

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**Strategic Overview Board
28th June 2016**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor John Powell
Portfolio Holder for Equality**

**SUBJECT: PCC Strategic Equality Plan 2012/16: October -
March progress report of 2015/16 and 4 year
evaluation.**

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Summary.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report and the appendices is to communicate the progress made during the last 6 months (Oct 15 – Mar 16) against Powys County Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2012 – 2016. It also provides a 4 year evaluation of the objectives and underlying actions from the start of the plan to the end.
- 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.
- 1.3 Out of the 10 objectives in the SEP by the end of 4 years 12 actions were completed, 23 actions were on course, 3 behind schedule, 3 red and 2 discontinued.
- 1.4 The available evidence indicates the first SEP has been partly successful in meeting its objectives. There has been some positive work with beneficial results. Some actions evolved during the length of the 4 year plan but still delivered improvement whilst some of the commitments are behind schedule and not yet completed and others have struggled due to pressure on resources.

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 2012-2016 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 month. Second their progress and evaluation over the duration of the plan. Third our employment information.

3.2.1 The attached appendix a presents the progress against each of the ten 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		8			
2		4			
3		1		1	
4	n/a – Completed in previous years.				
5		2			
6		4	1		
7		1			
8		3	2		
9				1	
10				1	
Total	0	23	3	3	0

To summarise 23 actions are on schedule, 3 are behind schedule, 3 are off schedule. 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
3 - Transport: We will, "Assist disadvantaged groups to access transport", by:	Developing innovative transport projects in the geographic areas where the most significant disadvantage exists in Powys.	
	Issues identified this reporting period	
	This action has not been delivered due to lack of financial resource.	

Objective	Action	BRAG
9 - Physical Activity: We will, "Increase the number of people from low socio-economic groups who participate in healthy physical activity, by:	Supporting the 'Access to Fitness' scheme through access to transport.	
	Issues identified this reporting period	
	An extensive review of public transport routes has been carried out in consultation with the public and findings presented. However the Authority has not been able to support the 'Access to Fitness' scheme through access to transport due to lack of financial resource. On 1st July 2015 leisure services was transferred to the Council's new delivery partner Freedom Leisure. Freedom Leisure will continue to offer the Access to Fitness Scheme on behalf of the Council.	

Objective	Action	BRAG
Training and Equipping: We will, "Train our staff and Elected members, so that they are equipped within their role, to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010", by:	Training our most senior staff, senior managers and elected Members on 'Leadership and management of equality improvement'.	
	Issues identified this reporting period	
	Members had a training session on 24th April, 2015 delivered by Show Racism the Red Card. During Q4 a master class 'equality & diversity' session was held by Diverse Cymru however only 1 internal staff member and 4 external participants attended. The team has developed an equalities awareness jigsaw which is due to go live via net consent soon. This is an activity designed to bring Equality & Diversity to life, engaging learners in imaginative ways and raising their awareness. Participation is very low and needs to be reinforced by line managers.	

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

- 3.3 Appendix Bi and Bii reports the progress and evaluation of the 10 equality objectives since the plan was approved and implemented in 2012. The 4 year evaluation provides an overview of the progress and what we have achieved and where we have not been as successful as hoped.
- 3.3 Appendix c presents Powys County Councils employment information as of the 31st March 2016.
- 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 also 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.

4. One Powys Plan.

4.1 The purpose of this report links directly to the One Powys Plan as it is one of its guiding principles. The report informs members, council employees, citizens of Powys and other stakeholders about the progress made against the Strategic Equality Plan.

4.2 The council has an annual statutory duty to report on the Strategic Equality Plan.

5. Options Considered/Available.

5.1 Delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan is a statutory requirement. Visibility of progress during previous years has been quite light and only assessed on an annual basis.

6. Preferred Choice and Reasons.

6.1 Reporting 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.

7. Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc.

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

8. Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing.

8.1 Objective 1 of the Strategic Equality Plan Education and training: We will "Improve outcomes for children and young people (0-19) who underachieve within the education system"

8.2 Objective 2 of the Strategic Equality Plan Employment: We will, "Improve employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups"

8.3 Objective 2 of the Strategic Equality Plan Power and Voice: We will, "Increase disadvantaged people's confidence and access to political processes"

8.4 Objective 5 of the Strategic Equality Plan is Physical Security: We will, "Improve referral rates for domestic abuse and disability-related harassment"

9. Local Member(s).

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

10. Other Front Line Services.

10.1 The appropriate front line services have informed the report.

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

11.1 The appropriate services have informed the report.

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

Finance – The contents of the report have been noted.

12. Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc.

12.1 This reports progress against the councils Strategic Equality Plan and linkages with key partners exist where appropriate.

13. Corporate Communications.

No proactive communications action required.

14. Statutory Officers.

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.

15. Members' Interests.

15.1 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.

16. Future Status of the Report.

16.1 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.

Recommendation: The cabinet note progress to date and areas where work is ongoing.	Reason for Recommendation: To comply with statutory requirements and good business practice.

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

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

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Beti-Jane Ingram	01597 826411		Bets.Ingram@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Individual monitoring reports over the plans duration.