

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

5 December 2018

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer - K.Jones

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-2018

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for 2017-2018.

Executive Summary

2. This annual report for 2017-2018, 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, data collection (with improved work in relation to impact assessments and new initiatives such as the Community Profile exercise), revision of the impact assessment process, etc.
4. During the year it has become apparent that some of the performance measures identified were unsuitable or were not able to be collected. As a result, further consideration will be given to identifying more appropriate measures as well as utilising the recently introduced Corporate Performance Management System for equality monitoring.

Background

5. 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.
6. Our work during 2017-2018 has been focused on consolidation and reflection; a period to consolidate the work previously undertaken and an opportunity to reflect on its implementation and the affect our actions have had on improving people's experiences.
7. We have concentrated our efforts on improving areas which have greatest impact on people lives including improving the equality impact assessment process and our work to address domestic abuse.

Current positon

8. The Annual Report reflects progress made during 2017-2018 through narrative and a small basket of measures which need to be further developed as stated above.
9. With budgets ever decreasing, staff numbers reducing, actions becoming 'business as usual', etc., 2017-2018 has been a time to consolidate and reflect on the work undertaken to date so that we can be in a stronger position in the future to help make a difference for people who share protected characteristics.
10. Key areas that were progressed during the year include:
 - Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities - we made significant progress on implementing the Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy. This includes successful campaigns such a White Ribbon Day, a service mapping exercise undertaken, roll out of the National Training Framework and increased capacity of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service.
 - Crucial Crew – held between 3 and 14 July 2017 for 1,647 Year 6 pupils from 52 primary schools with 12 partner agencies attending to deliver safety information; internet safety, healthy

relationships, playing safe, cycle safety and drug/alcohol awareness.

- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association - strengthened their position over the period by becoming a constituted organisation (with three elected members becoming trustees). The Association aims to promote equality and diversity as well as providing a voice and be representative of BME communities in Neath Port Talbot.
- Community Profile - a key piece of work to better understand of our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, along with their experiences of living the area and what issues they face in accessing services has been undertaken by the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association, supported by Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service and the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator. The outcomes of which will help inform our work going forward.
- Gender pay gap – following our work to identify reasons for the gender pay gap in the Council we will now be working with Chwarae Teg to develop a strategy to address the position.
- Integrated Impact assessment – a review of the equality impact assessment was undertaken to include the new legislative requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment Act 2016. Following completion of training sessions for officers and members, the revised assessment process will be rolled out across the Council shortly.

11. Key areas where we did not perform/ engage as well as hoped:

- Educational performance - a reversal in the educational performance of boys in literacy and numeracy at Foundation Phase and in literacy at Key Stage 3. We also saw a reversal in educational performance of girls in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 3 and in numeracy at Key Stage 4.

There was a continuing decline in both literacy and numeracy at Foundation Phase for girls. Improving educational performance for all pupils continues to be a high priority for the council and work will continue to address this.

- A decrease in the number of impact assessments being undertaken and reported to the relevant Cabinet Board. This could be as a result of a reduced number of new/revised

policies being reported during the year. However, there was a rise in screening assessments undertaken and reported as not requiring a 'full' impact assessment. The revision of the impact assessment process will help address any 'issues' that may have been experienced with the current assessment process.

- The disbanding of the Disability Network Action Group due to illness of one of the key members and responsibilities of the work being undertaken then by one other member. Over the coming months we will be considering the most appropriate way to continue our dialogue with local disabled people/groups to ensure their voices are not lost and that our policies continue to be enriched by their involvement.

Going forward

12. Following a review of the Heads of Service Equality and Community Cohesion Group new terms of reference were developed, membership revised and the name for the Group amended to reflect the changes, Equality and Community Cohesion Group.
13. Membership has been widened with more key officers representing each directorate as well as representatives from local equality groups. The first meeting was held on 10 October with a number of issues raised with opportunities to work together to identify solutions.
14. A review of the Equality Objectives will be undertaken during 2019 to meet legislative requirements. This will also provide an opportunity to better align the Equality Objectives with the Council's Well-being Objectives.

Financial Appraisal

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

Equality Impact Assessment

16. 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.”
17. 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

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

Legal Impact

19. 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

20. 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”.
21. The Strategic Equality Plan contains 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

22. 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

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

Recommendations

24. It is recommended that:

Members monitor the contents of the Annual Report 2017-2018 attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix

25. Appendix 1 – Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-2018

List of Background Papers

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

Officer Contact

27. Mrs Karen Jones, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer -Tel: 01639 763284 or e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk