

Meeting of:	CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES
Date of Meeting:	6 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER, FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	ZOE EDWARDS, CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EQUALITIES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	All public bodies in Wales must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. One of the specific duties is to produce the Strategic Equality Plan and an annual progress report.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet Committee Equalities with an update on the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 – 2024 for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 The SEP annual report enables the Council to:

- monitor and review progress against its strategic equality objectives;
- review its objectives and processes in light of any new legislation and other new developments;
- engage with relevant stakeholders around equality objectives, providing transparency;
- include relevant updates on equality impact assessments, procurement arrangements and training.

Specifically, the report sets out:

- the steps taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- where appropriate, employment information, including information on training and pay.

- 2.2 The report will show progress made by the Council on each of its six equality

objectives, which will be of interest to:

- Elected Members;
- Members of the community and community groups;
- Equality and Human Rights Commission;
- Welsh Government.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The annual report (**Appendix 1**) covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The annual report must be published on the Council's website/made available by 1 April 2025.

3.2 The six strategic equalities objectives for 2020 – 2024 are:

- Education
- Work
- Living standards
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety and respect
- Participation

3.3 This is our fourth and final annual report for this strategic plan. The next annual report will note the progress made towards the commitments set out in the 2024-2028 Strategic Equality Plan. The individual actions are noted in the corporate action plan developed and attached as **Appendix 2**.

3.4 Some key points to note from the annual report are:

- A number of staff network groups have been developed. They meet regularly to provide a safe, confidential environment to network, question, challenge, raise issues and receive support.
- A Welsh Language Staff Forum has been developed: "Iaeth Gwaeth", consisting of staff of all proficiency levels who meet up on a monthly basis to practice their Welsh Language skills and provide support to the Welsh Language Standards requirements.
- The equality impact assessment process and screening forms have been updated to include care leavers as an additional protected characteristic. This change has been communicated to staff and the e-learning training has been updated to reflect this change.
- The council has exceeded its target of appointing apprentices during 2023/2024 by employing 46 apprentices. There are also a further 6 graduates employed, with one being employed into a hard to fill area to support succession planning.
- The council renewed its Disability Confident status during 2023 and has started the process of becoming a Disability Leader, with support from Awen and Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).

- Whilst Black History Month (BHM) has been promoted each year, in order to mark Black History Month 2023, the team invited Bridgend college students and members of Bridgend Youth Council to create visual boards to represent BHM and what it means to them. We then displayed the boards in the Civic offices in order to promote the month and demonstrate our support of ethnically diverse groups and communities.
- The Council continued to work with community and equality groups within the Bridgend Community Cohesion Equalities Forum (BCCEF), representatives from across the community representing a wide range of organisations meet quarterly to share practice, receive joint briefings and training. All members are invited to share information about BCCEF with other organisations with the aim to increase membership and representation.
- The Council has promoted campaigns via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and the Bridgend County Borough Council website, including:
 - International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia
 - Men's Health Week
 - Armed Forces Day
 - Samaritans Awareness Day
 - Anti-Slavery Day
 - Ramadan
 - Stress Awareness Month
 - Pride Month
 - Plastic Free July
 - National Walking Month
 - Black History Month
 - Refugee Week
 - Deaf Blind Awareness Week
 - Mental Health Awareness Week
 - Pride Month
 - #AnAntiRacistWales
 - Carers Week
 - Infant Mental Health Awareness
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month
 - Disability Pride Month
 - ASB Awareness Week
 - Eisteddfod
 - World Mental Health Day
 - Shwmae Sumae Day
 - #LGBTplusHM
 - Welsh
 - #RaceEqualityWeek23
 - LGBTQ+ Adoption and Fostering Week 2023.
 - International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
 - World Down Syndrome Day
 - Ramadan
 - #worldsocialworkday
 - Trans Day of Visibility

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee Equalities notes the update on the work completed within the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020 – 2024 for the period 2023 - 2024.

Background documents

None