



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2ND JUNE 2015

SUBJECT: EQUALITIES AND WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL REPORTS

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the progress made during the financial year 2014/2015 against targets in the Council's current Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme, prior to presenting the annual monitoring and improvement reports to Cabinet for approval for submission to the relevant Commissions and publication online, before the deadline date of 30th June 2015.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce annual monitoring reports on Equalities and Welsh Language issues under current legislation. The requirements are very detailed as to what relevant information must be included in the annual monitoring and improvement reports (attached in full as appendices).
- 2.2 The amount of information presented is therefore in order to ensure that the regulatory bodies involved (the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office) are provided with full evidence of the Council's compliance and commitment to those statutory duties.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Equalities and Welsh Language issues are crosscutting themes of the Community Strategy and impact on every council policy, function and procedure, covering those aimed at the public and internal policies covering the Council's staff members.
- 3.2 The Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme have direct links with a number of other current policies and strategies, both within the Council and in terms of partnership working:-
- **Caerphilly Delivers** (the Single Integrated Plan)
 - Corporate Improvement Plan
 - Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
 - Youth Services Strategy 2014-2019
 - People Management Strategy
 - Workforce Development
 - 50+ Positive Action - action plan
 - Communications Strategy 2014-2017
- 3.3 There are also a number of national Welsh Government strategies or regulations that the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language work links to, including "**Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Words**" (the National Health and Social Care Welsh Language Strategy); "**Getting On Together**" (the All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy); "**Travelling to a Better Future**" -

the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan; and various aspects of Planning, Licensing and Building regulations.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Welsh Language Scheme annual monitoring and improvement report must be published by the 30th June each year.
- 4.2 Under the Public Sector Equalities duties in Wales, an annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan must be published anytime during the 12 months after the end of the financial year that is covered by that report.
- 4.3 Due to the fact that the Council operates an integrated Equalities and Welsh Language system, both reports are collated and presented at the same time for ease of reference.
- 4.4 There are two appendices to this committee report, the full Strategic Equality Plan annual monitoring and improvement report and the full Welsh Language Scheme annual monitoring and improvement report.
- 4.5 In summary however, the following performance information should be noted covering the financial year in question:
 - **231** reports, policies and proposals were impact assessed or had consultation comments provided for them. **43** of those were individual assessments on each of the savings proposals for the 2015-2016 budget, written by staff from the service areas and sent to the Policy Unit for comment.
 - **110** disability access audits were undertaken by Corporate Property and 46 properties upgraded -
 - 2 Caerphilly CBC corporate buildings
 - 2 Countryside locations
 - 2 community centres
 - 2 community education centres
 - 6 libraries
 - 2 Social Services centres
 - 5 leisure centres
 - 22 schools
 - 3 tourism sites
 - **3,517** course places were taken up across a range of Equalities and Welsh Language courses. The 2014-2015 annual training report will be available by Autumn 2015 and this year will include a full Training Needs Analysis, being undertaken over the summer, in order to help the Council and its partners focus on their future priorities.
 - **40** complaints were dealt with by the team, working alongside other service areas, **14** Equalities related and **26** Welsh Language related.
 - Nearly **2,000** staff payroll records had additional Equalities data entered, reducing the number of blank fields in the system. This demonstrates continuous improvement over the last three years of monitoring, from a position where roughly less than 5% of records held any significant level of Equalities and Language data, to a position this year where around 20% have data entered into the relevant fields.
 - **2,773** Welsh language translation requests were dealt with by the team.
 - **511** Welsh speakers are now recorded on the system, an increase of just over 100 staff recorded, for the second year running, due to improved data collection.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Full Equalities and Welsh Language assessments and consultation were undertaken on the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme as they were being developed, therefore no full assessment has been made on these annual reports. The reports themselves are an assessment of achievements made by the Council under both plans.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report as the annual reports cover work already undertaken in the previous financial year.
- 6.2 During 2014/2015, the team secured additional resources to help deliver against the statutory duties, from internal and external sources, to a value equivalent to £68,600.10, or 36.9% above the core budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications to these reports, although this continues to be reviewed as the work specified in the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme progress.
- 7.2 The additional resources noted in 6.2 above also covers the fact that staff in the team now undertakes Welsh translation work, and Equalities and Welsh language training work for 4 other organisations under formal Service Level agreements or arrangements.
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
 - Newport City Council,
 - Gwent Education Achievement Service
 - Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The reports are based on data gathered across the service areas on implementing the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme during 2014/2015.
- 8.2 A number of the officers shown at the end of this report as consultees, therefore contributed specific reporting information for different sections in the two full annual reports.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that members note the content of these annual reports and recommend that Cabinet endorse the submission of this information to the relevant Commissions by the date noted in 1.1.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 By gathering all the required information together into these reports from the Council's service areas and from partnership working, and then publishing them, the Council is ensuring that it complies with its statutory duties under current Equalities and Welsh Language legislation.
- 10.2 More importantly, the reports also evidence the amount of positive work and good practice the Council is achieving to benefit those individuals and groups who fall under one or more of the protected characteristics and wider Equalities issues.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
Human Rights Act 1998
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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- Consultees - Cllr Barbara Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services)
Cllr James Pritchard (Members Equalities Champion)
Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property
Angharad Price, Barrister/Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jackie Dix (Policy and Research Manager)
Anwen Rees (Equalities Training and Promotion Officer)
John Elliot (Senior Research Officer)
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager
Liz Sharma (Consultation and Engagement Officer)
Lynne Donovan (Personnel Manager)
Liz Vicente and Ian Joynes (Human Resources)
Simon Dixon (Disability Access Officer, Corporate Property)

General consultation also undertaken with Equalities and/or Welsh Language Officers from:-

City and County of Cardiff, Torfaen CBC, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Newport CC, Monmouthshire CC.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014
Appendix 2 - Welsh Language Scheme Annual Monitoring and Improvement Report 2014

Background Papers:

Strategic Equality Plan 2012
Welsh Language Scheme 2012-2015
Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2012 - 2016
Various Guidance Documents

(These are available electronically for information on the relevant pages at - www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities)