

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 23-24

MEETING: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 11TH JULY 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an opportunity to examine progress against the commitments made in the Strategic Equality Plan 20-24 during the period March 2023 to March 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members scrutinise the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Monitoring Report.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Tackling inequality is one of the Council's biggest priorities. If we are to achieve our ambition, it is important that we value and make the most of the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or any of the other characteristics that make us who we are.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced in April 2011. Within its specific duties is the requirement to publish an annual report on the council's performance against the commitments made in its Strategic Equality Plan.

The Council approved a new Strategic Equality Plan and objectives in March of this year, covering the period April 2024 to March 2028. The first progress report against those objectives will be received in July 2025. In the meantime, this annual monitoring report covers the final year of the 2020 – 2024 strategy.

- 3.2 The objectives in place during that period were:

- Give children the best possible start in life overcoming barriers to attainment and opportunity.
- Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity.
- Create cohesive communities.
- To provide services that are accessible to our public and support our workforce.
- Create a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Reduce the gender pay gap.

3.3 Here are some highlights from the year:

- We have developed the Building Stronger Families Team to work with families in a voluntary capacity around family goals and outcomes. This has resulted in children and families receiving preventative support in situations where initial concerns have been identified, helping to divert the need for statutory intervention.
- We have introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for Monmouthshire care leavers, as long as they meet the basic criteria of the person specification. This is continuing. We have the same scheme in place for disabled people. We have also achieved level 2 of the Department of Work and Pensions Disability Confident Employer scheme.
- Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) has continued to be commemorated annually in Monmouthshire with presentations and guest speakers. The most recent event, held on Saturday 27th January in line with HMD, was hosted by Friends of Monmouth Library and supported by the Library Service and Monmouth Comprehensive School.
- This year saw the new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) introduced around the UK - Significant progress has been made improving the accessibility of the council's website. We now track the progress of this project monthly using the free Silk Tide index tool. Our continued updates to the site see us improving month by month.
- We introduced the Apprentice Graduate and Intern Strategy (AGI) to support and increase the number of opportunities across the council. Work continues on this as an integral part of strategic workforce planning.

3.4 The monitoring report has been attached as an appendix to this covering report.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The updated actions within the Monitoring Report are presented in a way that enables the reader to understand the impacts of actions taken within the year to March 24. The Strategic Equality Plan is by its very nature a plan that is looking to address, mitigate and positively address identified issues in Monmouthshire that have an adverse impact upon people or groups of people with protected characteristics.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

We are required to publish the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Monitoring Report.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

N/A

7. REASONS:

To comply with legislation

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

9. CONSULTEES:

The Monitoring Report provides the roles of officers within Monmouthshire County Council who have contributed.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

11. [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 \(monmouthshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk)

12. AUTHOR:

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13. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Is my report exempt?

In some instances it may be necessary to submit a report to a committee but withhold the whole report, or part of that report, due to the sensitive nature of information contained within it.

There are specific circumstances in which a report may be considered exempt which are set in legislation. When writing your report bear in mind the following circumstances to consider whether your report should be exempt;

Local Government Act, Schedule 12A, Part 4;

12. Information relating to a particular individual
13. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
14. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
15. Information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
16. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
17. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b. To make an order or direction under any enactment
18. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

If you are unsure if the report should be exempt or not you should contact Democratic Services or the Monitoring Officer for further advice and guidance. The principal to bear in mind however is that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

If your report is to be exempt you should let Democratic Services know as soon as possible if you have not already done so when adding the item to the forward plan of the relevant committee.

When submitting your report to Democratic Services for publication with the agenda you must also include an exemption certificate which give details as to why the report is exempt and not for publication. This certificate will be publicly available with the agenda in place of the report so the reasoning for the exemption should be made clear on this form. The exemption certificate is available overleaf.

Further information on definitions and exemptions is available within the Local Government Act at the following link; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/schedule/12A>



**SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS**

Meeting and Date of Meeting: **Insert date and meeting**

Report: **Insert report title**

Author: **Insert author**

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the background paper for the report referred to above and make the following recommendation to the Proper Officer:-

Exemptions applying to the report:

[Enter the section and reason of the exemption, as defined by the Local Government Act set out above e.g – This report will be exempt under paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A – Information relating to a particular individual]

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

Prejudice which would result if the information were disclosed:

[Give a brief indication of what information would be disclosed and the impact of its disclosure]

My view on the public interest test is as follows:

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:

Maintain exemption from publication in relation to report

Date: **Insert date**

Signed: **Signed by report author**

Post: **Insert post**

I accept/I do not accept the recommendation made above

Signed: **[Signed by Chief Officer / Head of Service / Chief Executive]**

Date: **Insert Date**