

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Cabinet Board 1 November 2017

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services K.Jones

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2016-2017

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2016-2017.

Executive Summary

2. This annual report for 2016-2017, attached at Appendix 1, provides an assessment of progress against our 8 equality objectives during the year.
3. Significant progress has been made in some specific areas, for example domestic abuse, support for the BME Forum etc, while in others completion of actions during 2015-2016 have resulted in these being becoming 'business as usual' for the various services.
4. While performance measures originally identified in the Strategic Equality Plan have been revised during the year they have not proved as effective as we had anticipated and work is ongoing to develop more robust metrics for future reporting.
5. With the work currently ongoing to develop the CAMMS - Intelligent Performance System for use with the corporate performance management framework there is an opportunity to explore how this system can be utilised for equality monitoring.

6. Further development of measures will be informed by the change in direction proposed for future work to progress the equality objectives. These proposals are identified later in this report.

Background

7. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires us to provide an annual report each year which includes progress made towards fulfilling our equality objectives and how we have met the public sector equality duty.
8. During 2016-2017, although conscious of ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectations and the changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot we have continued to work to meet the equality objectives and significant progress has been made in a number of areas.
11. Once again we have concentrated our 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.
12. Our equality objectives and Corporate Improvement Priorities have been aligned to ensure a more holistic approach. This has ensured that progress made is complementary to both; the work on improving digital inclusion across the County Borough helps meet both our equality objectives and our wider improvement priority.

Current position

13. The Annual Report reflects progress made during 2016-2017 through narrative and a small basket of measures which need to be further developed as stated above.
14. There have been a number of changes within the Council and the areas as a whole since the revision of the Strategic Equality Plan and the development of the actions to meet the equality objectives in 2015.
15. Resources continue to reduce, actions have been completed and absorbed into 'business as usual', new initiatives are being

developed, etc., and with the new administration in place it is timely that we review our actions, building on the progress made to date to help make a difference for people who share protected characteristics.

16. Our Corporate Plan, approved by Council on 28 September, has been developed in line with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. Our equality objectives resonate with the wellbeing goals and the principle of sustainable development contained in the Act.
17. The obvious similarities and links between the Council's wellbeing objectives and the equality objectives will require further consideration to align them more closely as well as looking to develop existing measures to measure progress on the equality objectives.

Proposals for Future Work

18. In order to move our work forward and recognising the above changes we propose to revise our approach to the way in which we aim to meet the objectives.
19. We want to consider more of an audit approach to help determine the actions that would be make the most difference to people's lives.
20. We propose to:
 - undertake disability audits of our website, community directory and committee rooms
 - undertake an EIA audit – EIAs reported/undertaken since the beginning of the new administration and monitor the actions identified
 - undertake audit – business as usual work and determine progress measures
 - undertake engagement work with various groups, including Syrian refugees, LGBT Forum etc, to explore how well they have integrated into their local community (Syrian refugees), what it is like for them living in Neath Port Talbot etc.
 - identify the actions required to move forward the work on the Just More than Words programme in Social Services

- develop a child friendly version of the community directory
- include actions in relation to Welfare reform
- compile a profile of social services service users and undertake further analysis to identify any necessary actions
- undertake better, more targeted data analysis
- explore the outcomes of the WRAP and Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy training programme.
- revise the membership of the Heads of Service Equality and Community Cohesion Group to include representatives of the various local equality groups to improve communication and outcomes

Financial Appraisal

21. The progress described in the annual report was delivered within reduced budgets.
22. Any proposed actions will be delivered within reduced budgets or with funding from grants where appropriate.

Equality Impact Assessment

23. 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.”
24. 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

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

Legal Impact

26. 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

27. 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”.
28. 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

29. 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

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

Recommendations

31. It is recommended that:

Members monitor the contents of the Annual Report 2016-2017 attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix

- 32. Appendix 1 – Draft Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2016-2017

List of Background Papers

- 33. [Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019](#)

Officer Contact

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