



CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018-2019

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress made during the financial year 2018-2019 against targets in the Council's current Strategic Equality Plan, and for Cabinet to approve for submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission and publication online.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on Equalities issues under current legislation. The requirements are very detailed as to what relevant information must be included in the annual monitoring and improvement report (attached in full as an appendix).
- 2.2 The amount of information presented is therefore in order to ensure that the regulatory body involved (the Equality and Human Rights Commission) are provided with full evidence of the Council's compliance and commitment to those statutory duties.
- 2.3 The Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report must be published by the 31 March the following year. In March this year the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) wrote to all local authorities to advise that they had taken the decision to suspend their compliance check on the publication of annual reports and Strategic Equality Plans until October. This decision was taken as a recognition of the incredibly difficult circumstances within which listed bodies are operating due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. For this reason, although the 31st March 2020 deadline has passed, we expect that the EHRC will be tolerant of the delay.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 For Cabinet to approve the annual monitoring and improvement report for submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission and publication online.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The council is required under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce an annual monitoring report on the steps it has taken to meet the public sector equality duty and its own Equality Objectives.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales, an annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan must be published within 12 months after the end of the financial year that is covered by that report.

5.2 Appended to this report is the Strategic Equality Plan – Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report 2018-2019.

5.3 In summary however, the following performance information should be noted covering the financial year in question:

- In our 2018 submission to Stonewall's Education Equality Index Caerphilly maintained its first place ranking in Wales in terms of inclusive practice, and improved its UK ranking from 21st to 19th. The index looks at the work that we have done to tackle homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying in schools.
- Our Gender Pay Gap Statement for 2018 was published. The data showed the Mean Gender Pay Gap for the year was 7.4%.
- £90,000 of funding was used to support disability access improvement works, which included access improvements to reception facilities and main entrances within leisure centres, youth clubs and day centres. Automatic doors, ramps, handrails and lifts were also installed within some schools where identified.
- A full audit of the Council's website saw us increasing bilingual webpage content to 100%. A number of microsites that remain in English are being upgraded through a work programme to ensure they are bilingual and accessible.
- We had a presence at Pride Cymru 2018, with staff, LGBT Ambassadors and the Mayor joining in the parade for the first time under the banner 'Proud Council'.
- In partnership with Menter Iaith Caerffili and partners of the Welsh Language Forum, we developed a booklet for parents and prospective parents to consider Welsh medium education for their children. The work meets an action the county borough's Welsh Language Strategy.
- We received a Silver Award in recognition of our commitment to the Defence and Armed Forces Community. The award recognised the work we had done to ensure HR policies and procedures are in place to allow flexibility for training and mobilisation commitments and focusing on improving employment opportunities for service personnel.

5.4 Conclusion

The report demonstrates the Council's progress during the financial year 2018-2019 against targets in the Council's current Strategic Equality Plan.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in preparing this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

This report ties in with the following objectives of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023;

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

7.2 There are also a number of national Welsh Government strategies or regulations that the Council's Equalities work links to;

- **“Prosperity for All”** and **“The Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan”** – the Welsh Government's Community Cohesion Strategies
- **“Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: a Framework for Action”** – the Welsh Government's commitment to challenge hostility and prejudice, with the aim to drive greater leadership and partnership work across Wales to challenge and tackle hate crimes.
- **“Travelling to a Better Future”** – the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan;
- **“Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy”** – the Welsh Government's framework to support and extend usage of the Welsh language, and various aspects of Planning, Licensing and Building regulations.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Equalities issues are crosscutting themes of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and impact on every council policy, function and procedure, covering those aimed at the public and internal policies covering the Council's staff members. The report contributes to the following Well-being Goals:

- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
- Long Term – Ensuring that the Council provides services which are delivered in accordance with the needs of its residents.
- Prevention – The report evidences the work that has been undertaken to ensure that staff are trained and that services are delivered in an inclusive, non-discriminatory manner.
- Integration – Integrating equalities and Welsh language into the policies and plans the council has in place will ensure consistency in meeting objectives and reporting duties and build a stronger joined-up link between services.
- Collaboration – the report evidences work that has taken place through joint working with a number of the council's partners.
- Involvement – it is very important that we involve people and partners in the work that we do, so that the work is joined up and consistent but also so that people from a range of diverse backgrounds can influence change through service delivery and policies.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A full Equalities assessment and consultation was undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan when being developed, therefore no full assessment has been made on this annual report. The report itself is an assessment of achievements made by the Council under the Plan.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report as the annual report covers work already undertaken in the previous financial year.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although this continues to be reviewed as the work specified in our Strategic Equality Plan progresses.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The report is based on data gathered across the service areas on implementing the Strategic Equality Plan during 2018-2019.
- 12.2 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015
Human Rights Act 1998
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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Consultees: Christina Harrhy – Chief Executive,
Richard Edmunds – Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services
Cllr Eluned Stenner – Cabinet Member for Finance – Performance and Planning
Cllr James Pritchard – Chair of Policy and Resources Committee
Sue Richards – Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Stephen Harris – Head of Corporate Finance and S151
Robert Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan – Head of People Services
Keri Cole – Chief Education Officer
Mark Williams – Interim Head of Property Services
Kathryn Peters – Service Improvement and Partnerships Manager
Ros Roberts – Business Improvement Manager
Christopher Hunt – Community Cohesion Coordinator (West Gwent)
Elizabeth Sharma – Consultation and Engagement Officer
Sian Wolf-Williams – Policy Officer
Mark Jennings – Housing Strategy Officer
Lisa Rawlings – Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer
Emma Bush – Educational Psychologist
Lyndon Samuel – Regional School Liaison Coordinator, Gwent Police

Background Papers:

- Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020
- Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020
- Compliance Notice – Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Report to Cabinet on the 18th January 2017 – Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- Various Guidance Documents (*These are available electronically for information on the Intranet Portal and on the Council's website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities*)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2018-2019