



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

8TH MAY 2019

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2019-2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR M WEBBER, DEPUTY LEADER

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report provides information on the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

2.1 The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) is agreed and published.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The SEP has been developed so that the Council can set out how it aims to meet its commitment to equality and how it will meet its legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.

3.2 A comprehensive engagement process took place to involve as many people as possible on the draft Equality Objectives and to give an opportunity for suggestions for additional or alternative objectives. An engagement report has been produced.

3.3 Feedback on the engagement process was very positive and as a result the Equality Objectives included in the SEP are:

- To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive.
- To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities.
- To promote safe communities.

- To reduce the gender pay gap.
 - To create an inclusive workforce.
- 3.4 The Gender Pay objective is a requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duties.
- 3.5 An action plan has been developed which will be embedded within the Council's Performance Management arrangements.

4. BACKGROUND

The Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales came in to force on 6th April 2011 and included a requirement for public authorities to develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan every four years.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a general equality duty and a specific public sector equality duty that is applicable to Councils. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Single Equality Duty) requires public authorities to demonstrate that they have paid 'due regard' in their decision-making process to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 5.2 The Council must have due regard to the impact of any proposals on those with a protected characteristic. The Council has a specific duty to publish information to demonstrate how it has paid due regard to the aims above as part of its decision-making. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment screening exercise (and if necessary a full Equality Impact Assessment) would be evidence that the Council has considered its legal obligations in making the decision on the recommendations in this report.
- 5.3 The equality objectives provide a positive impact on all groups with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. It was noted that the engagement exercise failed to effectively engage with residents who are black and minority ethnic

(BAME). This is particularly concerning as we are aware there are no support / advocacy groups in the borough representing the needs of BAME residents. As a result, actions within the equality objectives will ensure efforts are made to develop communication and engagement routes with BAME residents.

6 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

An 8 week public consultation ran from 10 September to 2 November 2018. The consultation exercise involved a number of drop in events and targeted sessions. An online survey was created and placed on the Council's website and forwarded to relevant organisations representing protected groups. The full engagement report is available alongside the Strategic Equality Plan.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The SEP has been developed to meet legislation requirements contained in the Equality Act 2010.

9 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

The development of the Strategic Equality Plan contributes to the 5 ways of working within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council's Annual Equality Report has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

10.2 The Annual Equality Report has to be published by 31 March 2019 in order to comply with legal requirements.