

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND PERSONNEL MANAGER

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2016 - 2020

Purpose of Report

To ask Members to comment on the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2016/ - 2020 prior to the plan being published for consultation.

Introduction/Background

The Equality Act 2010 requires public Authorities to prepare a Strategic Equality Plan and update it at least every four years. This draft plan is to replace the Authority's first Equality Plan published in 2012.

How we developed our Equality Objectives

In carrying out this review we used two new sources of information – 'Is Wales Fairer?' by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published in October 2015, and a multi-agency consultation and survey involving most of the public bodies in south and west Wales which was managed by Carmarthen County Council during the second half of 2015.

By mapping the results of these and the Authority's corporate objectives against the Well-being Goals from the Future Generations Act it was possible to identify the appropriate equality objectives.

Financial considerations

All projects indicated in the Equality Plan will be subject to the approved budget.

Risk considerations

No additional risks are involved.

Compliance

Required to comply with Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Human Rights/Equality issues

None.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

None

Welsh Language statement

The approved document will be translated and published on the Authority's website.

Recommendation

Members COMMENT ON the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 before it is published for consultation.

Background Documents

None

(For further information, please contact Alan Hare)

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Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020



March 2016

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Strategic Equality Plan

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Introduction

Our first Strategic Equality Plan was published in March 2012, and as required under the legislation we have carried out a review in order to update it.

The population of the county of Pembrokeshire is 120,000 and within the National Park just 25,000. Local representation and data of any of the characteristic groups is difficult to identify and often non-existent within the area of the National Park.

How we developed our Equality Objectives

In carrying out this review we used two new sources of information – ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published in October 2015, and a multi-agency consultation and survey involving most of the public bodies in south and west Wales which was managed by Carmarthenshire County Council during the second half of 2015.

‘Is Wales Fairer?’ identified seven key challenges:-

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 to 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.

The multi-agency consultation covered ten areas of life (referred to as domains in the report):-

1. Health
2. Education
3. Housing
4. Transport
5. Crime and access to justice
6. Influencing decisions
7. Social, leisure and countryside access
8. Access to care and support
9. Employment
10. Getting along together in a community

(See pages 9 and 10 for more details)

It was evident from feedback received in the consultation that there were some clear key themes which were common to all participating organisations:-

- Communication
- Accessibility
- Staff awareness
- Working together

Corporate planning in the National Park Authority

The role and duties of a National Park Authority focus primarily on conservation and enjoyment of the National Park area and the Authority is not the main public body with duties in the 'domains' included in the consultation.

Alongside this Equality Plan, the Authority prepares an annual Corporate Plan, and the plan for 2016/17 has been prepared in-line with the Welsh Government's well-being goals set out in Well-being of Future Generations Act which is effective from April 2016. The corporate plan therefore sets out the Authority's own well-being objectives.

By mapping the relevant themes and challenges identified from the consultation and by the EHRC against our well-being objectives it was possible to identify where our existing work and activity contributes to equality for both the local population and the wider 'national' audience of visitors to the area. This mapping exercise is included on page 8.

This process, along with the Authority's existing knowledge and experience from previous consultations including the Local Development Plan and National Park Management Plan, has enabled us to identify more closely what is needed from this Equality Plan. We have identified the areas where the Equality Plan can best complement the corporate plan to strengthen our approach to equality challenges. These objectives and associated actions follow.

Equality Objectives

The revised Equality Objectives adopted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority are:

1. To continue removing barriers that can be identified for people accessing PCNPA services
2. To promote greater levels of participation from communities and other stakeholders in the decision making at PCNPA
3. To develop a level of understanding of equality, fairness and justice issues among staff and members as befits a Welsh public sector organisation
4. To promote equality and diversity within the PCNPA workforce.

Projects, Initiatives and Actions to deliver the Equality Objectives

In addressing these objectives, we will take account of the finding from the multi-agency consultation that suggests that, in 2015, disabled, LGB, BME and transgender people self-reported worse experiences across the 10 domains.

Objective 1: To continue removing barriers that can be identified for people accessing PCNPA services

- Respond to access concerns raised by the public.
- Continue to refine the process of undertaking equality impact assessments (EIAs).
- Continue to implement our Social Inclusion and child poverty policies and action plan
- Develop our capacity for improved service delivery to identified groups, such as dementia-friendly, British Sign Language (BSL)
- Work with West Wales Action for Mental Health and other health groups to encourage engagement with the National Park

Objective 2: To promote greater levels of participation from communities and other stakeholders in the decision making at PCNPA

- Mentoring scheme to encourage applications for WG appointees from a wider range of groups
- To develop staff skills in public engagement

Objective 3: To develop a level of understanding of equality, fairness and justice issues among staff and members as befits a Welsh public sector organisation

- Maintain an ongoing cycle of awareness raising, to include hate crime and violence,

Objective 4: To promote equality and diversity within the PCNPA workforce

- Ensure the Authority recruits from a wide pool of applicants and allows candidates to demonstrate potential.
- Work to improve our employment monitoring and pay data and our analysis of the data to allow remedial action as identified
- Ensure that jobs are paid fairly, including maintaining payment of the Living Wage (unless unaffordable)
- Continue to provide trainee opportunities
- Consider adopting a workplace index scheme such as Investors in Diversity, Stonewall, DWP two ticks.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Authority is required by the legislation to make arrangements in order to assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on our ability to comply with the general duty, as well as the impact of any policy or practice that we have decided to review or any proposed revision to a policy or practice.

For each new policy or practice (or revision of an existing policy or practice) the authority will assess the likely impact for its effect on people who share protected characteristics by undertaking an initial screening assessment.

If the policy or practice is likely to have an impact, a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken and an assessment report will be produced. Each assessment report will include the following information:

- the purpose of the policy or practice being assessed whether that is a new policy or an existing policy that is being reviewed or revised;
- a summary of the steps taken to assess the likely impact of the proposed or revised policy or practice;
- a summary of the evidence considered as part of the assessment process;
- the results of the assessment; and
- any decisions taken following the assessment.

Our equality impact assessment form has been updated and relevant staff have received training on both screening for relevance and conducting full equality impact assessments. The outcome of the assessments undertaken will be reported annually.

Monitoring the Plan and Publishing Information

The actions outlined in this plan which contributes to the fulfilment of the equality objectives will be monitored regularly. The results will be reported to the Audit and Corporate Services Committee annually.

Each full Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on any new or revised policy or practice will be published by the Authority on its website. Additionally, a summary of all the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken will be reported to the Audit and Corporate Services Committee.

We are also required by the regulations to report annually and make progress statements on the following:

- the steps that the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;

- in respect of the information that it holds, how the authority has used the information for the purposes of complying with the general duty and the duties of the regulations:
- the reasons for not collecting the relevant information that it identifies but does not hold;
- progress made towards achieving the fulfilment of each equality objective;
- a statement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information , and the steps taken towards achieving the fulfilment of each objectives; and
- the information the authority is required to publish in relation to employment information.

This Strategic Equality Plan will be in place for 4 years, but will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

Contact:

Further information on the details set out in this Strategic Equality Plan by contacting

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Llanion Park,
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Phone 01646 682400
or e-mailing: info@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

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Cross Referencing Well-Being Goals and Objectives

Well-being Goals Themes	Prosperous	Resilience	Health	Equality	Community	Language & Culture	SD Principles (Collaboration, Integration & Involvement)
EHRC Is Wales Fairer?	1.Educational Attainment		5. Mental health services and support	2. Recruitment & Reward, 4. Justice & democracy 7. Abuse & harassment	3. Living conditions/ cohesive communities/ poverty, 6. Treatment in care		
Themes from Consultation				1.Communication 2.Accessibility of services 3.Staff awareness 4.Working together			
PCNPA Corporate Plan: Well-being objectives	To encourage and support the development of sustainable employment and businesses, particularly in tourism and recreation.	To promote and develop the use of ecosystems management	To enable and encourage more people to improve their well-being by making a greater use of the N.P regardless of their circumstances		Work alongside communities to help them make the most of the NPA	To protect and promote the local culture of language, arts and heritage of the area	

Is Wales Fairer?

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Report "Is Wales Fairer?" published in October 2015.

This report identified 7 challenges and commented "These 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 Commission encourages "everyone who wants to make Wales a fairer country to respond to the key challenges".

1. Close attainment gaps in education.

Close attainment gaps by raising standards of children receiving Free School Meals, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), looked-after children and Gypsy and Traveller children.

Reduce exclusions from school and reduce bullying.

2. Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment.

Increase the employment rates of young people, disabled people, ethnic minority people and Muslim people.

Close pay gaps focusing on young people, ethnic minority people and women.

3. Improve living conditions in cohesive communities.

Reduce poverty especially amongst children, disabled people and ethnic minority people. Improve access to care for older people and children. Reduce homelessness, especially for people fleeing domestic abuse and people with poor mental health or learning disabilities.

4. Increase access to justice and encourage democratic participation.

Ensure equal and effective access to civil justice for everyone.

Improve political and civil participation and increase diversity in public life.

5. Improve access to mental health services and support to people experiencing poor mental health.

Improve access to mental health services.

Reduce the rate of suicide especially amongst men.

6. Prevent abuse, neglect and ill-treatment in care and detention.

Prevent abuse, neglect and ill-treatment of children and older people in hospitals and care homes. Protect human rights of people held in detention.

7. Eliminate violence, abuse and harassment in the community.

Eliminate the incidence of violence, abuse and harassment particularly against women, disabled people, ethnic minority people, Muslim people and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

Link to doc <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/wales-fairer>

DRAFT

Summary of findings from the multi agency consultation

A consortium of many of the public bodies in south west Wales and Powys, led by Carmarthenshire County Council undertook a major multi-agency engagement exercise, open to staff, partners and stakeholders and the general public, which included a comprehensive survey and a series of engagement events within the four counties.

It was evident from feedback received that there were some clear key themes which were common to all participating organisations:-

Communication: between organisations and between organisations and the public. This will ensure people are aware of the services available to them and know how to become involved in the work of organisations. The method of communication needs to be suited to the needs of people, particularly in relation to languages (including BSL) and alternative formats

Accessibility: in relation to buildings, services and information. The issue emphasises the need to consider how inclusive public organisations are

Staff awareness: is key in making sure people from protected groups have positive experiences of services.

Working together: communities and organisations collaborating to help achieve a more cohesive community

The following themes emerged in relation to protected groups:-

Disabled people appear to have the worst overall experiences across the ten domains, though particularly in relation to access to transport, social, leisure and countryside access and employment. Furthermore, the overall result is generally close to the result from disabled people themselves, suggesting widespread understanding of the issues disabled people may face. Males, females, single people, those in a relationship and those holding a religion or belief are generally considered to have experiences that are no better or worse than the population as a whole.

No group appears to have better overall experiences, though younger people are considered to have better experiences of education, and pregnant women or those who have recently given birth are considered to have better experiences of health, housing, and access to care and support.

The following can be summarised in relation to the ten domains:

Health: older, transgender and disabled people are the groups considered to have the worst experiences. LGB people self-report worse experiences than public perceptions. Significantly, respondents with caring responsibilities thought both disabled and older people had worse experiences than the overall results suggested.

Education: disabled, older, transgender, LGB and BME people are considered to have the worst experiences. When considering lived reality, BME and LGB people

reported significantly worse experiences than the perception of other respondents. Comments suggest issues with prejudice, and access barriers.

Housing: there is a perception that BME people and those who are pregnant (or with young children) have better experiences. Younger and single people are considered to have the worst experiences. When considering self-reported experiences, those for disabled and LGB people are significantly worse, suggesting poor experiences for housing for these two groups.

Access to transport: disabled (in particular) and older people are thought to have poorer experiences, whereas other groups are considered to have experiences no better or worse than the population as a whole. Carers believe that older, and disabled people have worse experiences than respondents as a whole.

Crime and access to justice: a number of the protected characteristics are thought to have worse experiences; in particular, younger, BME and transgender people. In terms of self-reported experiences, the results for BME, disabled, LGB and transgender people are all worse than the perceptions of respondents taken as a whole.

Influencing decisions: younger, disabled, transgender and BME people are thought to have worse experiences of influencing decisions. Considering self-reported experiences, the position for disabled, LBG, and transgender people, is worse than the perception of respondents taken as a whole.

Social, leisure and countryside access: Disabled and, to a lesser extent, older people are seen to have worse experiences, while the result for most groups shows little variance from the position for the population as a whole. The prevailing theme to emerge concerned accessibility issues for disabled people.

Access to care and support: older people were considered to have worse experiences, with pregnant women or those with young children having better experiences. The self-reported results showed variance in some cases, with much worse experiences reported by disabled, LGB and transgender people. Carers were much more likely to think disabled and older people had worse experiences.

Employment: the results show a number of groups may have poorer experiences – with disabled, older, and those pregnant / with small children faring the worst. Only men and single people are thought to have experiences no better or worse than the population as a whole (all others being worse). Considering self-reported results, BME, disabled, LGB, younger people, women and transgender all have worse experiences than the perception of respondents as a whole.

Getting along together in the community: BME, disabled, transgender and LGB people are all thought to have worse experiences. This is also true of the self-reported results for these groups. Key themes included: unwillingness to mix and fear of difference; access issues; and communication difficulties arising from language (including competence in English and Welsh, and BSL).

Background Information

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated in 1952 under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

The National Park covers 62,000 hectares, primarily along 416 kilometres of coastline and the Daugleddau Estuary, and with the historic Preseli Hills in the north. About 24,000 people live in the Park, which also receives about 4.7 million visitor days each year.

Approximately 16% of the residents of the National Park are Welsh speaking, mostly in the northern part of the Park.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was established by the Environment Act 1995 as a single purpose local authority. It has the following purposes as defined by the Act:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the (National) Park by the public.

The Authority has responsibilities for planning, conservation, land management, access and recreation but not for elderly care, schools, highways, emptying bins and other Local Authority duties.

The Act goes on to say that in pursuing National Park Purposes the National Park Authority shall seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic and social development within the area of the National Park.

Additionally under the Environment Act 1995 the Authority is the local planning authority for the whole of the National Park. The Authority is therefore responsible for the production of the Park Management Plan, Local Development Plan and for the determination of planning applications.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is about ensuring a fair deal for everyone and focuses on ending discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and outcome and fostering good relations between different individuals and communities.

It replaces the previous 116 different equality statutes in one all encompassing statute. It simplifies and clarifies the role of public Authorities as leaders in achieving equality improvements for their citizens and communities. Specific duties developed by the Welsh Government provide detailed and challenging requirements for Authorities but an overall emphasis on 'due regard' leaves authorities with greater freedom to produce distinctive local solutions and greater accountability to their communities.

Who is protected under the Act?

The Act sets out a new prescribed list of protected characteristics which replace what have traditionally been referred to as Equality Strands. These groups are protected through the general and specific duties of the Act.

The new general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- **Age**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Sex**
- **Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality**
- **Disability**
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Religion or belief**

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The General Duty

Public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing these equality aims involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;

- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Specific Duties

In addition to the general duty, the Welsh Assembly Government has introduced specific duties for public authorities in Wales. These specific duties are outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

The specific duties in Wales cover:

- Objectives
- Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessing impact
- Equality information
- Employment information
- Pay differences
- Staff training
- Procurement
- Annual reporting
- Publishing
- Welsh Minister's reporting
- Review
- Accessibility