

FULL COUNCIL

22 MAY 2018

REPORT FROM BRISTOL WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Report summary

This report summarises the work undertaken by Bristol Women's Commission since Bristol signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life in 2013.

The action plans set out how we are working towards equality of women in the priority areas of Safety, Health, Education, Economy, Business and Women's representation in public life

See also:

Appendix 1 - Action Plans

Appendix 2 - Images of Centenary Celebrations

THE FULL COUNCIL IS ASKED TO NOTE THIS INFORMATION UPDATE

Introduction

Bristol Women's Commission (BWC) has the following membership:

Bristol City Council (councillors and officers), Bristol Women's Voice, University of Bristol, University West of England, City of Bristol College, Avon and Somerset Police, TUC, University Hospitals Bristol, Voscur, Fawcett Society, BBC, First Group, CBI, WomenEd, Trinity Mirror, WECA}

Chair: Penny Gane, Bristol Women's Voice

BWC was established in 2013 when Bristol signed the European Charter of Equality of Women and Men in Local Life on International Women's Day. The charter is action

focussed and the commission sends regular action plans to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) which represents the interests of European local authorities and their associations in more than 40 countries.

Bristol is the only UK signatory to the charter and is well regarded in Europe.

Key organisations in the city were contacted by the then Mayor and the Chair of Bristol Women's Voice and asked if they would be interested in having senior representation by a woman on the commission and there is a wide representation .

For the first 2 years after signing the charter the equalities team audited the council's work through the lens of the charter and reported it to the commission. The commission has invited a number of senior officers to present their work and how women's issues are taken into account.

The Commission receives £5k per year from BCC to support its work alongside support to minute the commission meetings. It has cross party support with all parties having a place on the commission. It has an independent unpaid Chair and the £5k investment from the council levers in a considerable amount of time and work from commission and task group members as evidenced by the action plans. The current review of equalities work in the council will hopefully provide clarity as to the nature of the support for the commission for the future, as there is much more to do.

The Commission has commented on key strategies for the city e.g. the Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan –which only had one mention of women, The Draft West of England Combined Authority Strategic Plan that does not mention women at all. BWC is on the steering group and partnership board for the development of the City Plan. BWC are advising on the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

The commission has six multi- agency task groups: **Health, Safety, Economy, Representation and Transport** were set up in 2013 while **Education and Business** have been in place for almost a year. The task groups draw up and implement the action plan.

The Commission's action plans have been consulted with stakeholders at a Women's Mingle and a roundtable event. Health priorities have been established at a Women's Health Conference on International Women's Day 2017.

The Women's Commission has some 70 women in total contributing to the work with real expertise in particular areas. The council could avail itself further of this expertise in terms of gender- mainstreaming the city's policies and developments.

Work of the multi-agency task groups:

1. Representation of Women in Public Life Task Group {BCC, BWV, Voscur, Fawcett}

Co-Chairs: Sandra Meadows CEO Voscur, Cllr Margaret Hickman BCC

The Representation Task Group of Bristol Women's Commission was established in recognition of the fact that women are under-represented within democratic and decision making bodies in Bristol. The group works to increase women's representation and leadership in politics and in public, private and voluntary sector institutions across the city to make their leadership gender balanced. Lack of representation is not only a deficit in democratic terms but also deprives our city of opportunities for economic and social advancement. Diversity of thought, knowledge, experience and talent are key to the advancement of city and society in general.

The RTG works to encourage and support women to enter positions of power and influence in Bristol, promoting balanced representation in democratic, economic and social spheres across all sectors and increasingly diverse communities in Bristol. The RTG also works to ensure that the pathways to and positions of influence in the city are accessible and inclusive so as to ensure balance and equity in relation to resources, attitudes and power.

The RTG works to identify opportunities for women to have meaningful engagement in public life to challenge and eradicate gender inequality and ensure local and citywide policy and strategy is gender inclusive at the point of conception, through to delivery. The RTG also works to ensure that diversity is embedded within representation by broadening the definition of representation to include women who are from under-represented communities and/or identify as belonging to groups with protected characteristics.

Achievements from past work

50:50 Campaign

The group organised a 50:50 Campaign to increase the number of women councillors in Bristol. The 2016 elections saw 30 women elected to Bristol City Council, taking women's representation from 28% to 43% in two years. As well as press coverage showcasing individual women councillors the group have led a highly successful training session for women considering becoming councillors. The group also ran sessions

encouraging women to take up other positions in public life such as school governors, magistrates and charity trustees.

Board Representation

The group has also produced research on the make-up of Bristol Boards and which boards individuals are on.

Current work

- Conducting an audit of and creating a database and information portal for Leadership initiatives within the city to better understand, highlight and overcome barriers to inclusion and participation of women.
- Working with the Women in Business Task Group to take forward work and research on diversity and gender equality on Boards and decision making bodies.
- Supporting and participating in Bristol's programme of events for the Celebration of Women's Suffrage 2018.
- Contributing to workshops enabling women to enter public/political life

Aims for the future

- To see an increase in the diversity and gender equality on Boards and public bodies in Bristol.
- To achieve 50:50 women's representation across political parties in Bristol- 50-50 for 20-20.
- To encourage more women to register to vote through a publicity and outreach campaign to areas with previously low voter registration and turn out.
- Women in the Media – develop an action plan to challenge and change the current image of Women in all areas of media.

2. Economy Group {UoB, UWE, TUC, BWV, Fairplay SW, Women's Budget Group}

Chair: Diane Bunyan BWV

The aim of the group is to make sure that the issues and needs of women, particularly women who have been most affected by austerity, are considered in plans and proposals for Bristol so that the skills, knowledge and talents of Bristol women are able to contribute fully to the City and that economic benefits are shared by everyone.

Employment, unemployment and underemployment were identified as key issues for women in Bristol from a survey conducted in 2011.

The task group has:

- commented on the West of England LEP Strategic Economic Plan that has only one mention of women and where the focus is on industries that employ a majority of men.
- raised the lack of a gender analysis by Local Enterprise Partnerships in their work nationally. The Women's Budget Group has taken up this issue nationally.
- supported the FPSW conference on Care as Infrastructure and how this would contribute to economic development and continues to raise this issue as the major contribution to improving women's economic position.
- analysed the gender pay gap and its reasons for different areas of Bristol and used this information to inform the work.
- commented on the Draft Plans for the development at Temple Quarter and commissioned UWE Planning and Landscape Architecture students to produce a piece of work on how the area could be accessed by those communities living on the edge of the site.
- worked on the economic effects of Brexit on Women.
- secured £24,000 funding from Women to Women Fund to identify the barriers for women in Lawrence Hill and Easton accessing the potential employment opportunities in the Temple Quarter Enterprise Area and to work with employers and decision makers to make sure that these are tackled.

3. Education Task Group {UWE, COBC, BCC, Bristol Head Teachers}

Chair: Keziah Featherstone, Education consultant and former Bristol Head Teacher

Education is the key to improving the lives and life chances of young women, which is why BWC created the Education Task Group. The next generation of workers, voters and parents are currently being educated in our city and it is essential that we work together to ensure a collective purpose, one that makes Bristol a better place, a safer and more inclusive place to be women in the future.

The Educational Task Group has brought many women educators around the same table: primary, secondary and further education; special, alternative and mainstream, state and independent, faith and secular, from affluent schools to those in far more deprived areas, girls of all races, religions and backgrounds.

The group's first task was to audit the recording of incidents towards girls in schools and whether they were being recorded as sexist, transphobic or homophobic. Although many schools recorded them, not many recorded within these categories – something most of the Bristol schools are now addressing.

In July 2017 the first Our Lives Our Choice conference was held at Bridge Learning Campus. Eighty girls in Years 6 and 12 joined together to listen to an inspirational key note by architect Jane Locksmith. The girls then spent over an hour perusing the human library of inspirational women, who each spoke about their lives, their careers and the

choices they had made. A wonderful lunch was provided by Syrian Women Refugees who also spoke to the girls about their delight in making a new home in Bristol.

The group is organising two more girls' conferences this summer. The first, to be held at Cabot Institute on 27th June, will be for girls in Year 6 and 9 and will again be themed along the Our Lives Our Choice theme. PCC, Sue Mountstevens will be the keynote.

The second conference will be held at Redmaids High School on 4th July and will be for young women aged 15 to 18. This will focus more on the issues affecting our young women – principally their identity and personal safety. They will spend the morning compiling their own manifestos and in the afternoon will present to influential Bristol women, including Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor. The group is planning a careers focused conference for the autumn term.

4. Safety Task Group {BCC, SARSAS, BWV, Zero Tolerance, One25, Diversity Trust, UWE}

Chair: Alison Comley, Strategic Director Communities BCC

The Women's Safety Task group was one of the first groups to be established in 2013, having been identified as a key priority for the city and an important area of the Charter under the service delivery role. There is a wealth of work already underway in the city and the task group has worked in areas where it can add value and additionality.

This multi-agency group has focussed on a number of key priorities and has been instrumental in developing and taking forward the Zero Tolerance City work. Many organisations across the city have signed up to the Zero Tolerance pledge which includes taking action in at least one of the following areas:

- Training
- Awareness Raising
- Review of policies and procedures
- Initiatives
- Creation of safe spaces

An extensive programme of work is in place which is overseen by the task group and managed by Bristol Women's Voice to deliver a real difference. A major challenge is that the resources to run the project come to an end in July 2018 so work is currently

being undertaken across organisations and business in the city to identify further resources.

In the last year the initiative has continued to work across the city to raise awareness of gender-based violence issues and get businesses involved to take action:

- Currently 70 partners signed up and a strong social media presence
- Held successful 'Behind Closed Doors' conference in partnership with The Hollie Gazzard Trust
- Held 'Making Respectful Men: A Call To Educators' conference in partnership with A Call To Men UK
- Street Harassment Campaign launched during International Anti-Street Harassment Week in April 2017 including blogs, resources and taking part in an international Tweetathon; campaign has led to Avon and Somerset Police adopting gender/misogyny as a hate crime category
- Partnerships developed with Good Night Out and Drinkaware to create package for venues
- Partnerships developed with Avon and Somerset Police for sexual assaults campaign which feeds into work with venues, and working with security firms and licensing for taxis on night time economy
- Partner for UWE Inclusive Campus project on sexual violence and harassment, hate crime and anti-social behaviour
- Supported successful campaign for the UK Government to ratify the Istanbul Convention including contacting all local MPs
- Bristol Zero Tolerance was a signatory to successful #SREnow campaign calling for Compulsory PSHE
- Accepted to be a member of the national End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) and as a Co-Sponsor of International Anti-Street Harassment Week

Membership of : Forum Against Sexual Violence and Harassment, - FM and HBV Working Group, FGM Strategy Group, BDSA Strategy Group, BAVA locality groups, Sexual Violence Reference Group, Avon and Somerset Police Force Domestic Abuse Forum

5. Health Task Group {Public Health, UHB, Care Forum, BWV, Women's Alcohol Advisory Service, CASS, TUC, Next Link, Self Injury Support, Womankind, UoB}

Chair: Jackie Beavington, Public Health BCC

The group has a vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Bristol women of all ages through research, action and influence.

In its first year this group undertook two pieces of research into young women's health. A literature review of young women's access to health services was undertaken by a final year medical student from BWV with supervision from Prof Sarah Payne at UoB which was followed by community research undertaken by UWE. To help tackle some of the issues raised different organisations were invited to join the group including Self injury Support, CASS and Women's Alcohol Advisory Service. The Body Image Team at UWE and Womankind presented their work to the Commission.

On International Women's Day 2017 the task group organised the Women's Health conference at City Hall for health professionals. It was revealed at this event that women's life expectancy in Bristol is now worse than the national average and that more women are dying of cancer. Women's lifecourse issues were raised at the event and in November 2017 the task group ran a menopause event in partnership with UoB attended by 200 women.

The task group undertook a review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment from a gendered perspective which revealed a great deal of hidden information about women's health in the city. The resulting chapter in the JSNA has been widely reported.

The Task Group is currently drawing up a Women's Health Strategy for the city.

6. Women in Business Task Group {UWE,CBI, BWV, KPMG, Moon Consulting, Pelican Business Services, Rejoove, Trigon, EE, West News, Set Squared, West of England Growth Hub, The Village Hall, Shift Work, Ovo Energy, Business in the Community, Community of Purpose, First Group, Business West, Destination Bristol, We the Curious, Structur3dpeople}

Chair: Donna Whitehead, Pro Vice chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty Business and Law, UWE

A relatively new group, the task force aims to bring about significant improvements and pioneering new approaches within the influence of businesses nationally and internationally.

The group plans to do this through a number of objectives:

The improvement of awareness of the Women in Business task group through the creation of a strong social media presence through which regular updates from the group can be disseminated.

The promotion of flexible working to businesses in Bristol in order to maximise excellent opportunities for women through a 'best practice' event, held early 2018, designed to inspire and encourage businesses to adopt flexible working policies.

The promotion of an increase in women on boards through research into the experiences of women already present on boards with a view to sharing best practice.

The establishment of a mentoring scheme aimed at young women, with a focus on those from disadvantaged areas.

Key achievements since DW took on chair:

- High profile flexible working event ran in partnership with UWE Bristol Business School to showcase examples of flexible working. It was attended by 80 business representatives. The event received much social media interest and was covered by Business Leader magazine (see <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/will-increasing-flexible-working-help-close-gender-pay-gap-2/40765/>)
- Mentoring session for entrepreneurs morning of International Women's Day

7. Transport -Time limited Task Group {First Group, LEP, UWE, BWV}

Chair: Prof. Jane Harrington Deputy Vice Chancellor UWE

This task group produced research on Women's issues in relation to transport in Bristol and surrounding areas: 'Women and Transport in Bristol', July 2014, Dr. Juliet Jain, Centre for Transport and Society, UWE.

The work has been widely consulted on with stakeholders and disseminated to appropriate Bristol agencies including Bristol City Council.

The commission has also been represented on the Congestion Task Group.

Centenary Celebrations

BWC supported the bid to the Government Equalities Office for a year of activities to commemorate 100 years since the first women in the country got the vote. The bid was successful and Bristol was designated a Centenary City and was awarded 173k to deliver a programme of 14 events throughout 2018. 3000 people joined the wonderful Lantern Parade on February 6th to commemorate the signing of the Representation of

the People Act 1918. Bristol University lit the Wills Tower and Victoria Rooms in suffragette colours. Huge lantern suffragettes danced amongst the crowds and the procession was met by the 100 girls choir singing 'The March of the Women' and a women's choir joined them to sing 'We Rise' by Dionne Draper. A truly magical event. A further 3000 people attended International Women's Day Take over of City Hall three weeks later with over 50 events taking place despite appalling weather conditions. Participants, sang, danced, debated, watched awards, took part on panels and so much more. Burning Brass started the day and balloon suffragettes were in attendance! Many more events planned throughout the year. www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk

Bristol is widely regarded as leading the way with the Centenary Celebrations. There is also national interest in the model of a Women's Commission (BWC) working with a Women's Network (BWV)

Appendices:

1. BWC Action Plan
2. Images Centenary Celebrations