

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**  
**THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**  
**CHALLENGES OF THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY AND PILOT SUPPORT**  
**GROUP**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING**

**(Contact: Christine Gore, Tel: (01285) 623605)**

**1. PURPOSE**

To consider the challenges for the LGBTIQ+ community and examine how best to support this community.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee considers the report and makes relevant recommendations to the Cabinet.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 On the 28th February 2018, a motion to support the LGBTIQ+ community was received by Messrs A M Graham and A S Coles at Council.

*“The LGBTIQ+ community as most recently defined (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, intersex and Questioning plus) is an important and accepted part of our community.*

*This being the case, West Oxfordshire District Council will do everything it can to enable the LGBTIQ+ community to flourish and succeed, thus demonstrating the council’s commitment to representing the needs of the whole community.*

*The council agrees to examine how best to support this community by referring the matter to the relevant committee to consider any particular challenges in West Oxfordshire”*

3.2 This report provides details and progress on the pilot project set up to support the LGBTIQ+ community.

**4. WEST OXFORDSHIRE’S PILOT PROJECT**

4.1. Currently, there are no specific support services for the LGBTIQ+ community in West Oxfordshire (excluding the pilot support group). People in this community would need to travel to Oxford to access such services, which might in itself be a barrier for some individuals.

4.2. A pilot support group for the LGBTIQ+ community has been running since September 2017 in a number of planned locations. Leaflets to publicise the events were distributed to public places, and have been positively received by GPs, Libraries, and other community groups.

4.3. The meetings are informal and open to anyone aged 16 and over to use as a ‘drop in’ facility or more extensively as a support and social networking facility. The main aims of the meetings are:

- to provide opportunities for people in the LGBTIQ+ community and other communities to obtain/offer advice on a confidential basis and be signposted to relevant services;
  - to provide opportunities to share experiences about their lives including discrimination;
  - to be a social network and a place where people who identify as LGBTIQ+ to meet as well as a place for non-LGBTIQ+ people to find out more about this community.
- 4.4. We are mindful of the need to respect both the privacy of the individuals and the confidentiality of the matters discussed at these meetings, and therefore we are only able to provide general details on their success.
- 4.5. Thirty-nine people across a wide range of ages participated in the first three meetings and included people from the non-LGBTIQ+ community, for example, parents representing children who identify as LGBT and others who were just interested. In general, the number of participants varied depending on the size of the population in those locations.

## **5. FUTURE SUPPORT AND BENEFITS**

5.1. The types of assistance that could be provided by West Oxfordshire District Council include:

- Support/advice on future governance arrangements;
- General help including signposting and raising awareness.

5.2. The main benefits of the scheme are:

- The provision of support and opportunities for a community which has been recognised as suffering from discrimination and marginalisation;
- An increased visibility of the LGBTIQ+ community would help other communities to understand the issues and challenges for the LGBTIQ+ community, and help to create a more cohesive community;
- The model could be adopted by other councils.

## **6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

None

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Advice and support would be provided within existing resources

## **8. REASONS**

To respond to the motion to support the LGBTIQ+ community

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Background Papers:

None