

**Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a
Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Local Government and Public
Services Committee**
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Gwenda Thomas AM
Chair
Equality of Opportunity Committee
National Assembly for Wales

17 October 2006

As a Member of the Local Government and Public Services Committee you are aware that the Welsh Assembly Government's seventh annual report on equality (2005-06) was considered at its meeting on 4 October.

It was agreed that I would write to you, in advance of the Equality of Opportunity Committee's consideration of the report, to highlight the issues raised in relation to the Local Government and Public Services portfolio. These were:

- ◆ **Equal Pay** – the Committee recognises this as a big issue for local authorities. The Minister reported increased confidence that most local authorities had completed job evaluation work and would be in a position to act on the results by April 1, when the gender equality duty had been due to come into effect in Wales. Progress was also reported in relation to agreements on back pay and it was noted that the WLGA had been taking advice on that issue.
- ◆ **Equality-related performance indicators** - 16 authorities have included equalities indicators of various kinds in their policy agreements. It was noted that these were in addition to equality issues being picked up generally within the Local Government performance measurement framework and the audit work of the Wales Audit Office. The Committee has sought further detail about the “numerous equalities indicators” referred to as being contained within the performance measurement framework.
- ◆ **Diversity of public sector leadership** – The Committee noted the lack of a measure for the percentage of public sector leaders from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It received an assurance that efforts were being made to improve the data and consider where further data was needed, and that three of the sub-groups looking at the review of the performance measurement framework had responsibility for looking at equalities. Equality issues are also being taken into account in the work of Public Service Management Wales.

- ◆ **Public appointments** – the Committee noted improvements had been made in the field of public appointments but wished to see more hard data on the diversity of applicants and appointments. The Minister noted that more people were applying for public appointments but the number of women and black and ethnic minority candidates made up a very small percentage of the whole. It was an action arising from the meeting that future consideration of the Government's Annual Report on Equality would include a separate report from the Local Government Equalities Unit, to include data on diversity in public appointments.

I hope that this feedback will be useful to your Committee in its consideration of the Welsh Assembly Government's seventh annual report on equality.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Jones

Chair, Local Government and Public Services Committee