

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Cabinet

27 March 2024

**Report of the Head of People & Organisational Development – S Rees**

### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

**Report Title:** Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2022-2023

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To present the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report for the period 2022-2023 for consideration and approval prior to its publication in line with statutory requirements.

### **Executive Summary**

2. The Annual Report for 2022-2023, attached at Appendix 1, provides an account of progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and in particular against the equality objectives and actions set out in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024.
3. The report is required to meet duties set out Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
4. The Annual Report reports on progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty through our work in relation to the equality objectives as well as through our other plans and strategies and through the various initiatives and projects we have undertaken over the period.

### **Background**

5. 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. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6. 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. These include the requirement to publish a Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives every four years and to report on progress in an annual report for each those financial years.
7. The revised Strategic Equality Plan was published in October 2020 with revised actions published in January 2021.
8. Key elements of work during 2022-2023:
  - A trauma informed approach and relational health whole school training package, developed by the Wellbeing Service, has been rolled out to all schools
  - Additional posts within the education directorate have been established in order to help reduce persistent absenteeism and re-engage students back into education and to ensure that the needs of all elective home educated children and young people are catered for.
  - We have increased capacity across our Early Years Inclusion Teams to ensure the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are identified when starting school and where appropriate, individual development plans are in place
  - We introduced the Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport to support employees who join the Council, or who move jobs within the Council, with reasonable adjustments and discussions with managers
  - In partnership with Chwarae Teg, we launched a new mentoring programme, NPT Ment2Be, designed to help mentors gain new skills to help their own professional and personal development whilst giving mentees the chance to develop their skills from their mentors' knowledge and experience
  - The NPT Ethnic Minority Network continues to develop and its contribution and engagement has been key to the development of various plans and initiatives.
  - Continued improvements to our website to ensure it meets the AA standard has resulted in a score 96% which ranks us 27th amongst UK councils for accessibility.
  - We have attained a silver award, employer recognition scheme as part of the Armed Forces Covenant.
  - Ysgol Cwm Brombil was awarded bronze status in the Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru scheme in recognition of the support given to their service children by embedding good practice into the daily running of the school and creating a positive environment.

### **Financial Appraisal**

9. The performance described in the Annual Report was delivered within existing budgets.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

10. There is no requirement to undertake an integrated impact assessment.

### **Valleys Communities Impact**

11. The Annual Report includes progress made in delivering initiatives within the valley communities.

### **Workforce Impact**

12. There are no workforce impacts with this report.

### **Legal Impact**

13. This annual report is prepared under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **Risk Management**

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. 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.

### **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 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.

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

17. 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.’

18. The Strategic Equality Plan contains specific proposals to prevent and address domestic abuse and progress has been made to meet these proposals thereby assisting us in discharging this duty.

### **Consultation**

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

### **Recommendations**

20. It is recommended that Cabinet considers and approves the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2021-2022.
21. It is recommended that the Head of People and Organisational Development be given delegated authority to make such changes as may be needed to the Annual Report prior to publication, provided that such changes do not materially alter the content of the document considered by Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

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

### **Implementation of Decision**

23. For immediate implementation.

### **Appendices**

24. Appendix 1 –Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2022-2023

### **List of Background Papers**

25. Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
26. Equality Act 2010
27. Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

### **Officer Contact**

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