

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-28

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 29 February 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek approval of the authority's Strategic Equality Plan and objectives for the period 2024-28.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council approve the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Tackling inequality is one of the Council's biggest priorities as set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. It is vital that we value and make the most of the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, gender, race, sexual orientation of any of the other characteristics that make us who we are.

- 3.2 The production of a Strategic Equality Plan every four years is also a legal requirement placed on us by the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects people from unlawful discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It covers 9 protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation.

- 3.3 To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Act is underpinned by specific regulations which require public bodies to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty.

It also requires us to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between disabled people and people who are not disabled, in particular, the need to take steps to take account of disabled people's requirements.

- 3.4 We also use this plan to better support those who are socio-economically disadvantaged in terms of income and/or status in line with the Socio-economic Duty placed on public bodies in Wales.

- 3.5 Every four years we produce a Strategic Equality Plan setting out what the evidence tells us about inequality in the county, why it matters to us and the actions we'll take to make a difference to people's lives. We use this plan to set our strategic equality

objectives. These add greater detail to complement and build on the commitments we have made in the Community and Corporate Plan.

3.6 The objectives being proposed are:

- Objective 1: Give every child the best start in life.
- Objective 2: Support the creation of fair employment and good work for everyone.
- Objective 3: Work with partners and residents to build inclusive and cohesive communities.
- Objective 4: Expand our provision of community-based services that extend people's healthy life expectancy.
- Objective 5: Ensure our services are accessible to the public.
- Objective 6: Ensure we have a diverse workforce and a fully inclusive workplace.
- Objective 7: Reduce the gender pay gap.

3.7 The plan has a section for each of these objectives. Each section contains the same headings:

- why this matters to us;
- the evidence;
- the protected characteristics and other factors the objectives will affect; and,
- the proposed actions we will take.

3.8 It sets out the things we will do to contribute to national action plans including: The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan; LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales; Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Action Plan and the Action on Disability Action Plan.

3.9 The plan has been subject to a four-week public consultation and policy development scrutiny by the People Scrutiny Committee. The findings were used to shape the document ahead of full council. The Strategic Equality Plan is part of the policy framework in the Constitution and is therefore a decision reserved for full Council.

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

4.1 The objectives and actions within the plan are presented in a way that enables the reader to see the potential impact on groups with protected characteristics. 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. The Plan will also have a positive effect on all of the national well-being goals.

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To ensure that the authority complies with the legal requirement to produce a strategic equality plan no later than the 2nd of April 2024.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The plan identifies a range of measures and milestones. These will be used to produce an annual monitoring report each year. This will be considered by Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The plan can be afforded within the authority's existing budgets. Any requests for additional funding will be subject to individual decisions in accordance with the constitution.

8. CONSULTEES

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
People Scrutiny Committee

The plan has been developed following two informal sessions with Cabinet and the Strategic Leadership Team which have helped shape the objectives and actions. It was subject to a four-week public consultation and policy development scrutiny by the People Scrutiny Committee. These have helped shape the final document. The proposed objectives are unchanged as the vast majority of those who have engaged during this time were supportive of the proposals. It is recognised that we need to do more to engage the community in this work and this will continue over the next twelve months to ensure that the plan can be brought to life.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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