

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Strategic Equality Plan

2019-2022



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Rhondda Cynon Taf welcomes comments on all aspects of this report, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work we intend to do.

If you have any comments or want to know more about the work the Council is doing please contact:

Melanie Warburton
Equality & Diversity Adviser
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Ty Elai
Dinas Isaf East Industrial Estate
Williamstown
Tonypandy
CF40 1NY

☎ 01443 444531

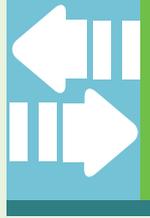
✉ equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

This plan is available in Welsh.

This plan can also be made available in alternative formats and languages.

To make a request please telephone 01443 444531 or email equality@rctcbc.gov.uk





Welcome to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Strategic Equality Plan



Cllr Maureen Webber
Deputy Leader

This plan contains important information about the work the Council is doing to promote equality and diversity.

Our aim is not just to meet our legal duties, but also to make Rhondda Cynon Taf a place where everyone matters. We want Rhondda Cynon Taf to be a place where no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of their identity or background. The Council sees everyone in Rhondda Cynon Taf as an equal citizen whilst recognising that people will have different needs.

We believe we have a duty to tackle discrimination and disadvantage so that people feel safe from harassment and everyone has access to high quality services.

The Council employs over 10,000 staff and believes everyone should have the opportunity to work for us, with a workforce to reflect the diverse nature of Rhondda Cynon Taf communities so that we can benefit from the skills, knowledge and experience within those communities.

The Council will use its leadership role to promote equality and diversity and share ideas and good practice with partners and other service providers. In developing this plan, we have engaged with our residents, our workforce, our partners and other stakeholders and their opinions and experiences have helped us to shape the equality objectives it contains. Please tell us what you think of this plan and our objectives. The Council encourages feedback to help bring about improvement and to make a difference for the lives of people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

M. Webber



Chris Bradshaw
Chief Executive

As the largest employer in the area, it is crucial that the Council leads by example and fulfils its legislative duties to ensure Rhondda Cynon Taf is a place where discrimination and prejudice have no place.

Within our service delivery we work hard to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all, however, we recognise that for some groups of people barriers exist to accessing some services, therefore the actions contained in this Strategic Equality Plan will help to remove those barriers.

Equality and diversity is an essential element of the Council's work. We recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce that works together to provide responsive and flexible services that take account of the different needs within our communities to help combat social exclusion and build strong communities.

Within the workplace we are committed to training and development for our employees to ensure our residents receive high quality service delivery. We will continue to work to eliminate discrimination in the workplace and service delivery and are committed to ensuring the diversity of our residents and workforce is recognised and valued.

Chris Bradshaw

About Us

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council covers a wide geographical area and has a population of over 234,000 people. We are the largest employer in the area and the third largest local authority in Wales, over 80% of employees live within the Council boundaries.

We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in our service delivery and in our employment practices.

Our vision is:

For a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all.

Our purpose is:

To provide strong community leadership and effective services for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf to enable them to fulfil their potential and prosper.

Our Corporate Plan 'The Way Ahead' 2016-2020 sets out how we will achieve our vision and purpose and sets out our priorities. These are shown below:



Economy

Building a strong economy



People

Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone



Place

Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

The plan puts residents at the centre of what we do.

The Council is governed by 75 elected Members and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Leadership Team headed by the Chief Executive and attended by Senior Directors, and employs over 10,000 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following groups:

- ▶ Chief Executives
- ▶ Education and Inclusion Services
- ▶ Community and Children's Services
- ▶ Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services





Purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan

The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to equality and how we will meet legal obligations contained with the Equality Act 2010.

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are outlined below:

Public Sector Equality Duty

The General Duty

When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't, we also need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic.
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

We also have to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty and have been developed around four main principles:

1. Use of evidence
2. Consultation and Involvement
3. Transparency
4. Leadership

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions the Council must take in order to comply and include the following areas:

- Setting Equality Objectives and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan
- Ensuring it engages with people who have an interest in how the Council's decisions affect them
- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact on the Council's identified
- Publish employment monitoring information annually
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst its employees and use its performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of its employees in relation to the General Duties
- Set a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified
- Think about including conditions relevant to the General Duty in its procurement processes.

Who is protected under the Equality Act 2010?

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristic.

This is the term used in the Equality Act 2010 to identify the types of things that affect how people are treated and can mean people may experience discrimination. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- ▶ age
- ▶ disability
- ▶ gender reassignment
- ▶ marriage and civil partnership
- ▶ pregnancy and maternity
- ▶ race
- ▶ religion or belief
- ▶ sex
- ▶ sexual orientation

1

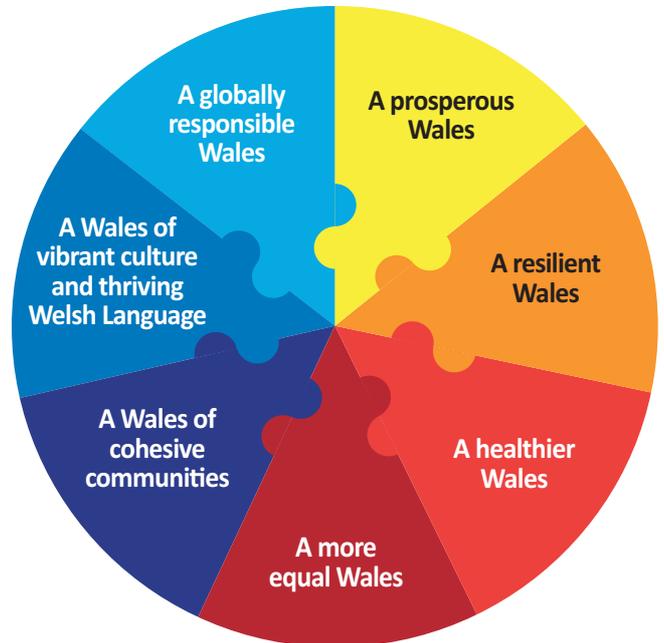
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Council is committed to embedding the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 into all its service delivery and activities.

The Act puts in place a sustainable development principle which means that we must 'act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Ref <https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>

The Act puts in place a duty on the Council as a public body to maximise its contribution to seven national Well-being goals, which are shown to the right. As a Council, we need to incorporate the goals into all of our work and make sure that when we make decisions we consider the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.



Whilst it is clear that some Well-being goals specifically relate to equality it is important to recognise that equality objectives contained within this plan and their associated action plans have a significant role to play across all Well-being goals, for example, actions to improve employment for disabled people will contribute not only to 'a more equal Wales', but to 'a healthier Wales', 'a prosperous Wales' and 'a Wales of cohesive communities'.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act also asks individual public services to apply five ways of working:



1

LONG TERM

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



2

PREVENTION

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



3

INTEGRATION

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.



4

COLLABORATION

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



5

INVOLVEMENT

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

The 5 ways of working have been used to shape the Council's equality objectives.

2

Our Equality Objectives 2019-2022

To develop the equality objectives we have engaged with our residents, engaged with our workforce and used relevant information, including Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reports, Welsh Government reports, internal strategies and results of internal staff engagement exercises.

The use of relevant information is explained more in section 3. Each objective is underpinned by more detailed actions and targets which are shown in Appendix 1 – Action Plan.

1. To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive

The Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment undertaken in 2017 by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board to inform the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 recognised that loneliness, isolation and a reduced sense of belonging are significant issues for people in our communities. Consequently, within the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan there is a cross-cutting objective to **tackle loneliness and isolation** in Cwm Taf. This is the key priority for the Cwm Taf Public Service Board in all of its activities.

Without knowing more about the people that make up the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf, we are unable to identify specific issues or barriers that may prevent them accessing our services or engaging with the Council when they need to. We already have some processes in place that identify people who may be vulnerable and need support but we recognise that more could be done to identify people who face barriers to accessing our offices and buildings, or barriers to our on-line and telephone services and other information we offer. This first objective supports the public service board's cross-cutting objective by working to understand more about the needs of our diverse communities.

We are aware of the lack of advocacy groups in the County Borough to support people from ethnic minorities and some religious groups and therefore we need to do more to engage regularly with these citizens. **We will do more to engage with community groups that support under-represented groups.**

When people access our services we would like to find out more information about them such as their ethnicity, whether they have a disability, their gender, their sexual orientation and other equality monitoring questions. This will help us to ensure the services we offer

reflect the diversity of our communities. **We will work with our service areas to develop equality monitoring questions that are relevant and timely.**

We already have a number of projects supporting employment opportunities for people from under-represented groups across the County Borough but we need to understand more about the barriers they face. The employment rate for disabled people in Wales is less than half than that for non-disabled people. There are also disparities for young people and people from ethnic minorities. **We will undertake an employment needs assessment to understand the barriers.**

A recent report highlighted that disabled people are demoralised and frustrated by the housing system. We need to know more about the housing needs of disabled people within the County Borough. **We will ensure our local housing market needs assessments look at this important area.**

2. To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities

We know from EHRC evidence that inequalities exist within society including the areas of educational attainment, employment and living standards.

We are already working in partnership to improve the transition process for learners with additional learning needs. We have recently consulted on improvements to our learning support provision and our future focus will be on achieving a better alignment of provision to meet needs.

We already have a number of positive strategies in place that look to reduce employment barriers for young people, disabled people and to reduce the gender pay

gap in the workforce. However, we recognise we could do more to help more people from certain groups into work. Our apprenticeship programme has already successfully recruited a number of people with disabilities.

However, we intend to apply the recently launched Welsh Government Inclusive Apprenticeships: Disability Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2018-2021 to develop an action plan to increase the number of disabled apprentices. We also want to recruit other under-represented people into our apprenticeship programmes.

We recognise we need to do more to attract and recruit people from under-represented groups into our workforce as a whole. **We will be reviewing our recruitment and selection policy, process and practice to increase the diversity within our workforce.**

We already work with schools to prevent inequality of opportunity for young people, for example, through working to encourage the uptake of free school meals. But we know we can do more to provide more effective support to young people and families. The newly established Resilient Families Programme is working to provide early intervention and prevention services that improve the resilience of families in Rhondda Cynon Taf. **We aim to work more effectively to identify appropriate multi-agency approaches to supporting young people and families in need.**

We recognise that our town centres currently face a number of challenges. We are already committed to enabling accessible, vibrant and enticing town centres which are at the heart of our communities. **We will modernise our town centres by building on their role as centres for social inclusion, local economic opportunity and the provision of services.**

Our Scrutiny Committees play an important role in reviewing and shaping services and policy and act as a critical friend to decision makers. They can also have a key role in ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duties by scrutinising Equality Impact Assessment documentation. **We intend to strengthen this process which will result in more accountability for decision makers.**

3. To promote safe communities

One of our previous equality objectives looked at hate crime. Whilst a lot of positive work has been done to improve the reporting of hate crime, work still needs to be undertaken to ensure the public know how and where to report hate crime and that victims of hate crime understand and are supported to access the support available to them. **We will review the existing Hate Crime Strategy and work with Hate Crime police officers to develop an awareness raising programme.**

Modern slavery exists in Wales. Modern slavery affects people of all ages, gender and races. However those that are socially excluded, a minority group or vulnerable tend to be targeted the most. **We will review and strengthen our existing process towards modern slavery.**

The Council already has an effective, non-gender specific strategy aimed at tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence and there is specific legislation that supports this work. We recognise however, that we need to better understand the specific issues for victims from under-represented groups. **We will work with Women's Aid to develop the freedom programme to develop this understanding about ethnic minority women and male victims.**

In 2017 the Education Inspection body Estyn produced a review of healthy relationships education. Respect for both oneself and others is a key characteristic of healthy relationships. In contrast, in unhealthy relationships, one partner tries to exert control and power over the other physically, sexually, and/or emotionally. **We will support the well-being of our pupils and develop a programme for schools about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.**

We already work with schools on their anti-bullying policies and we collect data about bullying incidents from schools on a termly basis. We know from research that some groups of young people are more likely to get bullied more than others. **We will work further with schools to develop and enhance their existing policies and support victims of bullying.**

The PERMA (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement) well-being model which aspires pupils to flourish is being piloted in some of our schools. The model uses the PERMA model as a measure to reflect on the key areas of need in regard to the well-being of their pupils. **We will support schools to map the data collected in relation to attendance, bullying and exclusions and will focus on targeted intervention on specific areas of need.**

prevent them from returning.

Whilst the number of male and female Chief Officer positions in the Council is equitable, we recognise that female Chief Officers are more likely to be employed on the lower levels of the Chief Officer grades. **We will continue to prioritise this area of work and are committed to positive action to encourage more female employees to undertake management development programmes.**

4. To reduce the gender pay gap

We are required to consider the pay differences that exist across the organisation and to identify an objective that will address any difference identified.

Whilst pay systems are important in determining pay equity, there are a number of other issues that are relevant in determining what women and men are paid. These include occupational segregation; availability of full/part-time work in different occupational groups, e.g. lower paid job roles being mainly part-time whilst higher paid more senior roles being mainly full time; availability of family friendly policies and support and organisational culture.

We know that nearly 75% of our workforce are female, and over half of those work on a part-time basis. This has a negative impact on our gender pay gap. We know from work on our previous gender pay equality objective that we need to identify the opportunities for female employees on lower paid grades to gain promotion or development opportunities. **We will ensure that all of our staff, regardless of grade or hours of work will receive a performance review meeting to discuss opportunities for development.**

Work by Cardiff University suggests that there may be pay and promotional penalties for women who have had maternity leave and taken time out to raise their family. **We will support the Equality and Human Rights Commission pledge 'Working Forward' which supports pregnant women and new parents. We will also undertake an analysis of women returning to the workplace following maternity leave, and look at barriers that may**

5. To create an inclusive workforce

The mantra of Stonewall Cymru is 'people perform better when they can be themselves'. This is what we also believe. To get the best out of our employees and ensure they provide the best service to our residents we need a workplace culture that is safe and inclusive. To do this we need to know more about the diversity of our workforce. **We will undertake workplace equality monitoring.**

The EHRC tells us that bullying and sexual harassment remain widespread in some workplaces. We are already proactive in raising awareness about our Dignity at Work Policy but we need to provide more training to our managers. In response to the #MeToo movement and the growing rise in reporting of sexual harassment as seen in the media, we recognise that we need to do some work in this area so that our workforce are aware of the issue and know how to report it. **We will develop a programme of awareness and training on sexual harassment in the workplace.**

We are Disability Confident employers. However we need to do more to raise awareness about the talents disabled people have and what support is available to disabled employees and their managers, not just at recruitment but throughout the workplace journey. **We will develop and implement a Disability Confident action plan.**

We will continue to be Stonewall Diversity Champions, and we will replicate good practice learnt from this area to reflect other under-represented groups. **Specifically, we need to do more to support our employees from ethnic minorities.**

We are committed to the Time to Change Wales pledge to end stigma towards mental health conditions and work proactively in this area. Nonetheless mental health conditions are the main reason for sickness absence within the Council. We are working hard to support our employees with mental health conditions through Occupational Health interventions and line manager support, however we recognise that much more training and awareness is needed throughout our workforce. We will review all of our mental health activities and develop annual plans which provide education, training and interventions for the workforce.





How we developed the Equality Objectives

Our Equality Objectives will continue to help us meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure we are making progress in advancing equality and inclusion for all protected groups.

They will also ensure that we are operating within the framework of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

To identify our Equality Objectives we undertook an 8 week engagement exercise. This included an on-line survey for the public, our Citizens' Panel and our workforce; a number of public engagement events; meetings with specific community groups that reflect the protected characteristics contained in the Equality Act 2010 and meetings with managers who are key to delivering Council services. These engagement

activities helped us understand the needs of our communities and our workforce and helped us shape the Equality Objectives and action plan.

The Engagement Report which can be viewed here gives an indication of the issues which were raised most frequently during the engagement exercise. Overwhelmingly the feedback was that people supported our proposed equality objectives. There were lots of comments and lots of good ideas and we have used these to develop the actions within the objectives.

The main information we learned from the engagement exercise was:

- People want the Council services and buildings to be more accessible and recognise that digital options are not suitable for everyone
- We need to engage with and involve our communities more, working closely with community representatives
- Mostly people are happy with equality monitoring questions being asked but more thought needs to be given about how they will be used
- People want to see and hear more about equality and diversity topics
- Council employees should have equality and diversity training
- Community spaces and towns should be more accessible
- Involve young people and enable them to have a voice
- Improve employment opportunities
- Reduce the stigma around free meals
- Work more closely with schools on anti-bullying initiatives
- Raise more awareness about reporting bullying, harassment and hate crime.

Areas highlighted by residents but not included in this plan include:

- Residents suggested that the lack of toilet provision is a problem. Under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 the Council must publish its Local Toilet Strategy by 31 March 2019, and this will include a plan showing how we will meet identified needs. As this important area of work is being developed it is not included as part of this plan, however, it will be an action in the relevant service delivery plan.
- We are already working towards 'Together for Mental Health'. This 10 year strategy sets out the Welsh Government's ambitions for improving mental health and vision for improved mental health service delivery. Developed through engagement and formal consultation with key partner agencies, stakeholders, service users and carers, it covers people of all ages and emphasises the need to promote better mental health and wellbeing among the whole population. It focuses on how to improve the lives of service users and their families using a recovery and enablement approach.
- A further objective 'Objective 5: To create an inclusive workforce' was created following the engagement exercise. It was clear that a separate objective would distinguish between community and workplace actions.



What relevant information we used

As well as listening to our residents, communities and our staff we have also used a range of equality information to support us in identifying equality objectives.

We have looked at regional priorities for Cwm Taf, Council Priorities, Service Delivery plans and their Self Assessments and have reviewed the progress that the Council's services have already made in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duties.

We have also reviewed national and external sources such as reports by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Welsh Government policy and priorities, research reports and other relevant statistics.

Whilst a number of external reports and EHRC inquiries have contributed to the development of the Equality Objectives, outlined below are the key reports that assisted in shaping the objectives:

▶ **Is Wales Fairer? 2015 – Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**

This report addresses seven key challenges that need to be addressed in Wales. The EHRC states there are major, entrenched inequalities and human rights abuses that will require substantial efforts of public, private and third-sector organisations and of individuals to reduce them.

The 7 challenges are:

- 1. Close attainment gaps in education**
- 2. Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment**
- 3. Improve living conditions in cohesive communities**
- 4. Increase access to justice and encourage democratic participation**
- 5. Improve access to mental health services and support people experiencing poor mental health**
- 6. Prevent abuse, neglect and ill-treatment in care and detention**
- 7. Eliminate violence, abuse and harassment in the community**

For a number of the challenges we already have effective action plans in place which aim to reduce the inequalities listed above, for example, closing attainment gaps in education.

However, for some of the challenges, we acknowledge that we can do more, for example, by reviewing the recruitment processes to ensure we are capturing the untapped talent of disabled people.

This report has acted as a key driver for the development of the Council's Equality Objectives.

▶ **Is Wales Fairer? 2018 – EHRC**

During the development of our Equality Objectives 'Is Wales Fairer?' 2018 was published by the EHRC. Whilst 'Is Wales Fairer?' 2015 was a key driver in the proposed objectives that we engaged on, it is important to acknowledge this up to date report and the challenges that Wales face. The format of this differs from the 2015 document with the challenges taking a thematic approach as follows:

- ▶ **Education**
- ▶ **Employment**
- ▶ **Living Standards**
- ▶ **Health**
- ▶ **Justice and Personal Security**
- ▶ **Participation**

A mapping exercise was undertaken to ensure our Equality Objectives are reflective of the above-mentioned themes, ensuring that our Equality Objectives are relevant and reflect current priorities for the citizens of Wales and our borough. The Action Plan shown in Appendix 1 identifies how the Equality Objectives and actions link to these themes.

▶ Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023

The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan was developed to set out those priorities that the Cwm Taf Public Service Board (PSB) has agreed it can tackle better by working together in partnerships. The priorities were developed following an assessment of the well-being of the residents in Cwm Taf areas. The PSB monitors the progress of the well-being objectives and has the vision of “One Public Service”.

The Well-being Plan is the overarching plan for Cwm Taf. There are other partnership boards that sit under the PSB, including the Regional Partnership Boards, the Mental Health Partnership Board, the Area Planning Board, the Community Safeguarding Board and the Safeguarding Board. These boards have their own plan for their area of responsibility and will contribute to the Well-being Plan. These plans will also contribute to the Public Sector Equality Duties and some of the challenges contained in *Is Wales Fairer? 2015 and 2018* (EHRC).

▶ Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect on 6 April 2016. The Act seeks to improve the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support. An area plan has been developed for Cwm Taf and this is led by the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board. The board is responsible for making sure that organisations in Cwm Taf deliver effective services that make a positive difference to people’s lives, now and in the future. The plan can be viewed here.

▶ The Corporate Plan ‘The Way Ahead’ 2016-2020

The Corporate Plan sets out the overall direction for the Council’s work over four years. The vision being for ‘a County Borough that has high aspirations of all, is confident and promotes opportunities for all’, The Equality Objectives take account of the work already being done to deliver the Corporate Plan.





How we will deliver and monitor the Strategic Equality Plan

Service Delivery Plans

The actions within the Strategic Equality Plan (Appendix 1) will be delivered through Service Delivery Plans.

The Service Delivery plans set out the key priorities for each service area to be delivered over 12-18 months. Each Head of Service must complete a Delivery Plan.

In addition to assisting the service with monitoring progress against its priorities, the Delivery Plans also:

- support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities
- demonstrate how the service is aligning with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- provide a framework to ensure the priorities arising from the Council's Corporate Assessment are addressed
- facilitate co-ordination of cross cutting strategies etc.
- inform Personal Development Reviews
- enable Internal Audit to conduct its review of Risk Management arrangements as part of agreed work programme.

It is advantageous to include the Equality Objectives within Service Delivery plans and it ensures equality priorities are embedded and mainstreamed throughout service delivery.

All Service Delivery Plans are monitored by the Group Director and Cabinet Member as part of the Council's performance management arrangements.

Self-Assessment

In addition to Service Delivery Plans we have a well-established and effective self-assessment process in place.

The self-assessment process focuses on impact and outcomes of the services being delivered, it leads to improvements in the experiences and the outcomes for our customers.

At the heart of self-assessment are three questions:

- ▶ **How well are we doing?**
- ▶ **How do we know?**
- ▶ **How can we improve things further?**

The process of self-assessment is continuous and an embedded part of the Council's working life.

Performance Report to Cabinet

Performance Reports are prepared every quarter. These reports enable Council officers and Councillors to monitor and scrutinise the progress of all Council priorities and services.

We regularly assess and review our progress in the delivery of actions set out in the Council's key plans and also the performance measures within the Council's Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Plans.

Publication of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report

The main purpose of an Annual Equality Monitoring Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties which includes its progress in delivering the Equality Objectives.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an Annual Equality Report by 31 March each year.

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APPENDIX 1

The following objectives and actions will be further developed as part of service areas delivery plans and specific actions plans.

Equality Objective 1: To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive		Link to EHRC Theme
1	Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of the citizens of Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop accessible communication channels with them.	Participation
2	Identify the number of refugees living in Rhondda Cynon Taf that are not already included in settlement programmes.	Participation
3	Undertake an employment needs assessment which will inform specific action points relating to young people, disability and ethnicity.	Employment
4	A community profile to be undertaken for all library areas to better understand the needs of customers.	Participation
5	Undertake research as part of the local housing market needs assessment into the demand for housing needs for disabled people.	Living Standards
6	Undertake a review of the Homestep Scheme to ensure equality monitoring questions are appropriate to identify specific needs with an emphasis on the identification of housing needs for young disabled people.	Living Standards
7	Improve and develop the collection and recording of customer equality monitoring information across Council service areas.	Participation
8	To evaluate the experience of disabled people who are on the Homefinder register to understand any barriers to accessing adapted accommodation and to identify improvements to the process as a result.	Living Standards
9	Improve and develop monitoring of customer complaints.	All themes
10	Improve local access to information advice and assistance provision for children, young people and families to promote their participation and engagement.	Participation

Equality Objective 2: To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities		Link to EHRC Theme
1	A comprehensive review of the recruitment and selection process to increase the diversity of applicants.	Employment
2	Develop and implement an action plan based on the employment needs assessment specifically in relation to young people, disability and ethnicity.	Employment
3	Recommend within the adapted housing review that the Council commits to increasing the number of adapted and accessible homes being built in the area across all tenures.	Living Standards
4	The implementation of the Develop, Invest and Grow project to improve well-being and equality and diversity outcomes in over 100 small medium enterprises in Rhondda Cynon Taf.	Employment and Health
5	To provide accessible information to the public through a variety of formats with a specific focus on improving accessibility of information for the Deaf community.	Participation
6	Undertake development of the use of assistive technology within the Digital Strategy.	Participation and Employment
7	To strengthen existing Homefinder processes to take into account equality and diversity best practice.	Living Standards
8	To further develop an inclusive approach to apprenticeships.	Employment
9	Strengthen the scrutiny process for the Equality Impact Assessment process.	All themes
10	Encourage the uptake of Free School Meal entitlement through reviewing service delivery models and an effective marketing strategy.	Living Standards
11	Take a strategic approach to our town centres which will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive and accessible environment for local businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors.	Participation
Equality Objective 3: To promote safe communities		Link to EHRC Theme
1	Review, develop and re-implement the Hate Crime Strategy.	Justice and Personal Security
2	Review the existing approach to tackling modern slavery.	Justice and Personal Security
3	As part of Education's Well-being Strategy we will develop a programme for schools about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.	Education, Justice and Personal Security
4	Pilot the PERMA model in secondary schools.	Education
5	Strengthen collection and analysis of data for bullying incidents in schools.	Education
6	Further develop the freedom programme with Women's Aid to better understand specific needs for victims of domestic violence from under-represented groups.	Justice and Personal Security

Equality Objective 4:**To reduce the gender pay gap****Link to
EHRC Theme**

1	Deliver the roll out of the performance review process for staff at all grades.	Employment
2	Improve the monitoring of the performance review process.	Employment
3	Better understand whether barriers exist regarding the progression of women into senior positions.	Employment
4	Support the EHRC pledge 'Working Forward' and implement its recommendations.	Employment
5	Understand more about what prevents women returning to the workplace following maternity leave.	Employment

Equality Objective 5:**To create and inclusive workforce****Link to
EHRC Theme**

1	Develop a programme of sexual harassment training and awareness.	Employment, Justice and Personal Security
2	Undertake a review of all our mental health activities and develop annual plans which provide education, training and interventions.	Employment, Health
3	Source and develop a suite of training for managers on equality and diversity topics.	Employment
4	Become more disability confident as an organisation.	Employment
5	Undertake workplace equality monitoring.	Employment
6	Replicate existing good practice to reflect all protected characteristics.	Employment

