

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet**

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **Report of Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer K.Jones**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

**Report Title: Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 – Draft Equality Objectives**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To seek Member approval to consult on draft equality objectives and potential actions as part of the development of a revised Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 (set out in Appendix 1).

#### **Executive Summary**

2. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 we, along with other public bodies, have a duty to develop Equality Objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan containing equality objectives and other information as required in the Regulations.
3. We are required to review our equality objectives at least every four years and have adopted the same timetable for a review of our Strategic Equality Plan. Our current Strategic Equality Plan was approved on 14 October 2015 but has recently been extended to April 2020. This will allow more time to improve the alignment of the new Plan with the Corporate Plan 2020-2023 (also to be published in April 2020); to take into account the review of the Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy; the exploration of the requirements and impact of the soon to be introduced socio-economic duty as well as the outputs of the Poverty Symposium held in October 2019.
4. The Equality and Community Cohesion Group has been instrumental in the development of the equality objectives. The draft equality objectives have been developed using information gathered from a range of sources: feedback from internal engagement activities; local, national and regional research publications as well as relevant strategies and plans that are already in place or being

developed (a list of these, along with links where available, are included in the background papers).

5. The themes of the Equality and Human Rights publication 'Is Wales Fairer?' provides a structure which reflects issues we have already identified as needing to be addressed and which are supported by the findings of local research recently undertaken.

## **Background**

6. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required 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; the Public Sector Equality Duty.
7. In Wales specific duties have been introduced under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to help public bodies carry out the public sector equality duty. Under these regulations we along with other public bodies have a duty to develop equality objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan containing the objectives and other information.
8. We have produced two Strategic Equality Plans since the introduction of the duty; April 2012 and November 2015. The development and implementation of the latter plan had been brought forward six months to take into account the various topical issues of the time.
9. On 30 October 2019 Cabinet approved an extension to the current Strategic Equality Plan to April 2020 which will allow sufficient time to improve its alignment with our Corporate Plan, to better explore the requirements and impact of the soon to be introduced socio economic duty as well as to take on board the outcomes of various projects/initiatives such as the Poverty Symposium held in October 2019.

## **Draft Equality Objectives**

10. In drafting the equality objectives we have considered various national and local research findings; latest data available to the Council and issues raised by local equality groups during meetings of the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.
11. Local research was carried out with members of the BME community, people with experiences of low income, disabled people, members of the Gypsy and Traveller community and communities in general. A number of common threads were identified such as hate crime/incidents, poverty and barriers when

accessing services (these research exercises are referenced in the ' List of Background Papers' section).

12. In addition we considered the work that we are already undertaking both as an individual organisation and as part of regional partnership working. This includes the revision of the Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy; Smart and Connected - A Revised Digital Strategy; and the Chwarae Teg Fair Employer Scheme.
13. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's '[Is Wales Fairer?](#)' Report has been a key source of data to inform the development of the draft equality objectives. It is the most comprehensive review of how Wales is performing on equality and human rights. The Report focuses on six themes: Education, Health, Personal Safety, Living Standards, Employment and Participation and these appear to reflect those areas which have been highlighted locally.
14. As a result we have adopted these themes for our draft equality objectives (also encouraged by the Equality and Human Rights Commission). We have also identified key areas of work and potential actions (although these are not exhaustive) that will help us achieve our objectives.

### **Financial Appraisal**

15. It is proposed that the draft equality objectives in the new Strategic Equality Plan will be met through actions already identified in existing strategies/plans or those due to be developed. The delivery of this work will be against an ongoing challenging financial backdrop.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

16. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is required.

An overview of the initial Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

The Integrated Impact Assessment will be revisited in light of responses to the consultation and a final impact assessment will accompany the final decision report in due course.

### **Valleys Communities Impact:**

17. The draft equality objectives, and the actions identified to deliver them, will contribute to projects supporting the valley communities.

### **Workforce Impact**

18. The draft equality objectives, and the actions identified to deliver them, will be achieved against a backdrop of a reduced workforce alongside ongoing financial challenges

### **Legal Impact**

19. These draft equality objectives and potential actions have been developed to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **Risk Management**

20. We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to develop equality objectives and publish these, alongside other information, in a Strategic Equality Plan. Failure to develop equality objectives 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.

### **Crime and Disorder Impact**

21. 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”.
22. The equality objectives contains specific proposals to prevent and address hate crime and domestic abuse thereby assisting us in discharging the crime and disorder duty.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts**

23. The Council has a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 when exercising relevant

functions to 'have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which:

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or
- (b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.'

24. The equality objectives contain specific proposals to prevent and address domestic abuse thereby assisting us in discharging this duty.

### **Consultation**

25. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

26. Members authorise the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer to initiate formal public consultation on the draft equality objectives and potential actions as contained in Appendix 1 (consultation period from 16 January to 20 February 2020).

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

27. To meet the statutory requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **Implementation of Decision**

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

### **Appendices**

29. Appendix 1 – Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 - draft Equality Objectives and Actions

30. Appendix 2 - Integrated Impact Assessment v1

### **List of Background Papers**

31. [Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 Draft Annual Report 2018-2019](#)

32. [Equality Act 2010](#)

33. [Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)

34. Draft Equality Objectives and Actions – Background documents:

- [Is Wales Fairer?](#) – Equality and Human Rights Commission
- [Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy](#) (currently being revised)

- [Chwarae Teg Fair Play Employer Scheme - Action Plan](#)
- Neath Port Talbot Poverty Symposium Report
- Community Cohesion Survey
- Stickability: Supportive Services for Gypsy and Traveller Communities in Neath and Port Talbot – research undertaken by Wales School for Social Care Research, Swansea University.
- [Time to Change Wales Campaign Employer Pledge](#)
- [Smart and Connected - A Revised Digital Strategy](#)
- [Strategic Plan for Autistic Spectrum Disorder](#)
- Community Profile - NPT BME Community Association
- [Making Wales the best place in the world to grow older - Older People's Commissioner](#)
- Making Money Work (people's lived experience in Neath Port Talbot) – research undertaken by Toynbee Hall and Tai Tarian
- Council's Website Audit
- Community of Practice – feedback from initial event

### **Officer Contact**

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