



CABINET REPORT

Date Written	3 rd March 2020*
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Service Area	Corporate Services
Committee Division	Strategic
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	25 th March 2020

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Council's Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 were approved by Full Council on 23rd March 2016.
- 1.2 In addition to preparing a Strategic Equality Plan the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty also requires the Council to prepare and publish an annual report every year noting progress across all aspects of its equalities work, including progress on delivering its Equality Objectives.
- 1.3 Through the Strategic Equality Plan and it's Equality Objectives the Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019, attached as Appendix 1, is testament to the Council's ongoing drive to progress its equality agenda and deliver our Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil, which 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".
- 1.4 The Council's Vision and Equality Objectives support the Council's Well-being Objectives and the seven national Well-being Goals and link to the five ways of working (the Sustainable Development Principle) that are set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 1.5 Based on the progress reported in the Annual Equality Report, outcomes have been assessed as Good - many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The Council's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 be approved.
- 2.2 Presentation of the Council's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 to Council for information be approved.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Equality Act 2010

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces the previous antidiscrimination 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 The general duty under the Act covers the following protected characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Marriage and Civil Partnerships
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
 - Religion or belief – including lack of belief
 - Sex (Gender)
 - Sexual orientation
- 3.4 It applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 The specific duties in Wales included a requirement for listed bodies to develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan by 2nd April 2012 that contained Equality Objectives.
- 3.10 The Council's Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives for 2012-2016 were approved by Full Council on 29th February 2012.

Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020

- 3.11 The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to review its Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives at least every four years.
- 3.12 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 Council'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.*
- 3.13 This Vision has been supported by the following four Equality Objectives (listed in the table below) that are set out in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020. The Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020 was approved by Full Council on 23rd March 2016.

Themes	Equality Objectives
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.
	<u>Equality Objective 3</u>

Understanding our Staff and Communities	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.

Annual Reporting

- 3.14 The Council is required to prepare and publish an annual report noting progress across all aspects of its equalities work, including progress on delivering its Equality Objectives.

4.0 ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT FOR 2018-2019

- 4.1 The Council's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 is attached as Appendix 1. Some of the key points to note from the report include the following:

Equalities & Diversity Champion and Armed Forces Champion

- Councillor Kevin O'Neill (Leader of the Council) is the Council's Equalities and Diversity Champion; and
- Councillor Andrew Barry (Portfolio Member for Governance and Corporate Services) is the Council's Armed Forces Champion.

LGBT History Month

- This was the fifth year that the Rainbow and Transgender flags were raised outside the Civic Centre to celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History month as part of the Council's commitment to supporting and engaging with the LGBT+ community within Merthyr Tydfil.

Pride Cymru 2018

- The Council was proud to be part of Pride Cymru in August 2018 for the third consecutive year, working with other Councils from South Wales to engage with the LGBT+ community. The aim was to engage with the LGBT+ community to establish key issues and, as a result, improve the experiences of local LGBT+ people across South Wales when accessing public services.

Insport

- Development of the MTCBC insport Gold submission has continued throughout 2018-19. To date we are the only Local Authority to have attended the Disability Sport Wales insport Golf Pre-Panel, outlining their priority areas as part of the submission.

- The Disability Sport Merthyr forum has continued to develop over 2018-19 and we have continued to pilot the insport education programme with 3 local schools. We are currently the only Local Authority in Wales to be running the programme.

Armed Forces Covenant

- A Veteran Advice Officer (VAO) has been in post since January 2019 supporting both MTCBC and RCTCBC. The VAO actively attends Veteran groups within the CWM Taf area.
- Good relationships have been developed with key organisations such as SSAFA (the Armed forces Charity), The Royal British Legion and Change Step who offer support for veterans, their families and carers in Wales – to access vital support services and to tackle serious stress and related issues.
- We continue to offer free swimming for armed forces personnel and veterans at our two Leisure Centres. Also a bi-monthly coffee morning continues to be held at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre.

Welsh Language

- In 2018 MTCBC launched a new initiative called the #Shwmaeronment Campaign which is about encouraging the use of the Welsh language in the workplace and wider community. As part of the initiative we encouraged school pupils in the County Borough to get involved and design a logo. The winning entry was developed into an official logo which was used in posters and other literature that was displayed across Merthyr Tydfil.
- We have developed and delivered several internal training courses for staff. A Welsh language customer telephone and greeting training course refresher training was provided to over 40 front line staff. Also we continue to provide work place training opportunities for staff and Councillors. Nine members of staff have successfully achieved the WJEC Entry Certificate in Welsh Second Language. The Council currently has 25 members of staff learning Welsh in the workplace.
- The Council's Welsh language service and Active Merthyr Tydfil continue to work in partnership to support an Urdd Sports Development Apprentice Project. The purpose of the project is for the Welsh language to continue to become more prevalent in the community by providing sporting opportunities for young people through the medium of Welsh. In 2018/19, some key development include five after school clubs were run, five community clubs were run and a summer tennis club.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

5.1 There are no specific financial implications identified in this report. Any financial implications arising from the report will be reported to Cabinet/Council as appropriate, including potential options for funding.

6.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	4 of 4	0 of 4	0 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	10 of 10	0 of 10	0 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1

Summary:

The Council's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 notes progress across all aspects of the Council's equalities work, including progress on delivering its Equality Objectives for 2016-2020.

The Council's Equality Vision and Equality Objectives support the Council's Well-being Objectives and the seven Well-being Goals.

The Council's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 positively impacts on the Council's Wellbeing Objectives, the five ways of working and the protected characteristics (including Welsh language).

No negative impacts have been identified.

**ELLIS COOPER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
& CORPORATE SERVICES**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		NO

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.