

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and Socio-economic Disadvantage

Please see the sheet *How to Make an Equality Impact Assessment* for assistance to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Participation Strategy.

Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires Authorities to promote and encourage participation and create a Participation Strategy.

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, local authorities in Wales must publish a Participation Strategy which notes the ways that local people are encouraged to participate in the Council's decision-making process.

It is expected that the strategy will evolve and improve over time as good practices emerge and as further technological advances are made.

The draft strategy outlines Cyngor Gwynedd's aim of encouraging people to take part in the decision-making process. The strategy attempts to explain how our objectives in terms of participation will make a genuine difference to the way we engage with people in Gwynedd. Within every objective, we have identified clear outcomes and actions.

This is our first strategy and its implementation will be kept under review.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Manager - on behalf of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 implementation group.

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

This is the second assessment following the results of the public consultation on the first draft of the Participation Strategy.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners whom we will have to work with to carry out this assessment?

Councillors, Staff and the public.

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people who have protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either due to location or due to need), who are living with a socio-economic disadvantage?

No specific steps have been taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, as the Participation Strategy is open to anyone everyone.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

89 responses were received through the public consultation. A report on the results of the consultation is presented to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 14/02/2023 – see the report for full information. In general, the responses to the consultation on the draft strategy were positive, with some comments suggesting improvements. The adaptations to the draft strategy have been included in the Cabinet report.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

We will operate in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Additional evidence has been gathered following the public consultation

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? There is also a need to consider the impact on socio-economic disadvantage and on the Welsh language.

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	none	No impact identified
Disability	Positive / negative	The strategy in its current form identifies the steps in terms of participation that already exist. We must ensure that everyone can take part in any future developments, particularly any developments in terms of technology, ensuring that they are accessible to all. This point was emphasised in the responses to the public consultation.
Gender	none	No impact identified
Age	none	No impact identified

Sexual orientation	none	No impact identified
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	none	No impact identified
Gender reassignment	none	No impact identified
Pregnancy and maternity	none	No impact identified
Marriage and civil partnership	none	No impact identified
The Welsh language	Positive	The strategy outlines the opportunities for individuals to contribute towards the Council's decisions through Welsh or English. As the Strategy is developed further in the future, we will promote input in Welsh from the public.
Socio-economic Disadvantage	none	No impact identified

* To be deleted as required

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	no	
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	Opportunity for any individual to raise matters of importance with the Council.

Foster good relations	Yes	Yes, as above
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* To be deleted as required

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The strategy outlines the opportunities for individuals to contribute towards the Council's decisions through Welsh or English.
As the Strategy is developed further in the future, we will promote input in Welsh from the public.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice so as to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

We will have to ensure that any future technological advances allow input fully through Welsh for any residents.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than improving outcomes for everyone only).

This is the second assessment, undertaken following public consultation on the draft strategy.

We will need to ensure more varied methods of engaging to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged when participating. For example, we will need to be careful not to over-use technology in the future as that could exclude some older members of society who may not be as confident using technology.

3.6 What measures or other changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

We will need to ensure more varied methods of engaging to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged when participating. For example, we will need to be careful not to over-use technology in the future as that could exclude some older members of society who may not be as confident using technology.

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

See the positive impact outlined above by giving an equal opportunity for everyone to participate in the Council's main decision as the developments proceed. (within the scheme's restrictions).

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, due attention must be given to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics. As a Participation Strategy falls within the decisions that could be considered strategic, there is a duty to give due attention to act in a way that has been designed to reduce the inequalities that derive from "socio-economic" disadvantage. The assessment confirms that there are no specific impacts that would support any diversion from the recommendation.

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy/service as it is robust	√
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	

No further steps at present, it is premature to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	
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4.4 If you decide to continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

This is our first strategy. The implementation of the Strategy will be kept under review.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to remove or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The implementation of the Strategy will be kept under review.