

**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**16<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY  
P.GRAHAM**

**INDEX OF REPORT ITEM**

**PART 1 – Doc. Code: PRB-160212-REP-CE-PG**

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# **1 Initial Draft Strategic Equality Plan**

## **Purpose of Report**

To endorse the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) as the Council's response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, and recommend to Council that the Plan is approved.

## **Background**

The Council, along with other public bodies, is required under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups.

These protected groups, or characteristics, are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the need to eliminate discrimination)

In Wales the specific duties have been introduced to help public bodies meet the general duty. These specific duties include the development of equality objectives and a strategic equality plan both of which must be published by 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012.

The Specific duties also include engagement, assessing impact, equality information, employment information, pay differences and staff training, procurement and annual reporting, publishing and review, which are all addressed within the SEP.

## **The Strategic Equality Plan**

The Council's progress in delivering the equality agenda over recent years has provided a strong foundation for the development of the SEP. However the Council, along with its partners, recognise the need to work towards greater understanding, better service delivery and fostering a fair and safe environment for all our residents.

With this in mind, engagement with the public, people representative of protected groups, partners, officers and Members has been a significant feature throughout the development of the SEP.

The majority of comments received during the public consultation period in October/November 2011, along with the information gathered at the Have Your Say event and focus groups held during the same period, supported long held observations on the issues most important to residents.

Some new issues were identified and while some have been used in the development of current objectives it has not been possible to include everything at this time. However, we will look to develop them into future equality objectives or include them in other strategies and plans.

The domestic abuse objective has yet to be endorsed by the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group however, should not present any difficulty.

The support of and contribution made by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group to the development of the SEP has been greatly valued. Members' enthusiasm and greater understanding of equalities will go a long way in helping the Council meet its responsibilities.

### **Evidence**

It is recognised that there are gaps in our data and knowledge and undertakings have been included in the SEP to tackle these deficits during the first year of implementation.

### **Gender Pay Objective**

The Council has in recent years undertaken a job evaluation exercise and carried out a review of the pay structures to establish a fairer and more transparent system of pay based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, free of all forms of discrimination and bias.

This exercise has allowed the Council to concentrate on further developing employment/pay data to better understand the reasons for and identify actions to close the gender pay gap.

### **Action Plan**

An action plan is currently being developed which will provide more detail on actions, timescales and responsibilities in connection with the objectives stated in the SEP. The action plan will be published, as an appendix to the SEP, by 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012.

## **Reporting and review of the SEP**

Progress made against the objectives will be reported annually to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board and Scrutiny Committee and published on the Council's website as well as being available in alternative format on request.

The objectives will be kept under review and amended as appropriate and reported to Policy and Resources Cabinet Board Scrutiny Committee when required.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Strategic Equality Plan is endorsed and recommended to Council for approval and subsequently published by 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

The SEP recommended for approval meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Strategic Equality Plan

## **List of Background Papers**

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

## **Wards Affected**

All

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# **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

## **1 Strategic Equality Plan**

### **(a) Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

### **(b) Sustainability Appraisal:**

#### **Community Plan Impacts**

Economic Prosperity	-	no impact
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	positive impact
Better Health & Well Being	-	positive impact
Environment & Transport	-	positive impact
Crime & Disorder	-	positive impact

#### **Other Impacts**

Welsh Language	-	positive impact
Sustainable Development	-	no impact
Equalities	-	positive impact
Social Inclusion	-	positive impact

### **(c) Consultation**

There has been no requirement under the constitution for external consultation on this item.

**Neath Port Talbot  
County Borough Council  
Strategic Equality Plan**

If you require a hard copy or need the Strategic Equality Plan in an alternative format, please ring the Corporate Strategy Team on 01639 763173 or send an e-mail to [corporate.strategy@npt.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.strategy@npt.gov.uk).

## **FOREWORD**

This Strategic Equality Plan, the first to be published by the Council in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, demonstrates our continuing commitment to provide high quality public services that meet the needs and aspirations of all Neath Port Talbot citizens.

Our desire to provide and promote genuine equality of opportunity and to tackle unfair discrimination is clear in all the Council's policies and strategies; is reflected in our partnership work with others; and, is a fundamental element in planning and delivering our services, and reviewing their effectiveness.

We have appointed equalities champions in the Council's Cabinet, in our scrutiny committees and at senior management level in each of our Directorates. Not only are these champions charged with ensuring that the Plan will be delivered effectively, they must also promote and foster the equalities principles and duties enshrined in the 2010 Act.

We readily acknowledge that we need to do more to understand the nature and diversity of our population and local communities; to be more certain that we understand the particular needs of those with the characteristics protected under the Act; and, to ensure that these are taken into account when we deliver our services. We have scheduled further work to be done during the next twelve months to help us achieve these aims.

We have tried not to be over-ambitious in what we hope to achieve during the first twelve months of the Plan and we will review the Plan at the end of this period to better reflect evidence-based objectives and actions.

We are determined that the Council continues to provide good services that meet the varying needs of our citizens, to root out any discriminatory practices and to foster good relations amongst the varied communities of place and people across Neath Port Talbot.

Cllr Ali Thomas  
Leader of the Council

Mr Steven Phillips  
Chief Executive

March 2012



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## **Introduction**

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010, by bringing together and replacing previous anti-discrimination legislation, simplified and strengthened the law, removed inconsistencies and made it easier to understand for everyone.

By implementing the Act we will be working towards creating a fairer society, improving public services, addressing entrenched inequalities and ultimately improving people's lives.

### **The General Public Sector Duty**

The Council, along with other public bodies, is required under the Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups.

These protected groups, or characteristics, are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the need to eliminate discrimination)

Examples of our work in relation to meeting the general duty can be found on pages 24-27.

### **The Specific Duties**

In Wales specific duties have been introduced to help us carry out the general duty. These include the production of a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and the development and publication of equality objectives.

## **The Development of the Strategic Equality Plan**

Information and data gathered from a variety of sources; from national research to local surveys and service information to public engagement activities, have been used in the development of the equality objectives and have been the backdrop for the Strategic Equality Plan itself.

The work that has already been done to progress the equality agenda in Neath Port Talbot has provided a strong foundation for the challenges ahead. This is reflected in the Plan which at the same time identifies and prioritises new areas of work over the coming years.

## **STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

### **Who We Are**

Neath Port Talbot County Borough is located on the coast between Swansea and Bridgend and covers an area of over 44,217 hectares. As of 2010 it has a population of 137,392 and 62,957 dwellings. It also shares boundaries with Carmarthenshire County Council, Powys County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The main urban areas are in Port Talbot, Neath and Pontardawe. The valley areas comprise the Afan, Amman, Dulais, Neath, and Swansea Valleys with extensive upland areas between. The valleys intersect the urban areas and are defined by spectacular scenery and a network of close-knit communities.

### **Demographics**

Neath Port Talbot has the 8th highest population density of the 22 local authorities across Wales. There are 14 areas in the county borough within the top 10% of the most deprived communities in Wales, most of which are designated Communities First areas.

It is expected that the population will grow by 7,000, an increase of about 5%, by 2021. Whilst the under-65 population is expected to remain stable, the increase anticipated in the over-65 population is significant.

According to the 2001 census, black and minority ethnic groups account for 1.1% of the population. However, according to more up-to-date data from the Annual population Survey 2009, 2.3% of the population in Neath Port Talbot state that they are from a non white background compared to 3.6% in Wales

Data from schools, indicates that the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds (non-white British) is 4.6% compared to the Wales average of 8.2%.

There are an estimated 41,828 children and young people aged from 0 to 25 years living in Neath Port Talbot. More than 300 disabled children live in Neath Port Talbot and 731 children with educational statements attend our schools.

There are two authorised gypsy traveller caravan sites in the county borough with an estimated population of 236.

At the 2001 Census, of those people indicating a religion, faith or belief, 72% described themselves as Christian, 19% indicated that they have no religion, 8% did not complete the question and those remaining were Buddhist (0.1%), Hindu (0.8%), Jewish (0.03%), Muslim (0.23%), Sikh (0.09%), other (0.22%).

In Neath Port Talbot there are high levels of chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disorders and stroke. 26.22% of the population is disabled (according to the Equality Act definition) compared to 19.1% across Wales. The numbers of adults registered as having a learning disability in Neath Port Talbot is 513, of which 314 live and are supported in the family home. Over 50% of carers are parents over 60 years of age with two thirds of this group of carers being over the age of 70 years. Approximately 130 families in Neath Port Talbot use respite care.

## **Structure of the Council**

Within Neath Port Talbot there are 42 electoral divisions returning 64 elected members and we operate a cabinet style of local government with a Leader who is supported by 9 cabinet members (the Executive). There are 5 Scrutiny Committees which scrutinise and monitor the performance and decisions of the Cabinet and make reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

A senior management group consisting of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors oversees the strategic management of the Council's business. Heads of Service have individual operational responsibility for services as well as providing strategic support to senior management.

## **What We Do**

The Council provides a wide range of services in a variety of ways. Some are provided centrally from three main civic offices whilst others are provided from the front-line in our communities, e.g. refuse collection, street cleaning, libraries and residential homes.

We have a successful reputation for not only working but delivering in partnership for the benefit of everyone in Neath Port Talbot. The range of partnerships and joint working arrangements vary from formal collaborations with statutory partners to informal grass roots

arrangements. All partnerships, however, share the same aim; to improve the lives of people in the county borough and recognise that by working together we can all make a difference.

In addition to the extensive partnership arrangements across the county borough, we are also a member of the Regional Partnership Forum for South West Wales, which oversees collaborative working across the region. We are involved in a number of regional collaborative projects of different scale and type: including waste management, education and lifelong learning, transport and social services.

As one of Neath Port Talbot's largest employers and service providers we recognise our unique role and influential position within the county borough and the contribution we can make to the development of inclusive and confident communities.

The Council is committed to:

- Providing equality of access to all of its services for the communities of Neath Port Talbot on the basis of need
- Providing services in a manner that is sensitive to the individual's needs whatever their background as far as is possible
- Taking positive action to eliminate discrimination and to redress past imbalances in order to provide genuine equality of opportunity
- Delivering services by a workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities
- The principle of equal pay for all its employees

This commitment to equality is evident in the Council's Corporate Plan, through the effective partnership working that is celebrated in Neath Port Talbot and through our engagement work with the public.

The priorities for improvement identified in our Corporate Plan have been developed from our aims and objectives and extensive involvement from citizens and partners. These priorities are:

- Improving services for older people and vulnerable adults
- Improving the way we do business
- Improving the environment;
- Improving education
- Improving housing

- Improving local prosperity
- Improving services for vulnerable children and their families

## **Equalities**

As a Council we are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination. We take action to provide genuine equality of opportunity, to tackle unfair discriminatory practices and to review and monitor the outcomes of our actions.

Throughout its work, both as an organisation in its own right and in partnership with others, the Council endeavours to adhere to the principles of sustainable development, social inclusion and fairness.

Equalities is inherent in all our work and finds expression through a focus on more citizen centred services in order to improve people's quality of life and their experience of Council services.

Equalities is championed at all levels of the Council. Nominated Heads of Service have responsibility for equalities within their directorates with officer champions supporting and promoting the equality agenda as part of their day to day work within and across service areas,

The level of importance that is given to equalities is reflected in the establishment of elected Member champions which include the Cabinet Member with responsibility for equality, who is also the Chair of Personnel Committee, and the Chairs of the five Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Special Appointments Committee.

The Council's commitment to providing fair and equitable services and employment is clear in all its policies and strategies. The principle of fairness permeates all of these as well as the partnership strategies and plans we support.

The improvement areas identified in our Corporate Plan allow us to concentrate on those priorities and actions that will protect important public services, in particular those that support the most vulnerable people and improve people's lives and futures by shaping Neath Port Talbot as a great place to live and work.

These priorities contribute to the picture of Neath Port Talbot that we, our partners and local people want to see in the future, which is detailed in the Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020.

## **Equality Objectives**

Our equality objectives have been developed as a result of research and engagement exercises (see pages 21-40). We found that people from all the protected groups expected and required the Council to deliver service improvements and enable them to achieve successful outcomes in life. We are particularly conscious of the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics, and;
- to take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

To this end we developed new activities and projects inspired by the research and engagement information and sought to apply the lessons learned to our existing priorities.

### **Improving services for older people and vulnerable adults;**

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

1. Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

Additionally, we are working to replace four of our residential care homes with new modern facilities which will improve the privacy and dignity afforded to older people living in our care homes.

We are also working with partners to design and implement new integrated health and social services care services for older people to help them remain independent.



## **Improving the way we do business;**

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

2. Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
3. Improve access to services by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
4. Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
5. Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements

In order to make our services easier for people to use, more efficient and of better quality we are working in a number of areas which include the introduction of a One Stop Shop in Port Talbot Civic Centre, the launch of a Digital TV channel and improvements to our severe weather warning information service.

Over the coming years we are committed to reviewing our services to ensure we continue to deliver what matters to individuals and our communities within Neath Port Talbot

## **Improving the environment;**

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

6. Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

The new Gwyn Hall, Neath, and Afan Lido, Port Talbot, have been designed to provide facilities that are accessible and suitable for all. The new buildings will provide sporting, leisure, arts, training and conference facilities.

We want our town centres to be more attractive places to live work and visit. We have begun to realise this aspiration with work carried out at The Parade, Neath; Railway Station, Port Talbot and the completion of the first phase of the regeneration of Pontardawe Town Centre.

### **Improving education;**

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

7. Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics
8. Reduce gaps in levels of attendance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

So that we meet our educational responsibilities our schools and education provision must be fit for purpose. This has prompted us to proceed with building new schools and consider the relocation and/or closure of others where necessary.

We will look to increase capacity in some schools including Ysgol Maes Y Coed, a special school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism.

While we have prioritised the above areas as current equality objectives we are aware of the equality dimension in the remaining improvement areas. We realise that we will be able to achieve considerable improvements in these areas by undertaking the following:

### **Improving housing;**

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

- Continue to assist with the process of adaptations to homes for older or disabled people
- Ensure the introduction of a new specialist team within NPT Homes to deal with cases of anti-social behaviour and harassment particularly by supporting victims
- Work with NPT Homes on the provision of newly developed extra care sheltered housing schemes
- Design and implement new services to help more vulnerable people to live their lives as independently as possible

## Improving services for vulnerable children and their families;

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

- Further develop initiatives to promote the engagement of more young people in sports, leisure and cultural activities particularly by young people who have left school and by disadvantaged groups including ethnic minorities, disabled children, young offenders and looked after children
- Initiate work to tackle problems of alcohol and substance misuse, domestic violence and emotional wellbeing affecting parents and adults
- Increase opportunities for young people to participate in decision making through the development of local youth forums and a formally elected Youth Council

## Improving local prosperity;

From an equality perspective, our research and engagement work suggests we will be able to achieve this if we can:

- Establish a coordinated and consistent approach to providing services to young people aged 16 -18 that are not in education employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET
- Continue to support and develop the Coastal project which supports unemployed people with an illness or disability, substance misuse problems, and young care leavers

## **How We Do It**

### **Forward Financial Plan**

In the current economic climate with diminishing public resources, the Council has had to make very significant year-on-year savings whilst at the same time trying to maintain our current level and quality of service delivery. To date we have managed to do this effectively by developing and delivering a rolling four-year forward financial plan, which sets out the savings the Council has to make each year and identifies how we will do so. This means that we have time to plan and implement the changes we have to make. So far we have delivered the required

savings each year with minimal impact on our services. Soon we will be reviewing the plan to take us up to 2015/16.

In these circumstances the Council cannot allocate any significant additional funding towards implementing the Plan. However, we can use our resources more effectively and the Plan's objectives and specific projects can be achieved by using existing staff resources, by doing things differently and by ensuring that we get things right first time. There will be a need for some small additional financial investment; this will be met from within existing budgets.

### **Equality Impact Assessments of Budget Proposals**

Realising the potential impact of reducing financial budgets as well as the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 prompted the Council to assess the impact of the equality implications of its budget as part of the budget setting process for 2011/12. This exercise resulted in each directorate producing an overview of the equality implications of their budget proposals, which informed a general statement in the budget report.

A more rigorous assessment process has been developed for use in setting the budget for 2012/13 and is a result of the lessons learned from last year as well as taking into account the Equality and Human Rights Commission's recent update on assessing impact when setting council budgets.

By adopting this approach we are confident that there will be sustainable public services for 2012/13, with the case for change shown to be based upon an informed, balanced and fair decision making process, having taken account of the needs of the population.

### **Partnerships**

Public bodies that provide services to the public, either directly or through a third party, are subject to the general duty, and all are responsible for ensuring compliance with current equality legislation. However, where the Council is the lead body, public services delivered in partnership will be provided in accordance with the SEP.

The Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020 is the expression of partnership working within Neath Port Talbot. This overarching partnership plan sets out a shared vision for Neath Port Talbot. It

focuses on delivering outcomes for citizens and communities, which reflect people's hopes and aspirations for themselves, their families and their local communities. This will result in more people and local communities getting involved in planning the public services they receive and having more influence over decisions that affect their quality of life and the well-being of their communities

The Community Plan is supported by a wide range of more specific partnership plans and strategies, such as the Children and Young People's Plan, the Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy, the Community Safety Plan and the Local Development Plan.

### **Local Service Board**

The Local Service Board (LSB) has built on the history of good partnership working in the county borough. It comprises of representatives of strategic partner organisations, from across the public, private and voluntary sectors, who work together to deliver the aims and objectives of the Community Plan. It seeks to promote integrated services and remove organisational barriers to the effective delivery of public services which are based around the needs of citizens, which contribute to the picture of Neath Port Talbot that we, our partners and local people want to see in the future.

### **Single Integrated Plan**

The LSB will play a vital role in the work to develop a single integrated plan. The Council's work on its plan and partnership rationalisation process will provide a significant contribution to the development of a single integrated plan for Neath Port Talbot.

The SIP, which has to be in place by April 2013, will replace the four existing statutory plans and strategies; Community Plan, Children's and Young People's Plan, Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy and the Community Safety Partnership Plan.

The integration of local service planning, streamlining partnership working and the strengthening of the strategic role and accountability of the Local Service Board are all considered essential to the Welsh Government's aim of working 'more effectively on delivering real improvements for people in Wales'.

The introduction of a single integrated plan will throw up a number of challenges for the LSB as a whole and for its individual organisations. However its success rests on the ability of the LSB to firmly root the SIP in the locality and address the needs and priorities of the communities it serves.

## **Engagement**

The Council's belief and work in the field of public engagement mirrors the Welsh Government's view that "we can deliver real improvements - improvements that people can recognise and understand - by engaging them in shaping and scrutinising our services". Effective public engagement has been recognised as a vital element in the planning and delivery of services. It invites people to get involved in deliberation, dialogue and action on issues that they care about, giving people a voice in the decisions that impact on their lives.

Public engagement is integral to our work. The development of policies and services are influenced by information gathered through a range of consultation mechanisms. Opportunities are available for engagement through the myriad of partnerships and service groups that have been established over time. Engagement with various groups, including the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Forum, Disability Network, Older Persons' Council, among others, help shape services as well as provide an ongoing dialogue to further equal opportunity and foster good relations in the area.

We have developed a joint Citizen Engagement Strategy and toolkit, adopted by the Local Service Board, which provides practical advice on how and when to carry out public engagement that is meaningful and constructive. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that the citizens of Neath Port Talbot have a voice in influencing the policies and strategies that affect their lives, and in informing the way services in Neath Port Talbot are planned and delivered.

We aim to be an open and responsive Council that encourages those who use our services to tell us what is important to them and to suggest how services might improve. In addition, we endeavour to engage with those who do not use our services and explore the issues or barriers, if any, that prevent them doing so.

Have Your Say events, service reviews, online conversations and consultation mechanisms, focus groups, citizen panel surveys,

satisfaction surveys, group discussions, partner events and regular meetings with groups are examples of the forms of public involvement we have undertaken in recent years. All have proved successful and have provided invaluable data and insights that have helped shaped public service provision in Neath Port Talbot.

We have recently been involved in an all Wales study on Public Engagement in Local Government conducted by the Wales Audit Office. The study acknowledged the Council's commitment to public engagement through our work on promoting good customer care and our recognition that public engagement is critical to improving services.

### **Development of Objectives**

This wealth of engagement has ensured that the equality objectives included in this Strategic Equality Plan, along with objectives, priorities and actions within other plans and strategies, are rooted in and shaped by information provided by the communities we serve.

In addition to the routine engagement practices an engagement event was held to capture comments specifically for the Plan and to inform a local community cohesion action plan. This event, funded through community cohesion funding, was held in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Neath Port Talbot College, ABMU Health Board and the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Additionally focus groups were held with groups that we had limited contact with/information from; children and young people (from an equality perspective) and the local lesbian, gay and bisexual community.

While the majority of comments received during these events supported long held observations on the issues most important to local residents some new insights came to light. These included the use of gender language; the concerns of Deaf people when entering residential care establishments; the institutional assumptions of a person's sexual orientation in accessing services; the need to provide audience appropriate information and intergenerational projects were considered beneficial for all.

Some of this new information has been used to develop objectives but where this has not proved possible at this time we will continue to explore ways in which they can be developed into future equality

objectives or included within other strategies and plans across the Council and with our partners.

The support and dedication of officers, elected members and partners throughout the development of the objectives and the Plan itself is testament to the commitment and energy to promote and address the equality agenda within the Council and with its partners.

## **Grants and Funding**

We are committed to applying our equality principles to applications received for funding. This is taken into consideration in all our grant schemes and by the Council officers responsible for administering those schemes.

An example of grant funding that has a positive impact in relation to the general equality duty is the Welsh Government's Community Cohesion Fund, from which the Council currently receives an annual allocation. Projects receiving funding must demonstrate how they meet the core aims and objectives of the Community Cohesion Strategy. This Strategy focuses on policy and service delivery areas which have been identified as having a positive impact on local cohesion; one of which is equality and social inclusion.

It is recognised that over coming months it may be necessary to explore our processes and procedures in light of the growing importance of the allocation of grants and funding.

## **What we have done so far**

We are proud of what has been achieved to support, promote and foster good relations amongst and between the various communities in Neath Port Talbot. The various service areas have been instrumental in providing services that are both equitable and where appropriate tailored to an individual's needs.

Below are some of the instances that we are proud of:

- The Library Service provides books and videos in Bengali, Punjabi and Cantonese in the main libraries in Neath and Port Talbot.
- Minority language newspapers are also provided by the service.



- The Council has helped establish, and continues to be involved in, the annual Holocaust Memorial.
- The Council has worked with the Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council to provide a range of courses for people excluded through recent immigration, the victims of cultural isolation and asylum seekers. This includes the employment of suitably qualified students from within the above communities to work as tutors.
- Schools have continued to organise educational visits to the local mosque, synagogue, and churches and chapels.
- The education service has developed and implemented an initiative to involve parents from minority ethnic groups working with schools as a living resource as part of curriculum delivery.
- We are actively working with schools and in other informal settings to combat political activity that condones racist or other discriminatory action.
- A group of elected Members have taken part in Equality Champions Action Learning Set training facilitated by the Welsh Local Government Association.
- The BME Forum continues to work in partnership to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations
- Through the Community Cohesion fund we have been able to support local organisations and partnerships to deliver projects which help promote mutual understanding and respect.
- We continue to support the work of Neath Port Talbot Tigers. The group gets involved with the local community and organises activities and events to promote integration and better community cohesion. These include various sporting activities, successful Multicultural Mela in 2010 and 2011, Mother Language Day celebrations and international cookery demonstrations and classes.
- The Disabled Persons' Advisory Group (DPAG) continues to work in partnership to eliminate discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people and help the Council improve its services for disabled people.
- We continue to earmark specific capital funds year on year to improve disability access across the Council's services. A wide range of services and buildings have been improved including the main civic centres, libraries, parks, the crematorium, schools, public toilets and community centres.

- Training has been provided to schools on establishing nurture groups and in supporting children with dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorder.
- The Coastal Project to develop training and employment opportunities for disabled people, continues to be successful
- A Changing Places public toilet was included as part of the refurbishment of Victoria Gardens, Neath
- Some physical and other access issues identified at Margam Orangery have been addressed. However some issues are waiting for approval from CADW.
- Signed performances have been provided in both the Princess Royal Theatre and Pontardawe Arts Centre.
- The library service has a housebound service that delivers not only books but also audio visual items to disabled persons.
- The toy library service has provided young children with toys suitable for both disabled and non disabled users and also toys that promote a positive approach to ethnicity.
- Theatre workshops for adults with learning difficulties and mental health problems are held at Pontardawe Arts Centre.
- The refurbishment of the Gwyn Hall will provide an accessible venue for all to enjoy. It has been designed to be fully inclusive for people of all abilities and ages. The spaces have a logical order and will be easy to navigate with technologies employed wherever possible to enhance the experience of audience, performers and staff alike.
- We established an Older Persons' Council to strengthen links between the Council and older people in the county borough, providing them with the opportunity to get involved in a wide range of discussions to make sure the voice of older people is heard.
- The Older Persons' Council, working with the Council's Road Safety Team, produced a Highway Code for disability scooter users. This has been very well received and requests for it have been received from as far afield as America!
- NPT Youth Council aims to challenge and improve the lives of young people by representing the voices of young people across Neath Port Talbot and working in partnership with us and other partners.
- NPT Youth Council won the Philip Lawrence Award in 2009 for a vibrant Youth Council with a voice on local issues, and running a radio show for and about young people

While we have achieved a great deal over the years we know we need to do more to improve people's lives in Neath Port Talbot and so we will continue to do our best to meet and overcome the challenges ahead.

### **Equality Information.**

Over the years the Council has built up successful relationships with various groups including local BME community groups, groups for and of disabled people and young and older people's groups. Through these relationships, informed and valued dialogue has identified and addressed issues and concerns, provided greater understanding and awareness on all sides and has led to an agreed way forward to ensure that we fulfil our public duty to those who not only live and work in, but also visit Neath Port Talbot.

Neath Port Talbot has a long history of engagement with the public, partners, local communities and interest groups, which has been a vital component in shaping Council and partnership strategies, policies and plans as well as influencing service delivery.

However, it is recognised that we do not have a complete understanding of the size, nature and complexity of all the groups with the protected characteristics so are working towards closing this information gap and an objective, with associated actions, has been identified to address this.

### **Impact Assessments**

There has been a requirement on public bodies to undertake equality impact assessments for a number of years and, whilst we have been well intentioned and committed to developing an effective assessment process, successful implementation has been limited. However, where assessments have been undertaken any gaps in information and knowledge have been highlighted and actions have been identified to address them.

With the requirements of the new legislation, along with an intended new compliance reporting framework, it is timely for the impact assessment process to be reviewed and revised. We are currently piloting the new compliance framework. This places more emphasis on identifying the impact of policies and services on a range of issues, including equalities.

The compliance statement requires that an impact assessment be done, ensuring there is greater accountability as well as providing a more focussed report for scrutiny prior to policies and changes to services being approved. Increasing experience of operating the new framework will, in turn, help improve the quality and effectiveness of the assessment process.

In terms of monitoring existing policies and services, the standard procedures for scrutiny will include an assessment of any ongoing impacts to ensure any issues are addressed in a timely fashion.

Communication and training will be undertaken to ensure all relevant officers are familiar with these new procedures prior to their introduction. All committee reports are published on the Council's website and a summary of the results of the assessment will be included as part of the report. In addition, where there is a substantial likely impact in respect of the general duty, the full impact assessment will be available on request.

### **Publishing relevant equality information**

The Council has a variety of established methods for publishing information:

- The Council's website – [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)
- Committee reports and minutes
- Publications, leaflets, booklets
- The Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Report

Information on equalities issues, including annual progress reports on the implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan and any appropriate employment monitoring data, will be published on our website.

The website has a dedicated equalities page which is currently being reviewed and updated to contain appropriate information and links to partner websites.

Each service will be responsible for publicising results of any assessments, monitoring and consultation exercises undertaken. This may take a variety of forms depending on the service and the nature of the information to be published but all will be produced in accessible formats

## **Reporting**

The Strategic Equality Plan will be kept under review and, where objectives and actions require updating or revision, these will be amended as appropriate and reported to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Board when required.

Progress made against the objectives will be reported in an annual report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Board. The annual report will be published on our website and will also be made available in alternative formats on request.

Additionally progress will be monitored through the various established groups and forums that meet on a regular basis and have an interest in the subject as well as a desire to become more involved in the process e.g. BME Forum, DPAG and DNAG.

## **Training and Communication of general and specific duties**

Training has always been an important element of the Council's ethos. The Council's commitment to be a "learning authority", where training and development continues throughout every employee's working life, has reaped numerous rewards in terms of improved, quality service delivery. This approach ensures that all employees have the opportunity to undertake training appropriate to their role and potential future development.

Equalities training to date has taken the form of themed sessions, as well as more general equalities training. Training has been undertaken by senior managers, officers delivering frontline services, support services employees and elected Members.

Specific training on the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, delivered by the Welsh Local Government Association, has been provided to the Council's senior managers and service managers. Staff from our training and development section will be providing similar training to employees and to those in the private sector who provide services on our behalf as well as to private and voluntary partner care providers.

Training for elected Members is an ongoing commitment for the Council. Training helps Members undertake their roles efficiently and effectively, particularly their democratic leadership role in their own communities. Training for members is a key feature of the Plan. Elected Members

have successfully completed Elected Member Equality Champions Regional Action Learning Set training, supported by the Welsh Local Government Association. This training has enabled Members to explore equality issues effectively, develop their own personal competencies and helped them identify and challenge policies, practices and services which potentially do not meet the requirements of the general or specific duties.

An internal Member development programme is in place, which serves primarily as an induction to council services, council policies and their role as elected members. As part of this programme, training on equalities is provided. During the last programme the training proved so successful that additional, more focussed sessions were arranged.

With the new responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010; continuing progress in developing scrutiny processes; and the myriad of changes happening in local government, the Member development programme is being revised in readiness for the new Council following elections in May 2012.

As a Council we are committed to the continuation of training and awareness-raising in respect of the equalities agenda and will ensure that equalities are addressed and reinforced through specific equalities and, more importantly, other topical courses.

## **Procurement**

In light of budgetary constraints and the increasing demands facing us the emphasis on procurement has increased over recent years. The procurement service works to ensure a consistent approach to procurement across a wide range of supplies, services and works.

The service is mindful of its legal obligations not only with regard to the spending of public money but also to equalities and works with service managers during the entire process to ensure that equality issues are considered at every stage.

Tendering paperwork includes relevant guidance as well as requiring statements and evidence of compliance with the public sector general duty.

While there is a positive approach to equalities issues within the procurement process there are still areas that need to be addressed, e.g. monitoring the equalities dimension on awarded contracts.

It is recognised that over the coming months it may be necessary to explore our procedures to ensure that equalities issues are fully addressed

### **Equality Objectives**

The following pages detail the equality objectives that have been identified through engagement activities and information that has come to light during recent months and years.

Information gathered through engagement with various groups has reinforced the Council's long held understanding of issues faced by members of the public in their day to day lives.

The identified objectives are not dissimilar to what we have been working towards over recent years. However, while previously we have tried to be everything to all people, this time we have adopted a more focussed approach to ensure we contribute to improving the quality of people's lives.

We acknowledge that there is more work ahead of us especially in the collection and analysis of data which will provide more detailed information in order to revise and refine objectives on an ongoing basis. This is reflected in the inclusion of Objective 4 below.

We consider the Plan as a living document and as such will be a working document. While the Plan and the objectives will be formally revised in 4 years, consideration will continue to be given to its content to ensure it remains dynamic.

The objectives themselves are not set in stone but will remain under constant scrutiny and revised when appropriate to ensure they continue address the issues most important to the people of Neath Port Talbot.

**Objective 1:** Address **harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety** experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

**Project 1**

Increase awareness and reporting of Hate Crime.

**Outcome**

People are confident and feel safe living and working in Neath Port Talbot.

**Evidence Base**

Local engagement events.

National research information and data.

Police Statistics.

**Actions and Timetable**

- Work with partners to publicise hate crime reporting
- With partners develop and circulate information about hate crime and how to report it
- Work with partners to provide a co-ordinated approach to hate crime issues
- Establish a protocol for staff for reporting incidents of hate crime
- Provide training/guidance for staff in dealing with hate crime reporting

**Success Measures**

Increase in reporting levels

Increase in satisfaction levels with reporting process

**Protected Characteristics**

Disability; Age; Sexual Orientation; Race; Gender Reassignment; Religion/belief.

**Links to other strategies**

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020, Community Safety Partnership Plan 2010-2013, Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014



**Objective 1:** Address **harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety** experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

## **Project 2**

Implementation of the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop Model across the county borough, continue to increase awareness of Domestic Abuse, help reduce the number of repeat victims (listed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)).

## **Outcome**

Operational One Stop Shop model, increased awareness domestic abuse and are more confident in addressing and reporting the issue, decrease in repeat victims (listed at MARAC).

## **Evidence Base**

National research information and data:

- Nationally domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men
- Nearly three quarters of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where domestic abuse occurs
- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (Department of Health, 2002)

Local Statistics:

- 2408 incidents of domestic abuse were reported to the police in Neath Port Talbot in 2010/11
- During the year to October 2011 297 high risk cases were discussed at MARAC of which 27.9% were repeat referrals with 386 children involved
- In 2010/11 there were 1098 calls made from Neath Port Talbot landlines to the Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline

## **Actions and Timetable**

- Continue to challenge the notion that domestic abuse is not acceptable via a range of targeted communication campaigns, training events and conferences
- Support the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process

- Support Hafan Cymru in its continued roll out of the 'Spectrum' education pack in schools
- Work with the relevant agencies to ensure that children and young people who witness or are involved in domestic abuse are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted

### **Success Measures**

Reduce the number of high risk repeat victims.

Maintain the arrest rate where a domestic abuse offence has occurred.

Increase the number of victims supported by the Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) service.

Increase referrals successfully contacted by the IDVA service.

Increase successful prosecutions at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC).

Increase the number of charge files marked domestic abuse by police which goes to SDVC.

Increase calls to the Wales Domestic Abuse helpline from Neath Port Talbot landlines by 10%.

### **Protected Characteristics**

Sex

### **Links to other strategies**

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020

Community Safety Partnership Plan 2010-2013

Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014

Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

Neath Port Talbot Domestic Abuse Strategy 2010-2013

**Objective 2:** Improve **access to information** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

### **Project 1**

To reduce the inaccessible elements of the Council's website.

### **Outcome:**

The Council's website is as accessible as possible for people, especially for those with visual impairments.

### **Evidence Base**

This is an issue that has been raised at numerous consultation/engagement events over recent years. It was raised at a Have Your Say event in October 2011 and is a particular issue for disabled people.

Requests for help in accessing information for various services received via contact centre.

Verbal 'complaints' received on lack of easily accessible information as well as difficulty in accessing information on website.

### **Actions and Timetable**

#### **Corporate**

- To review the Council's website to identify areas that are not accessible particularly for people with visual impairments
- To establish a system to monitor new pages and maintain existing pages for accessibility

#### **Services**

- Services to review /revise existing web pages and associated information to ensure they are accessible
- Develop British Sign Language (BSL) informative videos for social services/neighbourhood services
- Officers responsible for maintaining and developing new information content are trained/receive appropriate guidance in access issues

## **Licensing**

- Develop information/web pages to meet requirement or need – both in relation to languages and disability accessibility

## **Public Toilets**

- Identify location of public toilets and publicise type of facility on web pages
- Identify council owned buildings where toilets can be utilised by the public
- Publicise these locations along with access information on web pages as well as within the buildings themselves

## **Success Measure/Performance Indicators**

Increase in successful website hits

Increase in contact and referral from those protected groups who are disproportionately not accessing services

Increase in satisfaction levels via the Society of Communication and Information Technology Managers (Socitm)

Reduction in visits to offices and telephone calls requesting information

## **Protected characteristics:**

Disability; Age

## **Links to other strategies**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020

Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014

Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

Strategy for Older People 2009-2013

Neath Port Talbot Joint Carers Strategy 2011-2014

Access to Services Strategy

**Objective 2:** Improve **access to information** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

## **Project 2**

To increase the accessibility of paper based public documentation

### **Outcome**

The Council's paper based public documentation is as accessible as possible for people with visual impairments and language barriers

### **Evidence Base**

This is an issue that has been raised at numerous consultation/engagement events over recent years. It was raised at the latest Have Your Say event in October and is a particular issue for disabled people.

Requests for help in accessing information for various services received via contact centre

Verbal 'complaints' received on lack of easily accessible information as well as difficulty in accessing information on website.

### **Actions and Timetable**

#### **Corporate**

- Review guidelines on accessible information
- Standardise strap line for alternative formats

#### **Services**

##### **Waste Services**

- To review all paper based public documentation to ensure its accessibility
- Redesign documentation where applicable
- Ensure all documentation is written in plain English/Cymraeg Clir
- Investigate opportunities for specific targeted language/format preference

## **Licensing**

- Review paper based documentation for accessibility issues
- Utilise data to determine need for information in alternative languages
- Develop information/web pages to meet requirement or need – both in relation to languages and disability accessibility

## **Success Measure/Performance Indicators**

Increase take up of services

Increase in satisfaction levels

Reduction in complaints regarding a lack of accessible information

## **Protected characteristics:**

Disability; Age; Race;

## **Links to other strategies**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020

Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014

Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

Neath Port Talbot Joint Carers Strategy 2011-2014

Strategy for Older People 2009-2013

**Objective 3:** Improve **access to services** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

### **Project 1**

Improve access to the provision of Social Services

### **Outcome**

Social Services accessed by a larger section of the population when and where appropriate

### **Evidence Base**

Have Your Say events; Engagement; Complaints; Requests for service/ enquiries about what is available for the BME community

### **Actions and Timetable**

- Gather and utilise data more effectively to determine gaps in provision
- Engage with specific groups to develop service geared to meet needs of those groups
- Develop accessible information to encourage take up a range of services amongst BME community i.e. direct payments, support for people with mental health issues, recruitment of foster carers, etc.

### **Success Measure/ Performance indicators**

Increase in awareness, contact and referral by those disproportionately not currently utilising services.

Increase in satisfaction levels

Increase in BME foster carers

Increase in number of BME placements with foster carers

### **Protected Characteristics**

Disability; Age; Race; Sex

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014 , Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020, Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy 2011-2014, Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014, Neath Port Talbot Joint Carers Strategy 2011-2014, Strategy for Older People 2009-2013

**Objective 4:** Monitor **information and data** effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

### **Project 1**

Develop robust monitoring systems within services

### **Outcome**

Services are developed and provided with a greater citizen focus.

### **Evidence Base**

There has been a lack of effective monitoring systems within services. Where systems are in place analysis of the data has been limited causing missed opportunities for effective service provision.

### **Actions and Timetable**

- To review current monitoring systems used within service areas
- Using the information from the review develop a robust effective monitoring system
- Implement new monitoring systems across all service areas, where monitoring is considered appropriate

### **Success Measure/ Performance indicators**

Monitoring information forms an essential part in the development of services

Services make explicit reference to monitoring information in reports on new and revised policies.

### **Protected Characteristics**

Disability; Age; Race; Sex; Sexual Orientation; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Religion and Belief; Pregnancy and Maternity

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014, Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010 -2020, Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014, Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014, Neath Port Talbot Joint Carers Strategy 2011-2014, Strategy for Older People 2009-2013



## **Objective 5: Deliver staff training** in line with the Equality Act requirements

### **Project 1**

Review staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements.

### **Objective**

Provide training and information on the general and specific equalities duties, to identified appropriate staff between October 2011 and March 2012. Develop an information tool for managers to use at induction and performance appraisal to ensure the principles of both duties are understood by all staff.

### **Outcome**

Improved services to all service users by employees who consider equality issues when designing policies and in the delivery of services

### **Evidence**

The need to update relevant staff on the Equality Act (2010) and how it replaces previously separate duties;  
To inform of the protected characteristics covered by the general duty;  
To meet the specific duty in relation to staff training;  
The need to review processes in performance management framework to ensure equality awareness is embedded from induction onwards.

### **Action and Timetable**

- To review current take up of training – Jan 2012
- To deliver additional briefing sessions – Feb / March 2012
- To produce and circulate induction checklist on Equality Act and general duty – March 2012

### **Success Measures/ Performers Indicators**

Number of staff attending briefings/workshops;  
Monitoring evaluation of training to measure implementation of learning;

Reduction in complaints in relation to equality issues  
Positive feedback from attendees to others;  
Improved capability of those responsible for implementing the specific equality duties;  
Equality training identified as training need during performance reviews.

### **Protected Characteristics**

All

### **Links to other strategies**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010 -2020,

Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014,

Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-2014,

Personnel Policies

Training policies

Management Competency Framework

**Objective 6:** Improve **access to the environment** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

### **Project 1**

Improve physical accessibility to and within civic offices and other Council owned buildings

### **Outcome**

Greater accessibility of civic offices and council owned buildings for both the public and staff

### **Evidence Base**

Physical accessibility has been an issue identified at numerous engagement events held over recent years. Work identified through the capital programme.

### **Actions and Timetable**

- Review signage within civic offices and other council owned buildings
- Renew as appropriate signage within civic buildings
- Review access to and from civic offices and amend where appropriate
- Review accesses to council owned buildings and amend where appropriate
- Ensure access is suitable for the public to use toilets where appropriate
- Sensory accessibility within civic offices and other council owned buildings to be reviewed
- Reposition paving 'guides' outside Neath Civic Centre
- Improve entrance signage to Neath Civic Centre
- Undertake feasibility study for locating a disabled toilet near the committee rooms in Port Talbot Civic Centre

### **Success Measure/ Performance indicators**

Increase in satisfaction levels

Reduction in complaints

### **Protected Characteristics**

Disability

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014; Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020

**Objective 6:** Improve **access to the environment** by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

## **Project 2**

Appropriate positioning of street furniture, signs, lighting columns etc

## **Outcome**

Greater accessibility of the urban environment for the public

## **Evidence Base**

Issues identified through a variety of engagement activities.

Issues raised by people from protected groups during regular meetings with the Council

Issues identified during recent refurbishment/regeneration programmes

## **Actions and Timetable**

- Work with DNAG, Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership and other relevant groups to consider appropriate repositioning of street lighting columns as part of the street lighting refurbishment scheme
- Consider the most appropriate position for and associated style of street furniture when being refurbished/replaced
- To work with relevant groups to determine the most appropriate location, position, style for any new and replacement signs within the county borough

## **Success Measure/ Performance indicators**

Reduction in 'complaints'

Increase in satisfaction levels

## **Protected Characteristics**

Disability; Age

## **Links to other strategies and plans**

Corporate Plan 2011-2014; Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020; Community Safety Partnership Plan 2010-2013

**Objective 7:** Reduce gaps in the **educational performance** experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

### **Project 1**

To raise levels of attendance of pupils within the Protected Characteristics of pupils at school, i.e. Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation plus Traveller Children and Looked After Children

### **Outcome**

Attendance levels of identified groups are raised.

### **Evidence Base**

Comparative annual reports from data held centrally by the local authority data unit.

### **Actions and Timetable**

- Identification of pupils with protected characteristics .... Spring 2012
- Data unit to provide current attendance information ..... Spring 2012
- Education Welfare Service in collaboration with TAC co-ordinator, MEAS, LAC co-ordinator and Traveller Unit to work with schools and pupils to develop improved attendance patterns .... Summer 2012 and ongoing

### **Success Measure/ Performance indicators:**

From Data Unit identification of current levels with aim to increase levels to a minimum of 90%. PI to show increase of 5% per annum up to minimum level.

### **Protected Characteristics:**

Disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, age, Looked After Children and Traveller Children.

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020; Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014; Inclusion Strategy 2011-2014

**Objective 7:** Reduce gaps in the **educational performance** experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

### **Project 2**

To reduce the gaps in educational performance attainment between boys and girls at Key Stages (KS) 1, 2 & 3.

### **Outcome**

Improvement in pedagogy to address improved engagement of boys

Pupil achievements will be seen to rise amongst both gender and the gap between boys and girls significantly reduced

### **Evidence Base**

Teacher Assessments Neath Port Talbot at KS1, KS2 and KS3

All Wales comparative figures

Fischer Family Trust data

### **Actions and Timetable**

- To address areas of pedagogy to ensure curriculum is engaging and challenging for both boys and girls. September 2011 onwards
- Identify good practice where schools are displaying consistently strong evidence in relation to attainment by boys. 2012 Spring Term onwards
- Share good practice through NPT Gateway Summer Term 2012
- Improved performance as indicated below Summer Term 2013

### **Success Measure/ Performance indicators**

Gaps for Neath Port Talbot reduced to at least in line or below All Wales figure for KS2 and KS3 and reduce to 4% at KS1

The figures for 2011:

	NPT	Wales
KS1 Level 2+ Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	-5%	-8%
KS2 Level 4+ Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	-9%	-8%
KS3 Level 5+ Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	-12%	-10%

### **Protected Characteristics**

Age; Sex

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Neath Port Talbot Community Plan 2010-2020; Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014  
School Effectiveness Framework

## **Gender Pay Objective**

### **Objective**

To expand data collection to all protected characteristics with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

### **Outcome**

This will enable the Council to publish annual reports outlining numbers employed and job applicants by protected characteristic; and to set equality employment objectives. Both are requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **Evidence**

Employment data is currently collected in relation to age, disability, race and gender only.

### **Action and Timetable**

- Draft and issue revised recruitment monitoring form by 1.4.12
- Publicise reasons and assurances on Intranet etc
- Issue monitoring forms to existing workforce and chase their return by early 2013

### **Success Measures/ Performers Indicators**

- All employment equality monitoring forms issued from 1.4.12 to include all protected characteristics, i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, with a “prefer not to say” option, in accordance with best practice advice
- Forms to be accompanied by encouragements to complete the form fully, including an explanation of the reasons for monitoring and a reassurance of confidentiality
- Reasons for monitoring and assurances of confidentiality to be more widely communicated e.g. via Intranet site and articles
- Data to be collected, stored and reported in compliance with the Data Protection Act.



**Protected Characteristics**

Disability; Age; Race; Sex; Sexual Orientation; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Religion and Belief; Pregnancy and Maternity

**Links to other strategies**

Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy

Recruitment & Selection Policy

2 Ticks “positive about disabled people” commitment

## **Gender Pay Objective**

### **Objective**

To further develop pay/employment data to better understand the reasons for the gender pay gap and to identify any actions which may be feasible to close the pay gap.

### **Outcome**

The provision of accurate annual data regarding men and women, broken down by job, grade, pay, contract type (permanent/temporary) and working pattern (full time, part time and other flexible working patterns). This will enable the Council to better understand the reasons for the gender pay gap and to identify appropriate actions. It is also a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **Evidence**

Workforce data about gender differences in pay has been collected in relation to the financial year 1.4.10 to 31.3.11. It is based on basic pay, as it has not been possible to add other earnings such as overtime and weekend enhancements (which were covered by separate gender impact assessment as part of the Workforce Strategy 2010). It includes gender breakdowns by negotiating group, grade, full time/part time contracts and permanent/temporary contracts.

When it comes to the pay gap, it provides a contradictory picture. The Council increased its pay bill by millions of pounds to fund the introduction of job evaluation, accompanied by a new pay and grading structure for the LGS (Green Book) employees (who constitute approximately 80% of the workforce), with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. Over 1200 posts were job evaluated. A significant number of employees moved from single pay points to pay scales. The consequent re-gradings and subsequent progression towards the top of the respective pay grades, may account for the pay gap in favour of women of 15% (median average), when comparing male and female employees in full time jobs. The All Wales comparator (as at April 2011) is a 8.8% pay gap in favour of men.

However, 85% of the Council's part time jobs are held by female post-holders. This may account for the Council's 38% overall pay gap in favour of men, when comparing pay differentials between all full-time and part-time employees. The All Wales comparator (as at April 2011) is an 18% pay gap in favour of men. The Council's overall pay gap is likely to reduce as the collection of pay data becomes more sophisticated, specifically in relation to the large number of female post-holders, whose earnings from separate jobs are not amalgamated. Other factors involved in this differential are occupational and contractual segregation, and the proportion of females in senior roles, all of which require further data analysis.

The aim of the new pay and grading structure referred to above was to create a fair, transparent and equality-proofed package of pay and conditions of service. This was supported by an equality impact assessment undertaken by the leading expert in the UK on equal pay, Sue Hastings.

### **Action and Timetable**

- Annual report (covering the period 1.4.11 to 31.3.12) must be published by 31.3.13 at the latest. This will include more accurate data and more detailed analysis of the gender pay gap
- Continue to invest in a pay structure which will result in a continued narrowing of the pay gap

### **Success Measures/ Performers Indicators**

- A reduction in the gender pay gap
- Provision of accurate data
- Analysis of data to improve understanding of the reasons for any pay gaps

### **Protected Characteristics**

Gender initially –other protected characteristics to follow in 2012

### **Links to other strategies**

Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy  
Recruitment & Selection Policy  
Job Evaluation & NPT Pay Review

## **Abbreviations Glossary**

ABMU Health Board	-	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board
BME	-	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSL	-	British Sign Language
CADW	-	Cadw is a Welsh word meaning 'to keep' or 'to protect' and is the Welsh Government's historic environment service
CSI	-	Core Subject Indicator
DASG	-	Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
DNAG	-	Disability Network Action Group
DPAG	-	Disabled Persons' Advisory Group
KS1, 2, 3	-	Key Stage 1, 2, 3
LAC	-	Looked After Children
LSB	-	Local Service Board
MARAC	-	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MEAS	-	Minority Ethnic Achievement Service
NEET	-	Not in education, employment or training
NHS Trust	-	National Health Service Trust
SEP	-	Strategic Equality Plan
SIP	-	Single Integrated Plan
Socitm	-	Society of Communication and Information Technology Managers
TAC	-	Team Around the Child

## **2 REVIEW OF FEES PAID AT LOCAL ELECTIONS**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To approve the scale of fees to be paid at the local elections to be held in May 2012

### **Background**

The current structure and scale of fees paid at local elections are based on those previously set by the former Neath, Lliw Valley and Port Talbot authorities. This Council adopted those scale of fees in 1996. The fees were last reviewed prior to the Local Government Elections in 2008, and now need to be revisited once again to ensure they continue to reflect the fees paid at national elections.

With the introduction of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, polling hours at local elections have been amended from 8am to 9pm to 7am to 10pm, coming into line with national elections. The Act also introduced a number of additional complex procedures for the conduct of both national and local elections; particularly postal voting procedures. The number of electors requesting a postal vote has continued to increase dramatically. There are currently nearly 24,000 postal voters in Neath Port Talbot, which equates to 22% of the total electorate for the County Borough.

The conduct of elections, of course, is not restricted to polling day itself, and involves many months of preparation and planning by the Returning Officer and his election staff to ensure the electoral process is undertaken in a secure and efficient manner.

### **Proposed Fee Structure**

The most recent national elections were the National Assembly for Wales elections held on 5 May 2011 combined with a referendum on the UK Parliamentary voting system. It is proposed that the fees paid for these elections are used as a benchmark for certain local election fees, excluding any referendum. The proposed fees are set out in the following tables (all fees are subject to the deduction of income tax).

	Current £	Proposed £
Returning Officer: Fee per contested Electoral Division or Community/Community Ward	165.00	165.00
Fee per uncontested Electoral Division or Community/Community Ward	25.00	25.00
Deputy Returning Officers: Fee for conducting a count and declaring the result per contested Electoral Division or Community/ Community Ward. (Subject to the Returning Officer's fee being reduced by 50% of the Deputies fee - i.e. £35.00 per contested Electoral Division or Community/ Community Ward)	70.00	70.00
Receiving and validating of nomination papers. and liaising with candidates/parties on behalf of the Returning Officer: Fee per Electoral Division or Community/ Community Ward	40.00	40.00
Presiding Officer (One per Polling Station): Single election (County Borough or Community)	162.00	195.00
Combined election (County Borough & Community)	204.00	230.00
Poll Clerk (One per 700 electors): Single election (County Borough or Community)	97.00	115.00
Combined election (County Borough & Community)	122.00	135.00
Training: – Deputy Returning Officers, Polling Station Inspectors, Presiding Officers	30.00	35.00
Training: – Poll Clerks	30.00	30.00
Delivery of training: Payable per session	50.00	50.00
Chief Counting Assistant: Verification and Count together – overnight	50.00	100.00
Separate verification and count (per session)	-	55.00

	Current £	Proposed £
Issue of Postal Votes:		
Payable to assistants per session (office hours)	25.00	20.00
Payable for supervision per session (office hours)	40.00	35.00
Payable to assistants per session (weekend)	35.00	30.00
Payable for supervision per session (weekend)	55.00	50.00
Opening of Postal Votes:		
Payable to assistants per session (office hours)	25.00	30.00
Payable for supervision per session (office hours)	40.00	40.00
Payable to assistants per session (weekend)	35.00	35.00
Payable for supervision per session (weekend)	55.00	55.00
General Clerical and other assistance:		
Per contested Electoral Division or Community/Community Ward	40.00	40.00
Per uncontested Electoral Division or Community/Community Ward	30.00	30.00

### **Travelling Expenses**

It is also proposed that the payment of travelling expenses for election staff be reviewed. The present arrangement is that Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Verification/Counting Assistants are paid the local authority mileage rate for actual miles travelled.

At national elections 'fixed' travelling allowances are paid to staff who use their own transport. This arrangement reduces the administration of very large numbers of claims for travelling in connection with the election, and speeds up the process for paying staff.

Based on the fixed travelling allowance paid at the 2008 local elections it is proposed that the allowances set out in the following table are used for the 2012 elections, subject to use of own vehicle.

	<b>2008 £</b>	<b>2012 £</b>
Presiding Officers – for travelling to training, collection of ballot boxes, travel to and from the Polling Station, delivery of ballot box to the count	15.00	15.00
Poll Clerks – for travelling to training, travel to and from the Polling Station	7.50	10.00
Polling Station Inspectors – for all travelling on Polling Day	15.00	15.00
Verification/Count Assistants – for travelling to and from the verification/count (unless already paid the Presiding Officer travelling allowance above)	5.00	5.00

### **Expenses at Actual Costs**

In addition to the above charges, the following expenses are met at actual cost:-

- (a) Hire and fitting up of polling stations and Verification/Count Centres, including the provision of heating, lighting and cleaning
- (b) Stationery and postages
- (c) Polling screens, ballot boxes, etc. required to be purchased, hired, altered or repaired
- (d) Printing of Poll Cards, Ballot Papers and Postal Voting stationery (Quotations sought by the Returning Officer).
- (e) Conveyance of ballot boxes and polling screens.



### **Budgetary provision**

The cost of the quadrennial ordinary local elections is met from the Elections Equalisation Reserve Fund, to which annual contributions are made from the Chief Executive's Office budget. The balance in the fund at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 is estimated to be £190,000. The cost of the 2012 elections for the County Borough Council is estimated at £175,000; to be met from the Equalisation Fund.

Where elections to the County Borough Council and community councils are combined, the costs of the elections, including fees paid, are shared equally (except those costs attributable to a particular election only) between the Council and the relevant community council. Community councils will be recharged for their share of the costs following the elections.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the foregoing fee structure for local elections be approved.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

To agree the fee structure prior to the appointment of appropriate staff.

### **List of Background Papers**

None

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Officer contact**

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Mr. Rhys George, Electoral Services Manager  
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## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

### **2 Review Of Fees Paid At Local Elections**

#### **(a) Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

#### **(b) Sustainability Appraisal:**

##### **Community Plan Impacts**

Economic Prosperity	-	no impact
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	no impact
Better Health & Well Being	-	no impact
Environment & Transport	-	no impact
Crime & Disorder	-	no impact

##### **Other Impacts**

Welsh Language	-	no impact
Sustainable Development	-	no impact
Equalities	-	no impact
Social Inclusion	-	no impact

#### **(c) Consultation**

There has been no requirement under the constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **3 COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECTS FUND: APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION**

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To decide upon applications received for grant funding from Community and Voluntary Organisations and from the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership.

#### **Background:**

##### **Introduction**

Since 2000/2001 the Council has provided financial assistance to community-based and voluntary organisations to fund projects and schemes, which are designed to contribute towards the objectives of the Community Safety Strategy. The Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership also develops projects for the same purpose. The combined budget for these purposes for 2011/12 is £12,000.

##### **The Process**

Grant application forms are available from the Council's Community Safety Team which offers advice and guidance to applicants on the eligibility criteria and completion of the application form. Applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria prior to the application being reported to the Cabinet Board for determination. Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership submissions are agreed between the relevant partners prior to be presented for decision. Appendix 1 shows applications approved to date.

#### **Submitted Applications**

##### **Community-based Projects**

	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Grant</u>
1.	Cwmavon Boys & Girls Club	Football Team	£ 500

The Club use Cymmer sports centre 3 days a week to take young people from the club football training. The club would like to increase this to four days a week so that more young people will benefit from the activity; for this they require help with transport costs. The club is also open in Cwmavon four nights a week providing a facility with pool darts table tennis and play station games.

##### **Voluntary Organisations Projects**

There are no Voluntary Organisation project applications this month.

## Partnership Projects

There are no Partnership Projects this month

## **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the application be approved.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The applications recommended for approval meet the eligibility criteria and the projects will contribute to the objectives of the Community Safety Strategy.

## **List of Background Papers:**

Eligibility criteria and appendix.

## **Wards Affected:**

Cwmavon & Bryn

## **Valleys Strategy:**

Afan Valley

## **Officer Contact:**

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Youth Offending and Community Safety Strategic Manager  
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## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

### **3 Community Safety Projects Fund Applications for Decision**

#### **(a) Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

#### **(b) Sustainability Appraisal:**

##### **Community Plan Impacts**

Economic Prosperity	-	positive impacts
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	positive impacts
Better Health & Well Being	-	positive impacts
Environment & Transport	-	no impact
Crime & Disorder	-	positive impacts

##### **Other Impacts**

Welsh Language	-	no impact
Sustainable Development	-	no impact
Equalities	-	positive impacts
Social Inclusion	-	positive impacts

#### **(c) Consultation**

There has been no requirement under the constitution for external consultation on this item.

## Appendix 1

### YOUTH RELATED PROJECTS

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
Upper Afan valley	Summer Programme	£500	14/7/11
Cwmgors Boxing club	Boxing 4 All	£495	1/9/11
Fairyland Football Club	Forward 4 Fairyland	£300.50	1/9/11
Baglan RFC	Baglan Junior Section	£325	1/9/11
Port Talbot Arts Group	Port Talbot & Baglan	£500	23/9/11
Neath & Melin	Amateur Boxing Club	£500	7/11/11
Engage	Switch F C	£374	5/01/12
Boxing Club	Croeserw	£500	5/01/12

### VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION PROJECTS

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
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### PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
Safer NPT Crucial Crew	Neath Port Talbot	£1,500	2/6/11
Christmas Campaign	Neath Port Talbot	£2,536	17/11/11

**Total 2011/12**

**£7,530.50**