

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

Cabinet – 17 September 2015

EQUALITY AND WELSH LANGUAGE REVIEW REPORT 2014-15 DRAFT STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2016 - 2020

Purpose:	To present the Annual Equality and Welsh Language Review Reports for 2014-15 as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty for Wales and Welsh Language Commissioner. To present the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020.
Policy Framework:	Strategic Equality Plan 2012 – 2016 Welsh Language Scheme 2011-2014
Reason for Decision:	To present the review reports for approval prior to submission to the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Language Commissioner (as the regulators) and publication on the Council's website (as required by law). To present the draft SEP for approval prior to formal public consultation.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services
Recommendation(s):	That Cabinet approves both the report content (for publication) and draft SEP (for formal public consultation).
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Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report is our first combined Equality and Welsh Language Review. An integrated approach has been adopted to ensure a more efficient process, both for the Access to Services Team and for service areas.

2.0 Part 1 - Equality

- 2.1 For Equality (Part 1), this is our fourth review under the Public Sector Equality Duty and reflects the annual reporting regulations for Wales, which were introduced in 2011.
- 2.2 The report contains our third progress report against the Equality Objectives contained within our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) (www.swansea.gov.uk/sep).
- 2.3 This report also contains details on equality information and employment and training information. Additional information (of relevance to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty) has also been included, outlining work in areas including:
- Equality Impact Assessments
 - Consultation and engagement
 - Harassment and hate incidents
 - Education and schools
 - Work with older people
 - Children's Rights
 - Community cohesion
 - Poverty
 - Welfare reform
 - Domestic abuse
 - Interpretation and Translation
 - Change Fund

It is positive to see the breadth and quantity of additional information we have to report, which further supports the delivery and achievement of our Equality Objectives. All service areas have provided updates for the third year of our Equality Objectives. It is positive to see that progress continues to be made against all objectives, with a large number of actions now complete.

In terms of the small number of actions that have not progressed in 2014 - 2015, officers have provided details and updated deadlines where appropriate (as is permitted under the regulations). Where actions have needed to be changed or progressed in different ways, this has been highlighted throughout the action plan.

Part 1 of the report has 2 appendices:

- Equality Objectives – progress update
- Employment and Training Information

3.0 Part 2 - Welsh Language

- 3.1 For Welsh Language, this is the fourth Annual Review of our Welsh Language Scheme (2011-2014) – the third such scheme. Under the terms of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011), our existing scheme remains in force until Welsh Language Standards are operational.

- 3.2 External processes concerning the Welsh Government and the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner have delayed our receiving of the Welsh Language Standards which was originally planned for 2013. As a result, while our Scheme and its Action Plan reflect our aim of equality of service provision between Welsh and English, some parts have become less relevant as events such as new legislation, re-organisation and staff changes - coupled with regulatory uncertainty - have unfolded.
- 3.3 Although the final version of Welsh Language Standards was still awaited at the end of the reporting period, initiatives have been on-going to publicise and encourage pro-active implementation of standards which are considered inevitable.
- 3.4 Throughout the period, the profile of the W/L Measure has risen, with departments' awareness of and willingness to meet the approaching Welsh language standards increasing.

Part 2 of the report has 2 appendices:

- Welsh Language Scheme Action Plan
- Employment and Training Information

4.0 Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2016 - 2020

- 4.1 Our current SEP comes to an end in 2016. Under the regulations, we are obliged to publish a refreshed Plan (including Equality Objectives) every 4 years. This draft has been developed to incorporate the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme action plan. It will also include the relevant actions within the Older People's Strategy (which is currently under development).
- 4.2 A Task & Finish Group has been used to develop the draft Equality Objectives. Group members were asked to confirm their departmental content with Heads of Service before submission.
- 4.3 It is important to note that the Equality Objectives are still being developed as there have been delays in some service areas. As a result, there may be further changes made prior to approval (to consult) by Cabinet. For any additions, we will ask those officers involved to ensure Head of Service approval for all additions. For example, we won't be adding any items for Adult Services until the new Head of Service has taken up her role and the ongoing changes within the department have been made.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, acceptance of the SEP could result in additional expenditure at a future time. Acceptance of the SEP does not mean that additional resources will be made available and it should be assumed that future

spending needs will need to be contained within existing budget provision.

- 5.2 Within the development of the Equality Objectives, the support and guidance of the Access to Services Team has focused heavily on the financial aspect. All service areas have been advised to only set Objectives that are achievable as additional funds are not available corporately.
- 5.3 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from the Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report, the impending move to Welsh Language Standards will require the authority to meet externally defined objectives regarding Welsh language provision – objectives which are as yet not fully defined. Where additional resources may be required to meet these, it should be assumed that future spending needs will need to be contained within existing budget provision.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 This work is governed by the Equality Act 2010, (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which places specific duties on public authorities. The 16 regulations include specific publication requirements for:

- A Strategic Equality Plan (and any revisions)
- Equality Objectives including timescales and actions to be taken
- An annual equality report
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Any relevant equality information
- Specified employment information, including information on training and pay.

6.2 Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) the Welsh Government will define standards for local authorities and the Welsh Language Commissioner will direct which of these will apply to us.

This legislation supersedes the Welsh Language Act (1993), but the Act will remain in force – including our Welsh Language Scheme and the requirement to produce an Annual Report – until the standards are implemented.

7.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

7.1 An EIA screening form has been completed for the review report; with the conclusion that a full EIA is not required as this is purely a review of activity. The current SEP was subject to a full EIA at the time of development – this will be updated in order to reflect the 2016 – 2020 content.

Background Papers:

None.

Appendices:

Equality and Welsh Language Review 2014/15 (year ending March 2015) Report
– parts 1 and 2

Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2016 - 2020