

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Cabinet Board

15th October 2015

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

K.Jones

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2014-2015.

Executive Summary

2. This report for 2014-2015, attached at Appendix 1, is the last annual report on our first Strategic Equality Plan that was published in 2012 and provides an assessment of progress against our original equality objectives during the year.
3. We have continued to work 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 they were different from the needs of other people. While we have made progress against some of the equality objectives we acknowledge the amount of work that remains.
4. As a consequence of the ongoing challenging financial circumstances, a reduced workforce and consequent need to prioritise resources, we have carried out a review of our equality objectives earlier than was originally anticipated. This review has been the main focus of our work during the year.

Background

5. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires us to provide an annual report by 31st March each year. In this instance it means reporting on 2014-2015 by 31st March 2016.

6. The annual report includes the progress made towards fulfilling our equality objectives and how we have met the public sector general duty.
7. The focus for 2014-2015 has been the review of the equality objectives. We have been conscious of ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectations and changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot and these have prompted an early review of our objectives. We have, however, continued to work to meet the equality objectives while bearing in mind the revision of and the potential changes to the objectives.
8. During the year we have concentrated efforts on improving areas which have greatest impact on people lives including the accessibility of our website and improving the equality impact assessment process. We have not, however, neglected other objective areas.
9. As our equality objectives were linked to our Corporate Improvement Priorities and by undertaking the actions identified to meet these priorities we have been able to make progress across a number of our equality objectives.

Financial Appraisal

10. The progress described in the annual report was delivered within reduced budgets.

Equality Impact Assessment

11. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”
12. As the focus of the annual report is to report progress made against our equality objectives as well as to include other specified information there is no requirement to undertake an equality impact assessment.

Workforce Impact

13. The progress described in the annual report was achieved against a backdrop of a reduced workforce alongside ongoing financial challenges

Legal Impact

14. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce and publish an annual report every year.

Crime and Disorder Impact

15. The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with “due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area”.
16. The Strategic Equality Plan contained specific proposals to prevent and address hate crime and domestic abuse and progress has been made to meet these proposals thereby assisting us in discharging the crime and disorder duty.

Risk Management

17. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce and publish an annual report every year. Failure to produce an annual report could lead to a compliance notice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, an independent statutory agency which was established under the Equality Act 2006.

Consultation

18. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that:

Members monitor the contents of the Annual Report 2014-2015 attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix

22. Appendix 1 – Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015

List of Background Papers

23. [Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011.](#)
[Strategic Equality Plan 2012](#)

Officer Contact

24. Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.
Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk