

Summary of Responses

Do you agree with the principles set out in the draft Scheme?
<p>Equality Objective 1</p> <p>Address harassment discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics.</p> <p>Yes –11 No – 0</p>
<p>Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 1?</p> <p>Yes – 7 No – 3 No Response - 1</p>
<i>Please state what and why: (only 5 respondents commented)</i>
<i>“The LA should remember to protect the faith characteristic as well as other protected characteristics.”</i>
<p>Response</p> <p>Religion and faith is one of the protected characteristics and this will be reinforced within the Plan while the objective itself covers all protected characteristics.</p>
<i>“Would prefer a sharper focus on prevention of hate crimes as opposed to just reporting them. Whilst reporting is important, focusing efforts on awareness raising and conveying intentions of moving to a zero tolerance would, in my view, be more effective.”</i>
<p>Response</p> <p>A programme of public engagement to prevent hate crime to be included in the actions.</p>

“ We agree whole heartedly with this objective, and feel that the work of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership should be supported in their work in this respect.*

** The Older Persons' Council also believe that it is important to promote a positive image of older people, acknowledging and appreciating their contribution to society, especially with regard to their efforts in volunteering and caring for dependents and grandchildren, as they are not just a drain on society as often portrayed by the media, politicians and some intolerant people.”*

Response

The promotion of positive images of people with protected characteristics in public information provided by the Council to be included as an action under Objective 2.

“To ensure there is an effective reporting mechanism for hate crime.”

Response

Hate Crime reporting mechanisms through the Police 101 telephone number are currently in place and have been publicised throughout the Council, across statutory partners and through the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership.

“We would be grateful if you would consider aligning your reporting measures with those in our (South Wales Police) attached Plan for Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls (where they are relevant). We are particularly keen to encourage the early identification and intervention of domestic abuse. There is more information in the Plan and we would welcome contact if you wish to discuss it further.”

Response

The reporting measures in the Strategic Equality Plan have been aligned, where appropriate, with those identified in the South Wales Police Plan for ‘Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls 2014-2017’

Equality 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

Yes – 9 No – 0 No Response - 2

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 2?

Yes – 3 No – 5 No Response - 3

Please state what and why: (only 2 respondents commented)

“The LA should do more to ensure that the groups of the faith characteristic are protected as well as they protect the other groups.”

Response

The work identified to review guidelines on accessible information will help ensure due consideration is given to address issues for people with protected characteristics. Actions to meet Objective 4 will be instrumental in addressing these concerns.

** It is also important not to forget to include those who experience hearing loss, hearing aids are not the complete solution.*

** Whilst offering information which is more accessible and at lower cost, it is important to ensure that those without the skills and accessibility to IT and Computers are not over-looked.”*

Response

The implementation of the Council's Digital by Choice – Channel Shift Strategy, will ensure that the Council and its citizens access the benefits of digital technologies, whilst also ensuring that use of other, more traditional channels are appropriate, efficient and effective. The aim is to reduce social exclusion and poverty as on-line service options increase choice, life opportunities and can reduce cost. Additionally, widening choice of channel should mean that we are better able to cater for the needs of different groups for whom face to face and telephone contact may present barriers.

Alongside the work that is taking place in the development of the Strategy we will work with equality groups to review the guidelines on accessible information – an action to be included in the Plan.

Equality 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.

Yes – 11 No – 0

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 3?

Yes – 4 No – 5 No Response – 2

Please state what and why:

“School transport to faith schools. Currently the LA are (sic) not meeting their duty to the faith sector, when protecting their characteristics.”

Response

Home School Transport Policy 2013 - A detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed in respect of the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy. The EIA was subjected to rigorous internal and external scrutiny by the Welsh Local Government Association and was updated to reflect the results of the consultation exercise.

“ The Consultation Document refers to 'increasing choice and control' to improve efficiency and 'shifting investment to early intervention and prevention'. However, it is still important to still consider the needs of those who may find it difficult or will never regain independence, failure to do so could demonstrate an inequity of service! * The Older Persons' Council also wonder if in the future if the Independent Living Fund will be able to cope with the possible demand unless the rate of funding is increased significantly as demand increases. What*

is important to not loose (sic) sight of is that we do not actually lose those 'traditional service types' entirely, or to cater for anticipated future demand.”

Response

Action to be included:

Involve existing networks in developing information and advice in the implementation of the Social Care and Wellbeing Act

“Ensure that services offer appropriate services to meet specific needs, at the right time Put the needs and voices of individuals at the heart of services.”

Response

We are mindful of our responsibilities to service users ensuring services are appropriate and timely as well as ensuring we remain within our budget. Over recent years we have delivered services in an increasingly difficult financial climate something that is unlikely to change anytime soon. However, we are continually looking to improve our services and the actions identified under Objective 4 will help us achieve this.

“OBJ 3 – Action Plan ‘on children on child’”.

Response

This is an error and the Plan will be corrected prior to publication. No response required.

Equality Objective 4

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

Yes – 11 No – 0

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 4?

Yes – 4 No – 6 No Response – 1

Please state what and why:

“The LA should engage with ALL groups who have protected characteristics”

Response

We have established effective engagement mechanisms with groups representing/of protected characteristics and we will continue to develop these links.

“Agree to address issues identified through the suggested monitoring process”

Response

This is implicit in the Objective and the Plan as a whole

“ The text of this Objective is a little more reassuring in view of the content of Objective 3 (see comments). However the Older Persons' Council would urge you to continue to engage with community and special interest groups, however it is important that they know the outcomes of such consultation and see that their comments*

have been considered and sometimes make a difference. The Older Persons' Council are fortunate in that they are kept informed of developments, but if all community groups had feedback it may enhance public/community participation in such engagement.”

Response

While we aim to provide feedback to all who participate in engagement activities the inclusion of the 2 additional actions will ensure that this is given more prominence:

Provide guidance and advice to officers in providing feedback to consultation exercises

Feedback on consultation exercise to be available through ‘Objective’

“Obj 4 Action Plan – could also undertake development work with OPC?”

Response

The intention of undertaking development work with the specified groups was in order to raise confidence, improve greater participation and for the groups to become more sustainable. For clarity the wording of the action has been amended.

Equality Objective 5

Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements

Yes – 11 No – 0

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 5?

Yes – 2 No – 5 No Response – 4

Please state what and why:

“embed principles into your values framework”

Response

Equality is included as part of the induction training for new staff and is one of the underpinning principles for all our work along with Welsh language, sustainability, citizen engagement and partnership working/collaboration as detailed in and reported on in the Corporate improvement Plan and Annual Report respectively.

Equality is also one of the principles that underpin the partnership Single Integrated Plan, along with reducing poverty, community cohesion, sustainable development, early intervention and collaboration and service integration.

“OBJ 5 – Action Plan – Deliver training sessions on ... Age Discrimination, also Dementia Awareness (This will fit in with the Ageing Well Plan being done)”

Response

Action has been amended to take comments into account.

Equality 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.

Yes – 10 No – 1

If not please tell us the reasons why:

“ Although I fully understand the reasons for this requirement, there must come a time when the environment is left as it is without too much human intervention”

Response

The objective refers to environments over which we have influence, primarily the urban environment and regeneration projects, in order to meet and improve access. Consequently the comment is acknowledged but no further action is required.

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 6?

Yes – 2 No – 6 No Response – 3

Please state what and why: (only 1 respondent commented)

“The Older Persons' Council are concerned that the text in the consultation document refers only to 'our buildings and services', however we feel that this could be enhanced with specific reference to the following:

** However, surely the Council has a responsibility regarding the maintenance and erosion of standards in the street scene environment where such things as café furniture and 'A' signs encroach on walk ways, if*

so could this be included in this section as they then have a responsibility there also.

** Also as was pointed out by our Friend the late Cliff Croft, ensuring that street furniture such as seats and bollards are suitable for all people who have protected characteristics is vitally important.*

** What about less cluttered road signs, an increasing number of drivers find it difficult to negotiate busy traffic when there is unnecessary signage and this would particularly affect those with some of the protected characteristics (disability/age).*

** Does the Council have a responsibility to reinforce and ensure that buildings or projects which apply for planning permission not only are considerate of the needs of people from protected groups, but comply with recognised standards and the law in this respect also?*

** Could the Council also tighten up their requirements when procuring services or collaborating in projects to ensure that these standards and laws are maintained?*

** Considerations to improving mental/emotional health should be considered also, especially when encouraging the development of open spaces. ”*

Response

Officers to attend meetings of the various groups to provide information on the work that is currently under way to address identified concerns

Equality Objective 7

Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

Yes – 10 No – 1 No Response - 1

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 7?

Yes – 2 No – 4 No Response – 5

Please state what and why:

“The LA's home to school transport policy should be reviewed to ensure groups of pupils are not disadvantaged by their policy. I believe they are currently disadvantaged by this policy.”

Response

Home School Transport Policy 2013 - A detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed in respect of the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy. The EIA was subjected to rigorous internal and external scrutiny by the Welsh Local Government Association and was updated to reflect the results of the consultation exercise.

“Whilst the Older Persons' Council is well aware and appreciate the impact that a much restricted budget has had upon the provision of learning for adults. We feel that it is also important here to recognise, as much as it is feasible and practical, to acknowledge the contribution of Lifelong Learning, even if it is only through when working collaboratively with others. This is especially important to achieve many of the objectives in this Strategic Equality Plan, such as:

- * *OBJ 1 - Reducing harassment discrimination and threats to personal safety - raising awareness of issues.*
- * *OBJ 2 - Access to Information - vitally important to educate those with low IT skill base.*
- * *OBJ 3 - Access to Services - Community learning will play an important part in this Objective, particularly educating people about their own wellbeing and services available, especially for carers. It will also play an important part in providing community facilities for people in place of some traditional services. ”*

Response

This Objective focuses on schoolchildren as evidence suggested that improvements were necessary in relation to the attendance and attainment of pupils.

However, the contribution of lifelong learning for individuals and the community is widely recognised and officers are willing to attend meetings of various groups to provide information on the lifelong learning service.

Equality Objective 8

Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.

Yes – 11 No – 0

Are there any other actions you think should be included under Equality Objective 8?

Yes – 0 No – 6 No Response – 5

Is there anything else you think should be included in the Strategic Equality Plan?

Yes – 3 No – 2 No Response – 6

“This consultation response is completed on behalf of the Neath Port Talbot Older Persons' Council, as such the following equalities questions as a singular are not relevant. Please note that we are all over the age of 65, some with a disability.”

Response

No response required

“Strengthen information, advice and advocacy services to ensure people from protected groups are able to understand and exercise their rights.”

Response

The Council's response to the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act will go some way to address these concerns.

At start could benefit from details of the 'protected characteristics' and brief background. (Response from Grace Halfpenny, Corp Strategy)

Response

Information on the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics are to be included in the final version of the Plan.