



COUNCIL – 6TH OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS 2020-2024

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

- 1.1 The report, which was considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 25th February 2020 and Cabinet on 11th March 2020 sought Council approval on the draft Strategic Equality Plan.
- 1.2 It was noted that since April 2016, the Council has had in place a four-year operational document known as the Strategic Equality Plan – Equalities and Welsh Language Strategic Objectives, which has been accompanied by a separate Action Plan.
- 1.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales requires all public authorities to develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan every four years. The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 has undergone a full revision compared with the previous version, in order to reflect changes in best practice and objectives or to provide additional information. The combined Objectives and Action Plan have been developed to take achievements and progress into account and merged them into one operational document.
- 1.4 It was noted that the Plan has been developed so that the Council can set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010. We have used key documents to help develop the revised plan such as the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and Education's Shared Ambitions Strategy as well as information provided by service managers.

The Plan includes 7 Equality Objectives, which are:

- Service Planning and Delivery
 - Education, Skills and Employment
 - Community Cohesion
 - Inclusive Engagement and Participation
 - Welsh Language
 - Inclusive, Diverse and Equal Workforce
 - Reducing the Gender Pay Gap
- 1.5 Formal consultation took place in November 2019. This included targeted engagement with stakeholders with a specific interest in equalities e.g. Disability, Welsh Language, and Parents, Members, service managers and staff. The Consultation Report is attached at Appendix B of the report.
 - 1.6 Cabinet noted that feedback on the consultation process was very supportive of the draft objectives on the whole. Areas for improvement and barriers identified have been included as actions under each relevant Equality Objective. Members were asked to note in the Consultation Report, alongside the feedback received as part of the consultation, referenced were made to comments that have been embedded within the Strategic Equality Plan.

- 1.7 Cabinet were asked to note a few amendments that have been made to add clarity only, since the draft was presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee:
- The newly adopted **Consultation and Engagement Framework** will be added to Equality Objective 4 under **Supporting Documents**.
 - Strategic Equality Objective 6 – Action 4, we will specify the specific regulations mentioned, as the: **Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011**
 - A sentence will be added to the last paragraph on page 31 of the Plan, which will say; **Whilst an effort was made to consult with all sectors of the community, it is evident that some stakeholders did not engage in the process.**
- 1.8 The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 and associated actions; will ensure that the Council has a fit-for-purpose document which demonstrates compliance with the latest statutory Equalities and Welsh Language duties. It has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.
- 1.9 A Cabinet Member raised concerns around a recent consultation being undertaken by the UK Government in respect of the Gender Recognition Act and sought further information around the actions of the Council to support the Transgender Community and individuals in the workplace. Officers explained that training is available for all staff and members. Leisure Services previously requested Transgender Awareness training for staff, in order to deal with issues around the use of changing rooms in leisure centres. The team work closely with Umbrella Cymru and other partners, including the LGBT Youth Group to provide support and advice as required. In addition, staff awareness days are held to highlight specific awareness days relating to equalities and Welsh language, and as an opportunity to seek advice and support in relation to their work.
- 1.10 Cabinet were reassured that the Council aims to empower staff and provide the required support, which is embedded throughout the organisation, supported and celebrated.
- 1.11 Council is therefore asked to consider The Strategic Equality Plan, Objectives and Actions 2020-2024 and adopt as Council policy.

Author: C. Evans, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4210

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Cabinet on 11th March 2020