



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Human Rights & Equalities

Council – 21 March 2024

### Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

<b>Purpose:</b>	To adopt a Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan containing the Council's Human Rights Equality Objectives for 2024/28
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) That the Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28 is adopted.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Rhian Millar
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Roach
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Catherine Window

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider how to eliminate discrimination and positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities.
- 1.2 The Council also has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to publish a revised Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Prior to publishing, the Council is also required to consider the relevant information that is held and is needed and to engage with relevant stakeholders.
- 1.3 Swansea declared itself a Human Rights City in December 2022. This is the first time we have combined our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) with our Human Rights commitments. This plan will outline how we will

continue to meet our commitments to human rights and equality, and how we will meet our legal obligations within the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **2. Methodology for developing the Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan**

2.1 Work commenced in 2023/24 on the Council's Human Rights and Equality Objectives and Plan for 2024/28. The development of the objectives and the final plan is overseen by the Council's Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board. The purpose of the Board is to provide strategic oversight for the Council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Well-being and Future Generations Act.

It was agreed at the board:

- to have early and open engagement
- to make use of previous engagement
- to be honest and transparent
- to use existing evidence
- budgets need to be considered
- a monitoring and evaluation process is included.

## **2.2 Sources of information used for the Objectives and Plan**

- **Equality and Human Rights Commission - *Is Wales Fairer?* Report**  
*Is Wales Fairer?* 2023 identifies the key inequalities in Wales focusing on the 9 protected characteristics. It offered a framework for analysis to identify and address the most pressing and persistent equality challenges facing Wales and to identify and shape initial draft Objectives.
- **Swansea Council's Corporate (Well-being) Plan**  
This plan sets out Swansea Council's well-being objectives and the steps we will take to achieve them. Many of these steps already address equality and diversity issues. The close correlation between plans and Objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan is evident as we pursue closer integration between the two sets of plans and objectives and the steps to meet them.
- **Swansea Public Services Board Local Well-being Plan**  
This document sets out Local Well-being objectives such as Stronger Communities with a sense of pride and belonging with steps that align with equality and diversity priorities for Swansea.
- **Previous Strategic Equality Plans and Reviews**  
We looked at what worked and what could be improved in previous Strategic Equality Plans and Reviews.
- **The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015**  
Swansea Council applied the sustainable development principle's five ways of working to develop a Strategic Equality Plan that helps create a

more equal, prosperous, healthier Swansea of cohesive communities with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

- **The Social Services and Well-being Act (2014)**  
This legislation seeks to improve the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support. The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership's Area plan and Population Assessment has influenced the development of the Strategic Equality Objectives.
- **Swansea Equalities Statistics Review 2023**  
The Council collated an evidence base of statistical information relating to protected characteristics in a Swansea context. The commentary and analysis helps us to understand the diversity of Swansea's population, how it has changed and (as far as possible) how it may develop in the future. [Equalities Statistics Review - Swansea](#)

## 2.3 Engagement and Consultation

2.3.1 The engagement and consultation process involved all stakeholders in the Plan's development.

### Stage 1: Early Engagement and evidence

2.3.2 We asked the two following questions as part of our extensive early engagement;

- What do you think are the most significant inequality issues which affect people in Swansea?
- What actions do you think the Council can take to address significant inequality issues in Swansea?

We held a number of engagement sessions online and published a survey, in order to gather people's thoughts on the above questions. These questions were also included within our wider Residents survey. We visited a number of existing networks and forums across the city, including the Council's LGBTQ+ forum, Disability Liaison Group and asylum seekers and refugee groups. See Engagement report for full details Appendix B.

2.3.3 We looked at recent engagement and consultations that have happened in Swansea Council relating to equality and diversity. They have been used to inform this plan, including Swansea's Human Rights Engagement Report (2022), the Council's Corporate Plan – consultation results (2023) and the Residents Survey (2024).

2.3.4 We also looked at the evidence provided by 'Is Wales Fairer?' 2023 report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales, and the Census data 2021.

## Stage 2 – Consultation on draft Human Rights and Equality Objectives

- 2.3.5 The draft Objectives were shared with the public and with stakeholders so they could replace, remove, change and add so we could make sure the most appropriate objectives for Swansea were identified. The engagement also enabled more detailed information on actions relating to the objectives to be collected so that in line with the National Principles for Public Engagement people could be genuinely involved at the earliest stage and throughout the process.
- 2.3.6 The outcomes of this consultation were largely positive and supported our draft objectives. Comments received will also be used for continued action plan development and will be reviewed by the Strategic Board.

### 3. Human Rights and Equality Objectives and Plan

- 3.1 Six Objectives were identified following the review of information and evidence and after engagement with the public and stakeholders:

**Tackling Poverty:** Working together to address the causes and effect of poverty on people and communities, eradicating inequalities for those who are affected by poverty.

**Vulnerable Children and Families:** Understanding what matters to children and families and working together to find creative solutions.

**Tackling Discrimination:** Reduce inequalities and barriers that exist within our communities and services.

**Domestic Abuse and Violence:** We want everyone who lives in Swansea to be safe, happy and healthy. We want them to be free from all types of abuse.

**Equality and Human Rights:** To work with our partners to create and embrace a vision of a vibrant, diverse, fair and safe city where everyone counts.

**Workforce:** To be an inclusive and diverse workforce.

- 3.2 A brief summary of the Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28:
- Section 1 - outlines the purpose of the plan and how we became a Human Rights City.
  - Section 2 - describes the legislative context and how we meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and our human rights principled approach.
  - Section 3 - contains a summary of the demographic profile of Swansea based on the latest available information.

- Section 4 - describes how we developed our Human Rights and Equality Objectives,
  - Section 5 – outlines our Human Rights and Strategic Equality Objectives 2024-28, including the commitments the council will make to deliver them.
  - Section 6 – describes the way we will monitor and evaluate progress of the plan and the importance of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs).
- 3.3 A copy of the Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28 is attached at Appendix A.

#### **4. Action Plan**

- 4.1 The Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28 will be supported by an action plan which will detail how we will deliver each objective and accompanying commitments within the plan.
- 4.2 This action plan is still in development and will be completed following the adoption of the plan. This is to ensure that all engagement and consultation is fully considered to inform the actions.
- 4.3 The action plan will be reviewed and agreed by the Strategic Board and published on our website by the end of April. Each action will be subject to its own integrated assessment process.

#### **5. Monitoring and Reviewing the Plan**

- 5.1 The Human Rights and Strategic Equality plan 2024/28 will be assessed annually by departments who will report on the progress made against their actions. The delivery of this plan will also be assessed the Council's Strategic Equalities and Future Generations Board, which will identify areas for policy review and development.
- 5.2 The action plan progress will be reported on as part of the annual review. We will also use this opportunity to reflect on our future actions and amend if needed.

#### **6. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

6.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

6.3 The Human Rights and Strategic Equality plan 2024/28 was screened for relevance for an IIA. The screening determined that a full IIA was not needed at this point. Given the nature of this plan the overall impact on people and communities is positive. The objectives and commitments within the plan were directly informed from engagement with our communities and deliver on issues that matter to them. The positive impacts will be most seen within the delivery of our action plan. Each action will be subject to its own IIA process.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A	Human Rights and Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28
Appendix B	Integrated Impact Assessment.
Appendix C	Engagement Report