

Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

Purpose of this Report

1. To provide Members with context and papers to support a policy development opportunity for early input into the Council's work to develop its new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-28.

Structure of the Papers

2. Attached to this report to assist Member's preparations for the scrutiny:

Appendix 1: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-28

To which are appended:

Appendix A: Cardiff Equality Needs Assessment

Appendix B: Cardiff Equality Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Appendix 2: Presentation – Strategic Equality Plan Development

Background & Context

3. Included within the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference is a remit to scrutinise monitor and review Council policy in relation to equalities.
4. The Public Sector Equality Duty includes a requirement for public authorities to develop and publish Strategic Equality Objectives every four years. Therefore, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2024–28 is currently under

development, containing five Strategic Equality Objectives detailing a number of actions for their delivery over a four-year period.

5. The process of developing the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 is well underway. It commenced with an equality needs assessment, bringing all existing data and evidence of issues facing those groups with protected characteristics together, arriving at a *Cardiff Equality Needs Assessment*, attached at **Appendix A**. The findings of this review have been summarised in the *Executive Summary*, attached at **Appendix B**.
6. The proposed Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-28, attached at **Appendix 1**, has been drafted by taking account of the needs assessment, by reviewing the previous 2020-24 plan, and will continue its development journey by engaging with stakeholders.
7. As a key stakeholder the Committee is invited to engage in policy development discussion. There will follow engagement with other key stakeholders, e.g. Stonewall & Diverse Cymru; internal engagement with staff networks; and engagement with public sector colleagues via the PSB Equality Network.
8. The programme of engagement will culminate in a draft strategy to be considered by Cabinet in May 2024, followed by a wider public consultation exercise planned for May to July 2024.
9. The final strategy is programmed for presentation to Cabinet in September 2024, and this will offer a further opportunity for the committee to undertake pre-decision scrutiny.

Legal Duties and Requirements

11. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-28 details how the Council will meet the legal obligations as found within the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

12. The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens equalities legislation and introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (the 'general duty'), which replaced the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality.
13. The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:
- i) Age
 - ii) Disability
 - iii) Gender Reassignment
 - iv) Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - v) Pregnancy and Maternity
 - vi) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
 - vii) Religion or belief – including lack of belief
 - viii) Sex (Gender)
 - ix) Sexual orientation
14. 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.
15. When making decisions and delivering services, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - iii) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific duties in Wales

16. There are specific statutory duties placed upon the Council which set out what actions the Council must take to comply. 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. The specific duties in Wales were published by Welsh Government in April 2011.

17. A listed body in Wales must:

- i) Publish objectives to meet the general duty;
- ii) 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;
- iii) Make appropriate arrangements to monitor progress towards meeting its objectives and to monitor the effectiveness of its approach; and
- iv) Give appropriate consideration to relevant equality information it holds when considering what its equality objectives should be.

18. As part of this requirement listed bodies must also:

- i) 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; and
- ii) Publish an equality objective to address any gender pay gap identified or else publish reasons why it has not done so.

Issues

19. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-28, attached at **Appendix 1**, sets out how the Council will meet the legal obligations as found within the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. The Strategy identifies five Strategic Equality Objectives detailing a number of actions for their delivery over a four-year period. Progress against these Objectives will be detailed in an Annual Report.

20. The five Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024-28 are:

1. **A Fairer Cardiff:** We will reduce inequality and support everyone in Cardiff to fulfil their potential.
2. **An Accessible Cardiff:** We will work to ensure everyone can take part in all Cardiff has to offer, regardless of background or circumstance.
3. **An Inclusive Cardiff:** We will make Cardiff a city where differences are understood and celebrated, and where all communities feel like they belong.
4. **A Council that reflects its communities:** We will make Cardiff Council a more inclusive organisation which reflects the diversity of the people we serve, and where employees are confident to be themselves and are empowered to progress.
5. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the heart of the organisation:** We will ensure that Cardiff Council's core processes support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

21. The Strategy at **Appendix 1** approaches the task ahead in similar vein to the Corporate Plan. It is work in- progress, however the clear framework is as follows for each Equality Objective:

- A **narrative** that will set out the challenges and potential gaps that need to be closed.
- **Steps** that the Council will take to achieve the Objective, each of which will be assigned a **Lead Member** and a **Lead Directorate** and states clearly the **Source Document** from which the step has originated (*note this varies, it may stem from the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27; the Cardiff PSB Local Well-being Plan 2023-28; the Ask Cardiff survey; Cardiff & Vale RPB Joint Area Plan 2023-28; Cardiff Race Equality Taskforce recommendation; Workforce Strategy 2023-27; various Directorate Delivery Plans etc.*)
- **Key Performance Indicators** that will enable progress to be assessed annually.

Scope of this Scrutiny

22. The Committee has been invited to contribute to the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-28. As such, the presentation included within the papers at **Appendix 2** will be delivered at the meeting, and the discussion will address each Objective in turn. The Executive summary of the Equality Needs Assessment forms a good basis for understanding the challenges the strategy needs to address. Members may wish to explore whether the draft strategy proposed will deliver the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.
23. To support this item the following witnesses will be in attendance to provide a presentation and to respond to any questions from the Committee – Councillor Julie Sangani, Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty, Equity and Public Health; Dylan Owen, Operational Manager Policy & Improvement; Babita Parekh, equalities team and Abbie Streeter, policy team.

Legal Implications

24. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

25. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the contents of this report, appendices and information provided during policy discussion at the meeting;
- ii. Capture its comments, observations and recommendations to inform the development of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-28 during the Way Forward;
- iii. Consider whether it wishes to pass on any observations, or recommendations to the Cabinet prior to its consideration of the proposals in May 2024.

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7 March 2024