

# Report

## Cabinet

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### Part 1

Date: September 2016

Item No:

**Subject** Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Report 2015-16

**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 2012 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 five 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 31<sup>st</sup> of March. This is the report for April 2015 to March 2016.

The equalities objectives were reviewed during this period, as outlined in the Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019 and these will form the basis of the 2016-2017 report next year.

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

**Action by** Corporate Management Team

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Corporate Directors
- Relevant service managers
- Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Assets

**Signed** Head of People and Business Change

## Background

The council approved the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) in March 2012 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 five 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. The attached report on the SEP and the Wales specific equality duties covers the period April 2015 to end of March 2016, the fourth year of annual reporting.

The equalities objectives were also reviewed during the year, and have been published in the Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019. The revised equalities objectives which build on the 2012 plan will form the basis of the 2016-2017 report next year.

## Annual Report 2015-16

The report sets out to address how the council has met the general equality duty (GED) and the three specific equality duties below:

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good community relations
- Eliminating discrimination

(These apply across the 9 protected characteristics named in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.)

Overall findings indicate healthy progress against the council's five chosen equality objectives and has provided us with a model of engagement in developing the 2016 -2020 objectives.

The report is structured in three parts to evidence:

### **Section 1 How the authority collects and uses information**

We make substantial use of relevant equality information in setting strategic direction (the Unified Needs Assessment (UNA), Single Integrated Plan, Corporate Plan); we mainstream use of data in service planning and performance management (Service Area Plans, Customer Insight, UNA, the ward profiles) and use relevant data in taking decisions including budget planning (Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments).

### **Section 2 How we meet the council's five 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 2012 the council selected five equality objectives on which to focus the work and make the most difference, these were widely consulted on and remain in-line with the council's corporate priorities:

- Engagement
- Accessible services
- Community cohesion and tackling hate crime
- Domestic abuse
- Worklessness

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

In February 2016 Cabinet approved the Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-19 establishing revised equality objectives. These priorities will be monitored by Strategic Equalities Group (SEG) in 2016/17 and reported to Cabinet at year end.

### 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.

Data and analysis of workforce statistics is available in Annex 2 of the annual report.

### 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 training offer has been improved on both Welsh language and Equalities awareness and uptake is monitored to ensure high level engagement	Head of People and Business Change
That Equality Objectives are suitable	M	L	The equalities objectives have been revised and new equalities objectives established.	Head of People and Business Change

\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

## **Links to Council Policies and Priorities**

The Strategic Equality Plan 2012 supports the organisation in meeting its equality duty under the 2010 Equality Act and the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011. 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.

The Council objectives have been reviewed this year and the revised objectives have been included in the published Strategic Equalities Plan 2016-2019. They will form the basis of next year's annual report.

## **Staffing Implications: 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 will also inform planning around Wellbeing of Future Generations requirements in the current year.

## **Comments of Cabinet Member**

This report reflects the position for the Council for the previous financial year. The equalities objectives have since been updated and the work of the Strategic Equalities Group will be key to ensuring progress is maintained.

## **Local issues**

Not applicable

## **Scrutiny Committees**

Not applicable

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

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.

## **Consultation**

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

## **Background Papers**

The Strategic Equality Plan 2012

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

Strategic Equalities Annual Report 2014-2015

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016