

Report

Council



Part 1

Date: 26 November 2019

Subject Annual Report: Strategic Equality Plan 2018-19

Purpose This Annual Report details Newport City Council's progress on delivering its 2016-2020 Strategic Equality Plan (SEP), whilst also reporting on the essential equalities employment information that the authority is required to publish under the Equality Act 2010.

The Annual Report is required to be published on the Council's website in accordance with statutory deadlines (March 31st 2020).

Author Connected Communities Manager

Ward All

Summary Under the Equality Act (2010) the Council is required to report annually on the progress it has made against the 9 Strategic Equality Objectives contained within its Strategic Equality Plan. The Equality Act also requires Local Authorities to publish staff equalities data, which this report also contains.

This report, previously received by Cabinet is the third 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), as approved by Council 3rd March 2016.

Proposal To approve the attached final monitoring report for publication on the Council's website, in accordance with statutory deadlines.

Action by Head of People and Business Change, Heads of Service

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

Cabinet Member for Equalities
The Council's Strategic Equalities Group
HR Manager
Cabinet

Background

The Equality Act 2010 (Wales) states that a listed body in Wales, including Local Authorities, must produce an Annual Report by 31st March each year.

The Act requires that the report must specifically outline progress towards fulfilling each of the authority's Equality Objectives, a statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of these, and specified employment information, including information on training and pay (unless it has already published this information elsewhere).

The report should also set out the steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information and how we have used this information in meeting the three aims of the Public Sector General Equality Duty, which are to:

1. Foster positive relationships between those who share Protected Characteristics and those who don't
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
3. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a Protected Characteristic and those who don't

If relevant information has not been collected, a statement on the effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information must also be included.

The report demonstrates both the positive progress Newport City Council has made over the past year towards meeting the 9 Equality Objectives laid out in the SEP, and areas for development. As we approach the final year of delivery, we are also assessing the effectiveness of our current Strategic Equality Plan and associated delivery arrangements, and ensuring that opportunities for improvement are maximised through the development of our new Plan, due to be published by the 31st of March 2020.

Progress against the authority's Equality Objectives is reported on a quarterly basis to the Council's Strategic Equality Group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Equalities.

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 our actions relate to work already identified in Service Plans, for example workforce monitoring, or which occurs 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*	Probability of risk	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?
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	(H/M/L)	occurring (H/M/L)		
That the Plan is not implemented	M	M	Governance arrangements relating to delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan are being reviewed to ensure that actions are effectively progressed throughout the year at an operational level	Heads of Service
That equality commitments are not understood by employees	M	M	Equality training for staff continues to be rolled out across the organisation, and further development of our Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment process has further embedded equalities considerations as part of the Authority's decision making process.	Head of People and Business Change and Elected Members
That Equality Objectives are not implemented and reviewed	M	M	Progress against equalities objectives are reported on regularly to the Strategic Equality Group, however there is further work necessary to ensure that objectives are routinely monitored and reviewed at an operational level	Connected Communities Manager

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Council's commitments under the Equality Act and the Strategic Equality Plan are aligned to the Wellbeing Goals, in particular, working towards a more equal Wales, and a Wales of cohesive communities.

Equality Objective 9 relates to Welsh language. The Council also has a responsibility to publish a separate annual report in relation to our compliance with statutory Welsh Language Standards. Our Welsh Language Annual Report 2018-19 has been published online here:

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/documents/Council-and-Democracy/Equalities-and-Welsh-language-/Welsh/Welsh-Language-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf>

Options Available

- a) To approve the attached report for publication on the council's website
- b) To not approve the attached report and redraft

Preferred Option and Why

Option a) is the preferred option, in order to ensure that the Council remains compliant with its statutory obligations.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications associated with the proposal to approve and then publish the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report on the Council's website. The cost of implementing the SEP is met from existing budgets in service areas. 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 annual report is also required to set out equalities data in relation to staffing information. 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 on the third and final year of delivery against the Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019 and confirms that good progress has been made in meeting the 9 equalities objectives set out in the Plan, but also identifying those areas where further work is required.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

This Annual Report reflects the positive progress made towards implementing our Strategic Equality Plan while also highlighting areas of work that we will need to focus our efforts on in the coming year, or carry over into the 2020 Strategic Equality Plan. The publication of the report also meets the requirements to annually publish staff equalities data for the Local Authority, The work delivered over the last 12 months contributes to the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives and the national well-being goals. Any challenges identified in this report will be addressed through the Strategic Equalities Group.

The report outlines how Strategic Equality Plan 2018-19 is in line with the sustainable development principle.

Local issues

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Committees

Not applicable.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

No Fairness & Equalities Impact Assessment (F&EIA) is necessary for the Annual Report. By design, the Strategic Equality Plan and associated Annual Report are the mechanism by which the authority's Equality Duties are discharged, and therefore have a positive impact on all Protected Characteristics.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

No consultation was needed for this report.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, which came into force in April 2016, places an obligation on Local Authorities to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Strategic Equality Plan represents much of the work that the authority undertakes to fulfil our Wellbeing objectives to work towards 'a more Equal Wales' and a 'Wales of Cohesive Communities', drawing on much of the research undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission into fairness and inequalities in Wales.

The Strategic Equality Plan and its objectives aim to influence the way that the Council makes decisions that have a long term impact on communities, and engages and consults with diverse and seldom heard groups to ensure they are able to influence the design of service delivery. Early intervention to address issues such as hate crime and the risk of radicalisation prevent escalation of issues which may threaten community cohesion and collaboration with key partners in the delivery of our Equality Plan ensures an effective, holistic approach. The Strategic Equality Plan is influenced by national research, local data, and engagement with people in Newport that share Protected Characteristics.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020

Equalities Annual Report 2017/18

Welsh Language Annual Report 2018/19

NCC Well-being Objectives and Well-being Statement

Wellbeing Plan

Dated: 26 November 2019