

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Cabinet
11th July 2017

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor James Evans
Portfolio Holder for Equalities

SUBJECT: PCC Strategic Equality Plan 2016/20:
October - March progress report of 2016/17.

REPORT FOR: Information / Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report and the appendices is to communicate the progress made during the last 6 months (Oct 16 – Mar 17) against Powys County Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020. It also includes the Council's annual employment information report in relation to equalities and end of year review of the objectives, actions and measures.
- 1.2 It provides information on how the local authority is meeting its requirements in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and more specifically, the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

2. Background and Additional Information.

- 2.1 The aim of the public sector equality duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. It is an integral and important part of the mechanisms for ensuring the fulfilment of the aims of the Equality Act 2010. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for all.
- 2.2 In exercising their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 2.3 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality of opportunity in the second aim involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

2.4 The Act describes fostering good relations in the third aim as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Meeting the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others, as long as this does not contravene other provisions within the Act.

2.5 The nine protected characteristics are:

Characteristic	Description
sex/gender	being male or female
age	being a certain age; but often being younger or older
race	being a particular colour, ethnic origin, national origin or nationality
religion or belief	having a recognised religion or belief or a lack of belief
pregnancy and maternity	women who are pregnant or on maternity leave
disability	all disabled people, both physically and mentally
gender reassignment	people who change their gender from the one assigned at birth
sexual orientation	how people feel as well as act, in respect of people of the same sex, people of the opposite sex, or both sexes
marriage and civil partnership	being in a marriage or civil partnership

2.6 Powys County Councils Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 can be found by clicking on the following link:

[*Equalities & Fairness at the Council*](#)

3. Annual Reporting Requirements.

3.1 In order to show how the authority is meeting its specific duties under the act we will first look at the progress and evaluation of the equality objectives over the last 6 months. Second our employment information.

3.2.1 The attached appendix a presents the progress against each of the seven equality objectives and the associated strategic actions to deliver each objective over the last 6 months. Each action is listed with accountable owners and then progress against each of these actions evaluated using the Achievements, Issues, Actions approach and an

appropriate 'BRAG' status (Blue = completed; Green = On schedule; Amber = Some minor issues; Red = Some major issues or concerns) awarded.

3.2.2 The following table provides an overview of the progress made to fulfilling each of the authority's objectives and provides a breakdown of the number of actions / measures that were red, amber, green or blue.

2015-16 Year end position					
Objective	Blue	Green	Amber	Red	No Data
1	1	5	1	1	
2		3	2		1
3		5	4	1	
4		4		1	
5	1	7	1		
6		1			
7		2			
Total	2	27	8	3	1

To summarise 2 actions have been completed, 27 actions are on schedule, 8 are behind schedule, 3 are off schedule and there was 1 nil returns. All actions owners whose actions that have not progressed to plan have been asked to provide actions to address slippage.

3.2.3 Below are the objectives that have a BRAG status of red.

Objective	Action	BRAG
1 Close attainment gaps in education.	Support schools in ensuring that Personal Education Plans (PEP) for Looked After Children are of good quality, ensuring effective use of the LAC Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDP).	
	Issues identified this reporting period	
	The transfer of responsibility of PEPs back to social workers (as is their legal responsibility), has resulted in a steep reduction in the number of completed PEPs. The LAC PDG is funding 'Education Support Worker' posts to support looked after children in school at a time of turbulence or disruption, and is delivering positive results. Attachment training has been delivered across the county and highly valued by staff. Offers of training to social workers on PEPs has been offered through the year with little take up.	

Objective	Action	BRAG
3 Improve living conditions in cohesive communities.	Implementing night stop within the Local Authority.	
	Issues identified this reporting period	
	A meeting took place on 27th March 2017 and	

	it was agreed this is a service for 16-25 year olds not just care leavers. The Senior Manager has been actioned with taking it to the service's management team to discuss whether or not this is to be progressed further. Need to either jointly commission with Adults and housing or "outsource".	
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Objective	Action	BRAG
	Pilot and promote key scrutiny meetings via webcasting.	
	<p>There are currently a number of matters being discussed with the contractor relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Clarification of the numbers of hours purchased for webcasting and ongoing costs for webcasting hours in future; (ii) Installation of an unit so that translations (which can be heard in the Chamber) can also be heard on the live webcast. 	
4 Increase access to justice and encourage democratic participation.	<p>In addition whilst the Council when it decided to proceed with webcasting indicated that it would wish to webcast Council, Cabinet, Planning and some scrutiny committee meetings, this has not been confirmed with Council since webcasting was implemented. There is also a resource implication for the Council in supporting an increased level of webcasting and the Council will need to identify the funding to make these resources available.</p> <p>The recent Welsh Government White Paper on Reforming Local Government indicates that Councils should webcast all meetings. However there is no clarity as yet as to what the actual requirement will be until the Draft Bill is published in 2018.</p>	

Further detail of performance can be found in the appendix a.

3.3 Appendix b presents Powys County Councils employment information as of the 31st March 2017.

3.3.1 We are generally meeting the duty however we are unable to report on the protected group gender reassignment. Employees are encouraged to disclose and be supported in terms of our Equality policy statement and wider workplace equality initiatives; however, nil reports to date. We are unable to report on employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application as the authorisation of going on training courses isn't managed or recorded centrally. It is a verbal agreement between an employee and their manager. We are also unable to report on employees who have left the authority's employment who were pregnant or on maternity at the time.

4. End of year review of the objectives, actions and measures

Having reviewed the plan with services there are no changes to the objectives however there are some minor amendments and deletions to the actions and measures. Please see appendix c.

5. Training

5.1 In October 2016 it was reported to Cabinet that the one area of concern from an internal audit was training and as a result 6 improvement actions agreed.

5.2 44 face to face training sessions have been scheduled for this year for staff. The new eLearning package has been written and is currently being built by Powys Skills Academy after a long delay. Specific training courses have been set up purely for domiciliary care and other Social Services staff. New members training has been scheduled.

6. Proposal

The cabinet note the employment information report, SEP progress to date and areas where work is ongoing. Cabinet agreed 2017 review.

7. Options Considered / Available

7.1 Delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan and the annual employment information report in relation to equalities is a statutory requirement.

8. Preferred Choice and Reasons

8.1 Reporting progress on a half yearly basis was considered to be the best option for providing visibility of progress to plan and ensuring the council meets its statutory requirements.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1 Is an impact assessment required? No in relation to the information.
Yes in relation to SEP.

9.2 If yes is it attached? Yes

Equalities is a cross cutting theme that needs to be considered by all services and policies.

The plan's impact assessment was submitted in May 2016 and updated a year later in which the summary stated 'The 16-20 SEP will ensure we meet our statutory requirement but also help the authority to create an equal society that protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.'

10. Corporate Improvement Plan

- 10.1 The council's guiding principles are based on the well-being of future generations. The purpose of this report links directly to the Corporate Improvement Plan as it is one of these guiding principles 'A more equal Wales'. The report informs members, council employees, citizens of Powys and other stakeholders about the progress made against the Strategic Equality Plan. The council has an annual statutory duty to report on the Strategic Equality Plan.

11. Local Member(s)

- 11.1 This is the council's Strategic Equality Plan and is applicable to all areas of the county.

12. Other Front Line Services

- 12.1 Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? Yes

The appropriate front line services have informed the report.

13. Communications

- 13.1 Have Communications seen a copy of this report? Yes

No proactive communications action required.

14. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

- 14.1 Legal recognises the obligations required under this legislation and has no comment to make on its implementation within the authority at this stage

- 14.2 Finance - The contents of the report have been noted
- 14.3 Corporate Property (if appropriate)
- 14.4 HR (if appropriate)
- 14.5 ICT (if appropriate)

15. Scrutiny

Has this report been scrutinised? No but the SEP 16-20 was in March 2016.

- 15.1 All but one of Scrutiny's recommendations were accepted. The decision was made not to include targets against the measures in the SEP and instead refer to their source e.g. Service Improvement Plan, Hearts and Minds delivery plan to ensure accuracy.

16. Statutory Officers

- 16.1 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by finance.

The view of the Monitoring Officer is that: The Strategic Plan on equality is both essential and a legal requirement, progress of which must be monitored with a successful conclusion in mind.

17. Members' Interests

- 17.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

18. Future Status of the Report

Members are invited to consider the future status of this report and whether it can be made available to the press and public either immediately following the meeting or at some specified point in the future.

The view of the Monitoring Officer is that:

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
The cabinet note the employment information report, SEP progress to date and areas where work is ongoing. Cabinet agreed 2017 review.	Reason for Recommendation: To comply with statutory requirements and good business practice.

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y / N	Within Budget:	Y / N

Relevant Local Member(s):	
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Individual monitoring reports over the plans duration.
Trent equalities data.
Services AIAs.