreed that the overall the themes, tone and content of the strategy promoted equality and that those who would be affected by it had been considered. It was recognised there would be many opportunities to promote diversity through subsequent publicity. It was recognised that as the strategy was at quite a high level representatives from the different diversity strands would need to be involved in the preparation of specific projects that would arise from the Action Plan that would identify how the strategic aims

would be delivered. Importantly the equality impact assessment will be reviewed and re-evaluated after a year to ensure continuing inclusiveness.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Inclusive Policy Making workshops were very helpful in reassuring those from the Forestry Commission Wales who undertook the equality impact assessment that they had done this correctly. In addition the workshops enabled them to pass on experience to others who had not yet been involved in Inclusive Policy Making. They were also able to contribute to the revision of the Welsh Assembly Government Inclusive Policy Making guidance which is in the process of being updated. They have also been able to advise colleagues in Forestry Commission Wales in Inclusive Policy Making – the personal experiences of others are invaluable to anyone new to such a process.

Case Study 2 of Inclusive Policy Making

Strategic Action Plan to address Violence against women and to update the Welsh Assembly Government's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

In 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government undertook a review of 'The All Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy' published in 2005. A new strategic action plan to tackle domestic abuse and the wider violence against women agenda was published in June 2009. The process involved the preparation of a consultation paper, undertaking a 12 week public consultation, writing and publishing the revised plan.

It was considered appropriate, following an initial equality impact assessment that a full equality impact assessment be undertaken as part of the Inclusive Policy Making process.

The 12 week public consultation was widely publicised and we received 58 responses.

Having taken into account the responses received, a draft of the new strategy was written and its content had the greatest potential for equality impact across all sectors of the community.

Welsh Assembly Government officials have been involved from the initial stages. A full equality impact assessment workshop was arranged with representation from a wide variety of key stakeholders from the different diversity strands. The event was facilitated by an experienced consultant.

Feedback identified a need to make some minor changes to new strategy. It was agreed that the overall the themes, tone and content of the strategy promoted equality and that those who would be affected by it had been fully considered.

Question 4

What arrangements are in place at a Ministerial level to ensure that commitments relating to tackling inequalities and promoting equality across policy areas are co-ordinated and driven forward?

Equality is an integral part of the One Wales document and its commitments which cut across all Ministerial portfolios. The Single Equality Scheme is a key way of helping us meet our commitment to the "One Wales" vision of a dynamic economy, better health, high quality lifestyles and sustainable communities in a diverse and bilingual Wales. It will help meet our commitment to a fairer and just society.

The decision was taken by the Welsh Ministers to develop and publish a single scheme for gender, race and disability, together with religion and belief or non-belief, age, transgender and sexual orientation. The Welsh Assembly Government is required to publish equality schemes for gender, race and disability. Under the present legislation, the Welsh Assembly Government is not required to publish a Single Equality Scheme, but, the Welsh Assembly Government wants to go beyond that what it is legally required to do.

In developing this Scheme the focus has been on integrating the principles of equality, fairness, respect and dignity into Welsh Assembly Government's day to day work. The Scheme assesses the impact of Welsh Assembly Government policies on different groups within the population of Wales and the actions that will be taken to address that impact.

There is a commitment to publish a six monthly summary progress report on the Single Equality Scheme which sets out progress to date on the key actions which the Welsh Assembly Government intend to take forward over the next three years to deliver our commitment to promoting equality. The first of these six monthly summary reports has been published and the full reports which informed the summary report for the Directorates and Departments can be accessed at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/publications/sesfull/?lang=en>

Question 5

Do you think that the arrangements currently in place could be improved?

Inclusive Policy Making - Second Edition Guidance

The first edition of the Inclusive Policy Making guidance is currently being reviewed and as a result changes will be made to the IPM process. Screening will be changed to better consider the relevance of policies and practices to equality groups and the wider community. This will make it easier to consider any unexpected differential impacts that emerge, and help us to improve our policies and practices from what we learn.

Following the independent review in 2008, the lessons learned from this and our experiences to date have been included in the revised second edition guidance. The guidance will help to provide an understanding of how to use Inclusive Policy Making to best effect. The new guidance will be available from April 2010.

On going support


In October 2009, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division launched the first in a series of Inclusive Policy Making drop-in sessions for Welsh Assembly Government officials. These sessions take place every month at various office locations throughout Wales and are designed to support policy officials who are currently undertaking an equality impact assessment, or are about to. The Inclusive Policy Making team is available at these sessions to answer any questions about the process. The Inclusive Policy Making team has also created an Inclusive Policy Making Frequently Asked Questions sheet, which is available to staff on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division pages of the intranet.

The Inclusive Policy Making team provides on-going support to officials undertaking impact assessments and is present at both Policy Gateway and Detailed Assessment meetings as necessary.

Training

In partnership with Eliesha Cymru Training, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division have developed an Inclusive Policy Making hot-shot training session. These sessions will be included as part of the 'Policy Skills and Knowledge' training package currently being developed by the Policy Skills Project team. The hot-shot sessions will be available to Welsh Assembly Government officials in the coming months and will focus on our key Inclusive Policy Making messages and launch of the second edition guidance. The hot-shot session was successfully piloted in February 2010.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn', written in a cursive style.

Carwyn Jones