



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY
BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC EQUALITY
PLAN FOR 2016-2020**

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SECTION 1

FOREWORD

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is pleased to introduce its second Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2016-2020. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to improve equal opportunities within our community in service delivery, employment, commissioning, leadership and working in partnership.

The activities in the Action Plan of this Strategic Equality Plan clearly show our strong commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations between people visiting, living and working in Merthyr Tydfil.

As a Council, we have a duty to tackle and challenge discrimination and disadvantage so that people feel safe from harassment and everyone has access to high quality services. This Strategic Equality Plan will help us to ensure that we focus on the positive outcomes for people in Merthyr Tydfil and that our services are accessible and delivered effectively and efficiently.

Our Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil is “a place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.”

The Council will work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer, and we will work in partnership to reduce inequalities and to improve the well-being of the County Borough.

The Council will use its leadership role to promote equality and diversity and share ideas and good practice with partners and other service providers. We will continue to refine and develop our services, including respective monitoring systems, to help us gain a better understanding of our staff and the wider local communities and to enable us to meet everyone’s diverse needs.

Councillor Brendan Toomey
Leader of the Council

Gareth Chapman
Chief Executive

Councillor Ernie Galsworthy
Council’s Equalities Champion

The Council and its Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil

Merthyr Tydfil is situated in the Heads of the Valleys Region with an area of around 11,100 hectares. Approximately one fifth of the County Borough lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north, leaving some 8,668 hectares of land under the planning control of the County Borough Council.

Merthyr Tydfil has a population of approximately 59,065 of which, approximately 44,000 reside in the main town of Merthyr Tydfil which functions as the main commercial, retail and service centre of the County Borough and the Heads of the Valleys Region. As such, the main town of Merthyr Tydfil contains administrative headquarters (e.g. the County Borough Council), the primary shopping areas, the majority of employment opportunities, a hospital, and many other higher order services and facilities which serve surrounding settlements. The remainder of the population is distributed amongst eight interdependent settlements situated further south along the Taff and Taff Bargoed river valleys.

Merthyr Tydfil fulfils a key strategic role at the centre of the Heads of the Valleys region, benefiting from high levels of accessibility through its location at the intersection of the A470 (T) and A465 (T) strategic transport corridors in the north, and the A470 (T) and A472 strategic transport corridors in the south. The County Borough lies just 25 minutes north of Cardiff and the M4 corridor. Currently 1,499,547 people and 679,400 jobs are within the South East Wales Region.

The Council operates Leader and Cabinet executive arrangements supported by five Cabinet members. The Council has 11 electoral divisions which are represented by 33 elected Councillors. A Corporate Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Chief Officers, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer oversee the strategic management of the Council's business. The Council employs circa 2,500 employees.

Our Vision for Merthyr Tydfil is a place where:

- People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions.
- People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life.
- People visit, enjoy and return.

Our Ambition is to be:

- **Top performing**; characterised by good and excellent services.
- **Sustainable**; effectively deploying physical, human and financial resources.
- **An authority with a good reputation** for securing improvements for local people.

In order to fulfil our ambition we are securing organisation wide quality improvement by:

- Developing a performance culture that is client centred and focussed on delivering improved outcomes.
- Improving internal and external engagement and communication.
- Improving our use of information for analysis and quality improvement.
- Developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of our workforce.
- Working effectively with others to provide effective, efficient and economical services.

The things that matter are captured across the following seven key Priorities:

- Raising standards of attainment.
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable children.
- Economic Development.
- Employability.
- Promoting independence.
- Promoting active lifestyles.
- A sustainable environment.

And delivered through 4 Themes:

- Raising Standards.
- Improving Wellbeing.
- Economic Growth.
- Sustainable Environment

Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil

The Council is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and social justice and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in service delivery and employment.

Our Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil is:

“A place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.”

The Council will work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer, and we will work in partnership to reduce inequalities and to improve the well-being of the County Borough.

Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

This Strategic Equality Plan sets out:

- The Council's approach to:
 - Equality and diversity in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.
 - Equality and diversity to the workforce of the Council.

- An Action Plan, which demonstrates how the Council will manage, plan and mainstream equality and diversity across the Council.

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan ensures that the Local Authority focuses on the outcomes that matter to the community and people who use Council services; and that services are accessible and delivered effectively.

The Action Plan in this Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council's Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 which are discussed in further detail in Section 4 of this Plan.

We are also required to prepare and publish an annual report every year noting progress across all aspects of our equalities work.

SECTION 3

EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens the law, removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The majority of the Act came into force on 1st October 2010.

The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the 'general duty'), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality. This came into force on 5th April 2011.

The new general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age.
- Gender reassignment.
- Sex.
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality.
- Disability.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Sexual orientation.
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief.

It applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

What is the general duty?

The aim of the general 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. 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.

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.

Specific duties in Wales

The broad purpose of the specific duties in Wales is to help listed bodies in their performance of the general duty and to aid transparency.

What are the specific duties?

The specific duties in Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. The specific duties in Wales came into force on 6th April 2011.

The specific duties in Wales cover:

- Objectives.
- Strategic Equality Plans.
- Engagement.
- Assessing impact.
- Equality information.
- Employment information.
- Pay differences.
- Staff training.
- Procurement.
- Annual reporting.
- Publishing.
- Welsh Ministers' reporting.
- Review.
- Accessibility.

What the duty requires on Equality Objectives

A listed body in Wales must:

- Publish objectives to meet the general duty.
- Publish a statement setting out the steps it has taken or intends to take to meet the objectives and how long it expects to take to meet each objective.
- Make appropriate arrangements to monitor progress towards meeting its objectives and to monitor the effectiveness of its approach.
- Give appropriate consideration to relevant equality information it holds when considering what its equality objectives should be.

Objectives on pay difference

A listed body in Wales must:

- Have due regard to the need to have objectives to address the causes of any pay differences that seem reasonably likely to be related to any of the protected characteristics.
- Publish an equality objective to address any gender pay gap identified or else publish reasons why it has not done so.

Review and revision of objectives

A listed body in Wales must:

- Review all its equality objectives at least once every four years.

SECTION 4

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

As a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the Council agreed and adopted a Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2012-16. The Act and Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to review its Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives at least every four years.

Council's Strategic Equality Plan Objectives for 2012-2016

The Council's Equality Objectives for 2012-2016 are listed in the table below along with the related Themes:

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Equality Objectives</u>
Employment	<u>Equality Objective 1</u> Improve employment and training opportunities for young people and other under represented groups.
Access	<u>Equality Objective 2</u> Better access to quality services and facilities.
Engagement	<u>Equality Objective 3</u> Improve community cohesion for all members of society by fostering good relations between protected groups.
Hate Crime	<u>Equality Objective 4</u> Improve reporting of hate crime and domestic violence and satisfaction with how it is handled.
Gender/Equal Pay	<u>Equality Objective 5</u> Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Progress on delivering these Equality Objectives is reported as part of the Council's Annual Equality Report that is considered and approved by Cabinet.

As part of the review of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2012-2016 (which is discussed in more detail in Section 6) it was identified that Equality Objectives 1 to 4 were being addressed by the following plans, reports and work streams listed below. Therefore, to avoid duplication in monitoring and reporting on these Equality Objectives, they have not been included in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020.

Equality Objective 5 (Gender/Equal Pay) will continue to be included in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020 and is discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Equality Objectives 1 to 4 for 2012-2016 are being addressed by the following Plans, Reports and Work Streams:

- Council's Corporate Plan.
- Council's Themes on a page:
 - Raising Standards.
 - Improving Wellbeing.

- Economic Growth Plan.
- A Sustainable Environment.
- Merthyr Tydfil's Single Integrated Plan.
- Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan.
- Welsh Government Domestic Abuse Service Delivery Plan.
- Cwm Taf Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum – Joint Strategic Plan.
- Annual Report (Annual Council Reporting Framework) to Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales.
- Work streams for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Council's Strategic Equality Plan Objectives for 2016-2020

As part of the review of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan it was identified that an Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil was essential in order to set out the Local Authority's Ambition to eliminate discrimination / harassment, advance equality and foster good relations. The following Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil has been developed:

“A place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.”

The Council will work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer, and we will work in partnership to reduce inequalities and to improve the well-being of the County Borough.

This Vision will be delivered through the following Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 that have been identified as priorities for the Council as part of the review of the Strategic Equality Plan. These Objectives are supported by evidence and relevant information which can be found in more detail in Section 7.

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Equality Objectives</u>
Community Engagement	<u>Equality Objective 1</u> Put citizens' voices at the heart of local decision making so that their contribution is understood, recognised and used to help the Council understand and respond to the needs of its communities.
Equality Awareness Raising	<u>Equality Objective 2</u> To support and facilitate Equalities training and learning opportunities so that staff at all levels, Councillors and partners recognise and incorporate Equalities as part of their role.
Understanding our Staff and Communities	<u>Equality Objective 3</u> Develop robust monitoring systems to collect, collate, monitor and publish equalities data on our employees and customers, which will help the Council to ensure that it provides fair and accessible services.
Gender/Equal Pay	<u>Equality Objective 4</u> Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

These Equality Objectives were written in partnership with Council Officers and partners, and will be delivered through a detailed Action Plan, which can be found in Appendix 1.

Each of the Equality Objectives is structured around the following headings in the Action Plan:

- Objective.
- Reasons for choosing the Objective.
- Outcome(s).
- Impact on Protected Characteristic Groups.
- Measures of Success, Data Source and Lead Officer(s) / Partners.
- SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective, Lead Officer(s) / Partners and Delivery Date.
- Key Risks/Barriers to implementing/delivering the Objective, Action(s) to Mitigate Risks and Risk Owner(s).

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Council's Vision and Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 will contribute to delivering the seven Well-being Goals (shown in the diagram below) that are set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular 'A more equal Wales' and 'A Wales of cohesive communities'.



The table in Appendix 2 demonstrates how the Council's Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 link to the following:

- The seven Well-being Goals and Sustainable Development Principles that are set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

SECTION 5

GENDER/EQUAL PAY OBJECTIVE

The Council has continued to identify the following Gender/Equal Pay Objective for 2016-2020, which is supported by an Action Plan in Appendix 1:

- Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

The Council has identified this as an Equality Objective because:

- The National Employers are currently looking at the National Living Wage implications with a view that the pay spines may require remodelling.
- There is a need to reduce the gender pay gap.
- It makes the Council more attractive as an employer to the community.
- It makes the Council more attractive for existing employees to remain with the Council.
- As more national discussions and changes are coming up we need to ensure we retain fairness e.g. National Minimum Wage, gender pay gap.

By delivering this Objective the Council will be able to demonstrate that:

- We have fair, open and transparent pay, grading, remuneration and recruitment strategies and plans so that the reduction in the pay gap is achieved.
- Pay and grading structures and recruitment practices in the Council treat all staff and applicants equally, regardless of gender.

Strategic Equality Plan Task and Finish Group

To support the review of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives for 2012-2016 a Task and Finish Group was established.

Membership

The Task and Finish Group consisted of the Council's Equalities Champion, Council Officers and key stakeholders that represent hard to reach groups in the Community.

These key stakeholders were from The Big Lottery – Community Voice MAGNET Project (Merthyr Achieving Greater Networking and Engagement Together), which provides an opportunity for members of marginalised communities to increase their voice in influencing public service providers policy, planning and delivery processes. The Merthyr Portfolio is made up of the following seven projects, each being led by different voluntary organisations:

1. **Visible** - Bringing together lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons to provide support and promote their voice within Merthyr Tydfil.
2. **Focal Point** - Engaging with migrant workers, facilitating inclusion and cohesion, improving cultural awareness in the wider community.
3. **Bridges** - Building confidence and skills with the Gypsy / Traveller community and creating opportunities for effective engagement with local services.
4. **One Voice** - Advocacy and empowerment for disabled persons to agree collective action and engagement with service providers.
5. **Perthyn (Belonging)** - Intergenerational project between younger and older people living in social housing, focusing on past, present and future housing policies. Delivered in Caedraw, Gurnos and Trelewis.
6. **POSSIB** - Bilingual arts project to engage working aged men, parents and children in the areas of health, well-being, employment and education. Delivered in Northern Communities First Cluster.
7. **Up and Coming** - Youth media project where young reporters convey positive messages about young people and Merthyr Tydfil and communicate with service providers and decision makers.

Impact

Engagement with these key stakeholders provided a co-productive approach to the review of the Strategic Equality Plan and added real value and challenge.

Feedback from the MAGNET Project Leads was very positive in that they felt they had been involved in helping to inform and shape the revised Strategic Equality Plan.

Senior Leadership Team & Change Management Steering Group

As part of the consultation on the Equality Objectives for 2016-2020, the Objectives were shared with the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Change Management Steering Group for consideration, comment and feedback.

Cwm Taf Community Engagement Hub

As part of the consultation and engagement process on the Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 the Council used the Cwm Taf Community Engagement Hub, which gave residents, partners and other organisations the opportunity to have their say on the Objectives.

The communication methods used to raise awareness of the consultation on the Equality Objectives were as follows:

- The Council's corporate website.
- The Council's corporate Facebook page.
- The Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum Facebook page.
- The Council's corporate Twitter account.
- A tweet from @cwmtafconsult.
- Wales Online.
- Merthyr Express.
- Citizens Panel.
- Emails were sent to the following stakeholders and organisations:
 - MAGNET portfolio of projects and their related networks and access groups.
 - Local Service Board partners.
 - Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum.
 - Community First Clusters.
 - Trade Unions.
 - Other Welsh Councils.
 - Older People's Forum.
 - Health and Social Care Forum.
 - Children and Young People's Forum.

SECTION 7

RELEVANT INFORMATION

The following relevant information was used to inform the review of the Strategic Equality Plan for 2012-2016:

- The Council's Annual Equality Monitoring Reports.
- Welsh Local Government Association Equality Improvement Peer Review that was carried out at the Council and a Peer Review follow up that has been undertaken by Internal Audit.
- Engagement with the Strategic Equality Plan Task and Finish Group.
- Equality Objectives from other Welsh Councils and public sector organisations.
- Guidance for the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Reports and data from the MAGNET Portfolio (Merthyr Achieving Greater Networking and Engagement Together).
- Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse Data.
- Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan.
- Is Wales Fairer? Report; Emerging Challenges.
- Disability Wales, Accessible Rail Services Policy, 2010.
- Office for National Statistics, Population Estimates by Local Authority and Age, 2015.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership Statistics, 2011 Census.
- Office for National Statistics, Conception Statistics, 2013.
- Office for National Statistics, Population Estimates by Local Authority and Ethnicity, 2011.
- Religion and Belief Statistics, 2011 Census.
- Integrated Household Survey, Welsh Government, Sexual Identity by Area and Identity Status, 2013.
- Office for National Statistics, Population Estimates by Local Authority and Gender, 2014.
- Office for National Statistics, Welsh Language Speakers, 2014.

The Process

A large part of embedding equality into service delivery is through the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Process. All Cabinet and Council Reports are subject to scrutiny through the EqIA Process. This process is structured to identify any potential inequality. Where an issue is identified consultation and engagement is carried out with service users to gauge views and opinions.

The EqIA form and guidance have been reviewed in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and was rolled out for implementation from April 2015. The form is easier to complete, more focussed and supported by easy to follow step by step guidance.

Once the EqIA form has been completed report authors are required to capture the outcomes in the body of the Cabinet/Council report. If a full EqIA has been completed report authors are also expected to capture the following information in the body of the report:

- The positive impacts.
- The negative impacts.
- Current proposals to address the issues.

No Cabinet or Council Report is allowed to be submitted without being accompanied by a completed EqIA form.

The EqIA process is also an integral part of the Council's Change Management Programme.

Monitoring

Each completed EqIA and Equalities section in the related Cabinet/Council Report are reviewed for quality assurance before being submitted to Cabinet and Council for consideration and approval.

The EqIA also requires report authors to:

- Document the date of the next review of the EqIA; and
- If a review is not required an explanation why.

Publishing Results

All EqIA forms are published on the Council's website along with the Cabinet and Council Reports.

Knowledge and Understanding

Equality Awareness Raising is the related Theme for the following Equality Objective for 2016-2020:

- To support and facilitate Equalities training and learning opportunities so that staff at all levels, Councillors and partners recognise and incorporate Equalities as part of their role.

The Council has identified this as an Equality Objective because:

- The Council's corporate approach to equality training needs to be developed further to improve awareness and understanding of equalities.
- Training and learning is an important means of achieving equality improvement.
- There is a need to ensure that all staff, Councillors and partner organisations are aware and understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

By delivering this Objective the Council will be able to demonstrate that:

- Staff, Councillors and partner organisations receive training on Equalities.
- The Council promotes equalities in the workplace.
- Councillors are empowered with an insight, knowledge and understanding about the different communities they represent in the County Borough.

Performance Assessment

This Equality Objective will be delivered by a series of actions that includes refresher training on the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Objective is also supported by key measures of success to assess whether it has been delivered.

The performance of this Objective will be reported as part of the Council's Annual Equality Report.

Training and Continued Professional Development is a key element of the Council's Performance Management Framework for Performance Appraisals and One to One's. This enables employee training needs for Equalities to be identified and addressed.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 has replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993 and places an obligation on public sector bodies to comply with Welsh Language Standards. Essentially, the Measure has the same requirement as the Welsh Language Act: **to treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality in the provision of services to the public in Wales.**

Welsh Language is a key element of the Council's Equality agenda. The Council promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language by observing the following guiding principles:

- Individuals have the right to deal with us in Welsh.
- Welsh must be positioned to be read first (to the left or above the English)
- Language rights for staff.
- The quality of service and a positive attitude are important.
- We must offer Welsh language services to give language choice.

SECTION 11

STATEMENT ON DELIVERING, PUBLISHING AND MONITORING RESULTS

The Council's Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 will be monitored and delivered through a detailed Action Plan, which is attached as Appendix 1. The Action Plan identifies SMART Actions and Delivery Dates to deliver the Objectives.

The Council will publish an Annual Equality Report that will provide:

- Information on the delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan.
- Progress on the Equality Objectives and Action Plan, and the effectiveness of the steps it is taking to meet those objectives.
- Employment monitoring information.
- Details of relevant information and Equality Impact Assessments.

SECTION 12

CONTACT DETAILS

How to contact us

If you would like a copy of this Strategic Equality Plan in any other format or translated into another language, please contact:

Mr Kerry O'Donovan

Corporate Risk & Equalities Manager
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Castle Street
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8AN
Tel: (01685) 725298
E-Mail: equalities@merthyr.gov.uk
Council's website: www.merthyr.gov.uk

**STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN - ACTION PLAN
FOR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR 2016-2020**

Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil

“A place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.”

The Council will work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer, and we will work in partnership to reduce inequalities and to improve the well-being of the County Borough.

This Vision will be delivered through the following Equality Objectives for 2016-2020:

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Equality Objectives</u>
Community Engagement	<u>Equality Objective 1</u> Put citizens’ voices at the heart of local decision making so that their contribution is understood, recognised and used to help the Council understand and respond to the needs of its communities.
Equality Awareness Raising	<u>Equality Objective 2</u> To support and facilitate Equalities training and learning opportunities so that staff at all levels, Councillors and partners recognise and incorporate Equalities as part of their role.
Understanding our Staff and Communities	<u>Equality Objective 3</u> Develop robust monitoring systems to collect, collate, monitor and publish equalities data on our employees and customers, which will help the Council to ensure that it provides fair and accessible services.
Gender/Equal Pay	<u>Equality Objective 4</u> Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 1

THEME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Objective	<u>Equality Objective 1</u> Put citizens' voices at the heart of local decision making so that their contribution is understood, recognised and used to help the Council understand and respond to the needs of its communities.
Reasons for choosing the Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Cwm Taf Public Engagement Strategy states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement is fundamental to how services are identified, designed, commissioned, delivered and evaluated. • There is a need to achieve the kind of involvement that values people and communities and makes a difference, where everyone of all ages, whoever they are, can say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'My views are needed and considered in shaping services.' ○ 'I can easily get involved in services that affect my community and me if I choose to.' ○ 'My involvement is highly valued and it makes a difference.' • Fundamental to the principles of community engagement is genuine equality of opportunity and access; making it as easy and as welcoming for all people to be included regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and the Welsh language. 2. The Council needs to ensure that protected characteristic groups are consistently considered throughout the development of engagement and consultation work to ensure they have the same opportunities to influence decision-making. The portfolio of Community Voice projects, MAGNET (Merthyr Achieving Greater Networking and Engagement Together), will be an important means of achieving this. The aim of the MAGNET portfolio is to provide an opportunity for members of marginalised communities to increase their voice in influencing public service providers policy, planning and delivery processes. 3. Community engagement and involvement is a key element of the Sustainable Development Principle that forms part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This means involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the Council serves. There are seven Well-being Goals, which include "A more equal Wales" and "A Wales of cohesive communities". 4. Engagement is not only a key means of improving services, but also a statutory responsibility in relation to Equality, as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Outcome(s)	The Council will be able to demonstrate that: 1. Residents of the Merthyr Tydfil communities are provided with an equal opportunity to increase their voice and actively participate in influencing Council policy, planning and shaping of services. 2. Protected characteristic groups are consistently considered throughout the development of consultation and engagement work.		
Impact on Protected Characteristic Groups	All Protected Groups.		
Measures of Success		Data Source	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)
1. Residents think the Local Authority provides high quality services.		National Survey of Wales and Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
2. Residents think the Local Authority is good at letting people know how it is performing.		National Survey of Wales and Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
3. Residents think they can influence decisions affecting the local area.		National Survey of Wales and Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
4. The Cwm Taf Public Engagement Network and Strategic Group will measure impact by using the main key public engagement indicators below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had the opportunity to be involved. • I felt supported and respected. • I felt my views were valued. • My involvement made a difference. 		Cwm Taf Public Engagement Network and Strategic Group	Cwm Taf Public Engagement Network and Strategic Group
SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective		Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
Action 1: Deliver the Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy.		Corporate Communications,	2017

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
	Consultation and Engagement Manager	
<p>Action 2: Support the delivery of the Cwm Taf Public Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>What do we aim to achieve? The partners that make up the Cwm Taf Public Services Board aim to achieve the kind of involvement that values people and communities and makes a difference, where everyone of all ages, whoever they are, can say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘My views are needed and considered in shaping services.’ • ‘I can easily get involved in services that affect my community and me if I choose to.’ • ‘My involvement is highly valued and it makes a difference.’ <p>What we are going to do?</p> <p>The Cwm Taf Public Services Board will ensure that this form of public engagement becomes core business. This means that public engagement is fundamental to how services are identified, designed, commissioned, delivered and evaluated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All services that impact upon the lives of people and communities will understand the need to engage in this way with the people that they serve. 2. All services will use the National Principles of Public Engagement, National Children and Young People’s Participation Standards and Equality of Opportunity Principles as a guide for involving people in their services and will work towards the Principles of Co-production. 3. Strategic, corporate and operational plans will ensure all partners 	Cwm Taf Public Engagement Network and Strategic Group	Ongoing Work Programme

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
<p>hold themselves to account in terms of public engagement, in the actions identified, facilitating co-productive approaches with people and communities to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>4. Public Services Board partners will collaborate with community members and service users to develop an approach that supports people to shape services and the communities where they live and hold each other to account, while understanding each other's different constraints such as the resources, timescales and the commitment required from people who volunteer their time.</p> <p>5. Participation, engagement and feedback will be planned and timely, linking with identified participation leads within all services.</p>		
<p>Action 3: Work in partnership with the following MAGNET portfolio of projects to provide an opportunity for members of marginalised communities to increase their voice in influencing Council policy, planning and delivery processes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visible - Bringing together lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons to provide support and promote their voice within Merthyr Tydfil. 2. Focal Point - Engaging with migrant workers, facilitating inclusion and cohesion, improving cultural awareness in the wider community. 3. Bridges - Building confidence and skills with the Gypsy / Traveller community and creating opportunities for effective engagement with local services. 4. One Voice - Advocacy and empowerment for disabled persons to agree collective action and engagement with service providers. 5. Perthyn (Belonging) - Intergenerational project between younger and older people living in social housing, focusing on past, present and future housing policies. Delivered in 	<p>Local Authority Officers / Voluntary Sector / Partner Groups</p>	<p>October 2017</p>

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective		Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
<p>Caedraw, Gurnos and Trelewis.</p> <p>6. POSSIB - Bilingual arts project to engage working aged men, parents and children in the areas of health, well-being, employment and education. Delivered in Northern Communities First Cluster.</p> <p>7. Up and Coming - Youth media project where young reporters convey positive messages about young people and Merthyr Tydfil and communicate with service providers and decision makers.</p>			
<p>Action 4: Work towards the achievement of Disability Sport Wales insport Gold Standard. The successful attainment of insport Gold standard will ensure the Council, and its key partners, place service users at the centre of the development of sport and physical activity opportunities for disabled people in Merthyr Tydfil, with actions being a direct response of engagement and consultation. The insport Gold Standard will evidence how service users have been engaged and how the Council and its partners have taken a collaborative approach to meet this need.</p>		Disability Sport Wales Development Officer / Identified Partners	March 2020
<p>Action 5: Review Community First activities and establish and implement a new Community Involvement Plan.</p>		Communities First Strategic Officer	April 2016 Reviewed annually
Key Risks/Barriers to implementing/delivering the Objective	Action(s) to Mitigate Risks	Risk Owner(s)	
1. The MAGNET Project is lottery funded for four years and is due to end in 2017.	Explore alternative sources of funding to ensure that the MAGNET Projects are sustainable for the long term.	Voluntary Sector / Partner Groups	
2. Lack of resources/capacity.	Work in partnership and ensure that there is ownership and accountability for consultation and engagement across all service areas.	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team / Local Authority Officers	

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
3. Negative perception of the Council and a lack of public interest will lead to low numbers of participation and engagement.	Provide quality information to encourage participation and ensure people are well informed.	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
4. Lack of belief from customers that they will be listened to.	Ensure the principle of “we asked, you said, we did” is consistently adopted for engagement and consultation.	Corporate Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 2

THEME: EQUALITY AWARENESS RAISING

Objective	<u>Equality Objective 2</u> To support and facilitate Equalities training and learning opportunities so that staff at all levels, Councillors and partners recognise and incorporate Equalities as part of their role.	
Reasons for choosing the Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council's corporate approach to equality training needs to be developed further to improve awareness and understanding of equalities. 2. Training and learning is an important means of achieving equality improvement. 3. There is a need to ensure that all staff, Councillors and partner organisations are aware and understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. 	
Outcome(s)	<p>The Council will be able to demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff, Councillors and partner organisations receive training on Equalities. 2. The Council promotes equalities in the workplace. 3. Councillors are empowered with an insight, knowledge and understanding about the different communities they represent in the County Borough. 	
Impact on Protected Characteristic Groups	All protected groups.	
Measures of Success		
1. The number and percentage of staff, Councillors and partner organisations who have received training in Equalities.	Baseline to be established.	Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
2. Number of hits on Equality training pages and feedback of usefulness of resources.	Baseline to be established.	Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
3. Number of different training opportunities provided.	Baseline to be established.	Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
4. Number of disciplinaries, whistleblowing and grievances related to equality issues.	Baseline to be established.	HR Manager
SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective		Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)
Action 1: Rollout Equalities E-Learning Module for staff and Councillors.		Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
		Delivery Date
		March 2017

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
<p>Action 2: Work in partnership with the MAGNET portfolio to deliver a training programme for staff and Councillors based on the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal Point – Newly arrived citizens. • Visible – Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender. • One Voice – Disabled persons. • Bridges – Gypsy / Travellers. 	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager / Voluntary Sector / Partner Groups</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
<p>Action 3: Work with Active Merthyr and its partners locally and nationally to establish opportunities for disability awareness training for staff, Councillors and partner organisations.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager / Disability Sport Wales Development Officer / Active Merthyr / Other Public Sector Partners / Third Sector Partners</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
<p>Action 4: Develop Equalities training pages on the Council's Intranet to act as a learning and knowledge resource.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
<p>Action 5: Work with the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator to deliver a range of Equality training.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager / Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
<p>Action 6: To assess and define any cultural barriers that may be preventing staff from feeling 'safe' to disclose equalities data, we will undertake policy training on Dignity and Respect at Work, Code of Conduct of Employees, Values and Behaviours expected by all.</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>March 2017</p>
<p>Action 7: Create an Action Plan to address any cultural barriers.</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>March 2018</p>

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective		Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
Action 8: Provide refresher training on the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessments.		Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager	March 2018
Action 9: Work in partnership with other organisations to offer staff, Councillors and partner organisations a range of Equality training opportunities.		Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager / Local Authority Officers / Identified Partners	March 2020
Key Risks/Barriers to implementing/delivering the Objective	Action(s) to Mitigate Risks	Risk Owner(s)	
1. The MAGNET Project is lottery funded for four years and is due to end in 2017.	Explore alternative sources of funding to ensure that the MAGNET Projects are sustainable for the long term.	Voluntary Sector / Partner Groups	
2. Lack of resources/capacity.	Work with partner organisations as much as possible to alleviate resource/capacity pressures.	Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager / Local Authority Officers	

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 3

THEME: UNDERSTANDING OUR STAFF AND COMMUNITIES

Objective	<p><u>Equality Objective 3</u> Develop robust monitoring systems to collect, collate, monitor and publish equalities data on our employees and customers, which will help the Council to ensure that it provides fair and accessible services.</p>
Reasons for choosing the Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a Council we need accurate equalities data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow us to be sensitive to and meet the needs of our employees and customers. • Identify any workplace or community based issues and risks so that they can be addressed accordingly e.g. gaps in service provision or where a protected characteristic group is being treated disproportionately. 2. There is a statutory requirement through the Public Sector Equality Duty to collect and publish equality employment information.
Outcome(s)	<p>The Council will be able to demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an improved understanding and evidenced based profile of its employees, which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure we are a good employer that provides equal opportunities for all staff. ○ Effectively deploy our duty of care to our employees. ○ Build better strategies to support the well-being of our employees. 2. There is an improved understanding and evidenced based profile of customers, which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inform front line service delivery when dealing with customers. ○ Ensure we adapt our services accordingly for newly arrived citizens. ○ Help us to improve and shape service delivery to meet the needs of our customers. ○ Improve information to services users. 3. There is consistent, accurate and robust collation and recording of employee and customer equality data. 4. Greater transparency in the Annual Equality Monitoring Report.
Impact on Protected Characteristic Groups	<p>All protected groups.</p>

Measures of Success	Data Source	Lead Officer
1. The Council receives registration as a “Two Ticks” Equal Opportunity Employer.	Department for Work and Pensions	HR Admin Team Leader
2. An increase in the number of employees disclosing personal data to allow the Council to be sensitive to and meet their needs.	HR21	HR Admin Deputy Team Leader
3. An increase in the number of customers disclosing personal data to allow the Council to be sensitive to and meet their needs.	Establish a baseline.	Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
Action 1 Identify data requirements for Equalities Monitoring Form by identifying what information is needed (taking into account Public Sector Equality Duty reporting and relevant information requirements).	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader / Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager	March / April 2016
Action 2 Develop electronic monitoring and recording system to capture all data requirements for Equalities Monitoring Form using HR21.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	August 2016
Action 3 Develop paper copy of Equalities Monitoring Form.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	September 2016
Action 4 Communicate message to all staff (who have access to a computer) to complete the Equalities Monitoring Form.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	October 2016
Action 5 Include an Equalities Monitoring Form in all recruitment paperwork.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	October 2016
Action 6 Distribute paper copy of Equalities Monitoring Form in a staged approach to staff that do not have access to a computer.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	December 2016
Action 7 Monitor and report on the number of staff who have completed the Equalities Monitoring Form through HR21.	HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader	January 2017

SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective	Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)	Delivery Date
<p>Action 8 Record completed Paper Equalities Monitoring Form in HR21.</p>	<p>HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader</p>	<p>May 2017</p>
<p>Action 9 Monitor and report on the number of staff who have completed the paper copy of the Equalities Monitoring Form.</p>	<p>HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader</p>	<p>June 2017</p>
<p>Action 10 Remind staff of the importance to ensure that their equality employment information is continually reviewed and up to date.</p>	<p>HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader</p>	<p>April (Annually)</p>
<p>Action 11 Report annually on equality employee data.</p>	<p>HR Admin Team Leader / HR Admin Deputy Team Leader</p>	<p>June (Annually)</p>
<p>Action 12 Identify data requirements and develop a process to capture and report equalities data from customers.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>September 2016</p>
<p>Action 13 Develop and distribute an Equalities Monitoring Form to service areas to enable them to capture equalities data from customers.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>December 2016</p>
<p>Action 14 Remind services of the importance of recording customer equality data.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>April (Annually)</p>
<p>Action 15 Report annually on customer equality data.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>June (Annually)</p>
<p>Action 16 Where they are not already in place encourage service areas to develop feedback forms in relation to the services they provide, to establish levels of satisfaction and identify any barriers which might exist which prevent people from accessing these services. This will include ensuring that all feedback forms ask the equalities monitoring questions.</p>	<p>Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager</p>	<p>March 2017</p>

Key Risks/Barriers to implementing/delivering the Objective	Action(s) to Mitigate Risks	Risk Owner(s)
1. Lack of resources/capacity.	Ensure that there is ownership and accountability across the Council for completing the Equalities Monitoring Form.	HR Manager / Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager
2. Organisational culture prohibits employees feeling safe to disclose the data.	Provide training and awareness, including communicating the consequences for breaching confidentiality and dignity and respect at work policy.	HR Manager
3. Small numbers of employees and customers completing the Equality Monitoring Forms.	Build up trust and provide reassurance regarding the confidentiality of equality data. Communicate the importance and benefits of recording Equality data for staff and customers.	HR Manager / Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 4

THEME: GENDER/EQUAL PAY

Objective	Equality Objective 4 Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.	
Reasons for choosing the Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National Employers are currently looking at the National Living Wage implications with a view that the pay spines may require remodelling. 2. There is a need to reduce the gender pay gap. 3. It makes the Council more attractive as an employer to the community. 4. It makes the Council more attractive for existing employees to remain with the Council. 5. As more national discussions and changes are coming up we need to ensure we retain fairness e.g. National Minimum Wage, gender pay gap. 	
Outcome(s)	<p>The Council will be able to demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have fair, open and transparent pay, grading, remuneration and recruitment strategies and plans so that the reduction in the pay gap is achieved. 2. Pay and grading structures and recruitment practices in the Council treat all staff and applicants equally, regardless of gender. 	
Impact on Protected Characteristic Groups	Equal treatment for all Protected Characteristic Groups as far as equal pay is concerned.	
Measures of Success		
1. Understanding any gender pay gap the Council may have.	Establish a baseline through Equality Impact Assessment and review of pay and grading structure.	HR Manager
SMART Actions to Deliver the Objective		
Lead Officer(s) / Partner(s)		
Action 1 Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to have a baseline understanding of any equal pay issues in the Council.	HR Manager	September 2016
Action 2 Publish Annual Pay Policy Statement.	HR Manager	April (Annually)

Action 3 Where necessary make changes to policies and practices that are found to be a contributory factor to any identified inequality in pay.		HR Operations manager	January 2017
Key Risks/Barriers to implementing/delivering the Objective	Action(s) to Mitigate Risks		Risk Owner(s)
1. The reduction in local government funding creates a resource pressure which leads to inability to deliver the Objective and Actions.	Ensure staff structures are sustainable and that equal pay is considered as a priority for the Council.		HR Manager
2. Risk of equal pay claim from employees.	Ensure that pay and grading structure is equal pay assessed.		HR Manager

LINK BETWEEN THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR 2016-2020 AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015 AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014

Theme	Equality Objectives	Link to seven Wellbeing Goals	Link to Sustainable Development Principles	Link to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
Community Engagement	<p><u>Equality Objective 1</u> Put citizens' voices at the heart of local decision making so that their contribution is understood, recognised and used to help the Council understand and respond to the needs of its communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Heathier Wales. • A more equal Wales. • A Wales of cohesive communities. • A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term. • Prevention. • Collaboration. • Involvement. • Integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and mental health and emotional well-being. • Protection from abuse and neglect. • Education, training and recreation. • Domestic, family and personal relationships. • Contribution made to society. • Securing rights and entitlements. • In relation to children; physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development and welfare. • In relation to adults; control over day to day life and participation in work.
Equality Awareness Raising	<p><u>Equality Objective 2</u> To support and facilitate Equalities training and learning opportunities so that staff at all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more equal Wales. • A Wales of cohesive communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term. • Prevention. • Collaboration. • Involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, training and recreation. • Contribution made to society.

Theme	Equality Objectives	Link to seven Wellbeing Goals	Link to Sustainable Development Principles	Link to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
	levels, Councillors and partners recognise and incorporate Equalities as part of their role.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing rights and entitlements. • In relation to adults; control over day to day life and participation in work.
Understanding our Staff and Communities	<p><u>Equality Objective 3</u> Develop robust monitoring systems to collect, collate, monitor and publish equalities data on our employees and customers, which will help the Council to ensure that it provides fair and accessible services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Healthier Wales. • A more equal Wales. • A Wales of cohesive communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term. • Prevention. • Collaboration. • Involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and mental health and emotional well-being. • Protection from abuse and neglect. • Education, training and recreation. • Domestic, family and personal relationships. • Contribution made to society. • Securing rights and entitlements. • In relation to children; physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development and welfare. • In relation to adults; control over day to day life and participation in work.
Gender/Equal Pay	<p><u>Equality Objective 4</u> Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A prosperous Wales. • A more equal Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term. • Prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution made to society. • Securing rights and entitlements.

Theme	Equality Objectives	Link to seven Wellbeing Goals	Link to Sustainable Development Principles	Link to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1675 300 2096 400">• In relation to adults; control over day to day life and participation in work.