

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting: 26 November 2019
Cabinet Member: Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer: Delyth G Williams, Policy and Equality Officer
Contact Telephone Number: 01286 679708
Title of Item: Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Cabinet is asked to approve the document as a draft for public engagement

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

In order to ensure agreement on the content of the Gwynedd Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. The Purpose of the Plan is to reduce inequality between people with protected characteristics and those without those characteristics in line with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Cabinet's wishes.

3 INTRODUCTION

This is the Council's third Strategic Equality Plan. The first was published in 2012 and the following one in March 2016. The 2020-24 Plan builds on these previous plans and recognises that there is still core work to do to ensure equality for people with the nine characteristics protected by the Act.

We believe, if this core work is done properly, it will provide a strong foundation for ensuring that equality becomes more deeply embedded in all the Council's work.

To this end the Council intends working on the following five objectives:

- Strengthening awareness among Gwynedd Council Staff and Elected Members of the field of equality, and ensure they know how to operate appropriately.
- Improve the information we have from and about people with protected characteristics.
- Build on the work already achieved to embed Equality Impact Assessments as a tool to ensure better decision making.

- Act to reduce the pay gap between genders and identify any pay gap based on any other characteristic.
- Act to increase the diversity of our workforce.

Our aim in doing so is to take a step back and identify things that will make a genuine difference to improving the lives of people with protected characteristics. Our starting point with every objective is to gather information, and focus on engaging with people with protected characteristics in order to ensure we do the right thing. Only through doing the right thing, and considering fairness to all, will we be able to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

This plan had been prepared in line with the duty to produce and publish the Strategic Equality Plan. The work of including the representatives of people with protected characteristics was done from the outset, but we are now eager to engage more widely, which will give everyone who wishes to do so the opportunity to express their views on the proposed plan. We will take steps to ensure we reach people who do not usually respond to engagement exercises.

6 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Consultation period from December 2019 to February 2020.

Final draft for approval by the Cabinet in March 2020.

7 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

We included the Equality Core Group from the beginning of the process. We will engage widely if the draft Plan is approved.

An Equality Impact Assessment is attached.

Statutory Officer's Comments:

i) Head Finance Officer

I support the report, and the intention to consult the public on the content of the draft Strategy.

It is noted that there is no cost to two of the objectives in the Strategy, and I am comfortable that the cost of the other three objectives will be comparatively low. I expect that it will be possible to meet these costs within existing revenue budgets but if not, additional funding will need to be sought through the normal arrangements.

ii) **Proprietary Officer**

In accordance with the Council's duties under equalities legislation the Council needs to review its Equalities Objectives at least every four years. Undertaking an engagement process meets the statutory requirements and principles in relation to the holding of a review. I have nothing further to add in relation to propriety.