

Report

Cabinet



Part 1

Date: 14 June 2017

Subject Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Report 2016-17

Purpose To inform Cabinet of the council's progress in meeting the general equality duty set out the Equality Act 2010 and public sector duty for Wales.

Author Head of People and Business Change

Ward All

Summary Council approved the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) in March 2016 to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011. It set out how we apply the law to the council's work, and our commitments to make progress on nine equality objectives as outlined in the report.

Public authorities have to produce an annual report and publish it within a year of the year end at 31st of March. This is the report for April 2016 to March 2017.

This annual report covers the 1st year of the new Strategic Equalities Plan, and provides an update on equalities work across the Council.

Proposal To note the attached report and progress made against the Equality Objectives.

Action by Heads of Service

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

Corporate Directors
Relevant service managers
Cabinet Member for Assets & Member Development (Deputy Leader)
Strategic Equalities Group

Signed Head of People and Business Change

Background

This report is the first annual report on the progress Newport City Council has made towards meeting the Equality Objectives set out in the authority's second four year Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) (available here) as approved by Council 3rd March 2016.

This report demonstrates the positive progress Newport City Council has made over the past year towards meeting the nine Equality Objectives laid out in the 2016 Strategic Equality Plan. As the lifetime of the strategy extends over four years, we would not expect to have delivered on all outcomes at this point in time, however the progress made is encouraging.

Following the approval of the SEP in 2016, the authority re-convened the member-led Strategic Equality Group (SEG) which meets on a quarterly basis to take a strategic lead on the implementation of the equalities agenda. Through the SEG, progresses on the equality objectives are monitored throughout the year.

In this report there are sections on the nine Equality Objectives, information on how the council collects and uses equalities information, and employment data as required by the Equality Act 2010.

Section 1 Equality Objectives

In summary, work under the equality objectives is on course and the objectives remain a priority for the authority. Ensuring fair outcomes is at the heart of the council's work and is a driver in decision making.

In 2016 the council selected nine equality objectives on which to focus the work and make the most difference and grouped the objectives in line with the goals of the Well-being and Future Generations Act.

A more equal Wales

- Diversity in the workplace
- Engagement and democratic participation
- Improving Access to Services
- Tackling Poverty

A Wales of cohesive communities

- Cohesive Communities and tackling hate crime
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Homelessness

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

- Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
- Corporate Compliance

The attached annual report provides further detail on the progress against the actions and measures.

Section 2: Equalities Data: from data collection to service delivery

Newport City Council uses data at every step of its decision making process and sees data as a vital tool in the fulfilment of its public sector duties to promote equality of opportunity and good community relations, while also helping us eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. This section will look at the role of on our equalities data in three stages:

- Collecting data; how the authority collects data on protected characteristics, the Welsh language and Well-being of Future Generations

- Evaluating data; how the authority uses data through our internal processes like Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments
- Using data; how the authority uses relevant equality information to set strategic direction and meet our equality objectives

Section 3 Workforce profile

Workforce statistics are required under the specific duties and is attached to the annual report.

Workforce monitoring is mainstreamed in the HR/ payroll system, which was upgraded in 2012. Job applications are now online and equality monitoring is included on the system although there is a 'prefer not to say' option for those who wish not to. Additional equality categories have been added in-line with the Equality Act 2010, including sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Monitoring progress

The report attached outlines progress made against each of the strategic objectives. This is also monitored by the Strategic Equalities Group, considering each equality objective and where appropriate receiving information from relevant service managers, and partner organisations,

Financial Summary

The cost of implementing the Strategic Equality Plan and the Equality Objectives is met out of existing budgets by each relevant service area. The majority of the actions relate to work already identified in the Service Improvement Plans, for example workforce monitoring or occur in projects that have already been approved and prioritised, such as domestic abuse and hate crime.

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs (Income)					Not applicable
Net Costs (Savings)					
Net Impact on Budget					

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the Plan is not implemented	M	L	Priorities identified in the Plan are included in service area plans and partnership plans and monitored primarily through existing governance arrangements.	Heads of Service
That equality commitments are not understood by employees	M	L	Employees are aware of their responsibilities through the usual management structures. The Strategic Equalities Group provides a monitoring role against the SEP and this ensures that lead officers are	Head of People and Business Change

			aware of their roles in incorporating equality commitments across service delivery.	
That Equality Objectives are implemented and reviewed	M	L	Progress against equalities objectives are reported on regularly to the Strategic Equality Group	Head of People and Business Change

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 supports the organisation in meeting its equality duty under the 2010 Equality Act and the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011. The SEP is linked to the Welsh Language Scheme and incorporates our commitments relating to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Equality and fairness are guiding principles that underpin the Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan.

Options Available

The options available are:

1. Accept and note the progress identified in the Annual Report appended to this report
2. Not accept the Annual Report and request further information.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is 1. The Annual Report provides a review of the previous year and context for planning future work and is already mainstreamed through council strategies and service plans.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial consequences arising from this report. However, Fairness & Equality Impact Assessments are included in business cases during the Medium Term Financial Plan process when applicable.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required to publish an annual report setting out progress made and the effectiveness of the actions taken to meet its public sector equality duty and specific objectives. The general public sector equality duty requires the Council to have due regard in the exercise of its functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct and to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers impose specific duties on local authorities in Wales for the purpose of enabling better performance of these general duties. These include the duty to publish objectives designed to enable the authority to perform the statutory duty, to publish a statement setting out steps taken or intended steps in order to fulfil each objective and how long the authority will take in order to fulfil each objective.

This report provides an update of the first year of delivery against the Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

This report demonstrates that the Council considers the equalities on a strategic level and has governance arrangements in place with the Strategic Equality Group, to ensure successful delivery. The equalities agenda also forms part of our wider partnership and corporate priorities, and is in line with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Comments of Cabinet Member

This report provides a summary of the work that has been done in delivering the first year of the new plan. The Strategic Equalities Group has played a key role that each objective is reviewed annually and progress updates are provided by lead officers from across the authority. We will continue to progress this work over the next 12 months and continue to mainstream equalities across service delivery.

Local issues

Not applicable

Scrutiny Committees

Not applicable

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

A Fairness & Equalities Impact Assessment (F&EIA) is not required for the annual report. Equalities and Welsh language agenda are well aligned and actions in the report referring to F&EIA in Newport will consider both together.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

No specific requirement to consult with Children and Young People, however actions arising from strategic equalities developments that directly affect children and young people will continue to be monitored by the Strategic Equalities Group.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which came into force in April 2016 sets the context for the move towards long term planning of services. A programme of training for senior management and elected members is underway so that the wide-ranging implications of the Act are understood and can be embedded in the Council's ways of working.

Work towards the strategic equalities plan objectives includes working in partnership with other organisations, in line with the sustainable development principle, and the work contributes to a number of the wellbeing goals.

Consultation

Consultation with the public was undertaken for the development of the new Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable.

Background Papers

The Strategic Equality Plan 2012

Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019 (Cabinet Report February 2016)

Strategic Equalities Annual Report 2015-2016

Dated: 22 May 2017