

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY
PLAN AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME
2013/14**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To endorse the annual monitoring reports for the period 2013-14 for both the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme, prior to publication and distribution to the relevant regulatory bodies. The reports are available in the Members' library and on the Council's website.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council has a statutory duty to produce annual monitoring reports for its Strategic Equality Plan and its Welsh Language Scheme.

2.02 The Equality Act 2010 placed a specific duty on public bodies which requires them to draw up a strategic equality plan and publish equality objectives. An annual report is required to be published by 31 March each year setting out the progress made to achieve the equality objectives.

2.03 The Council published its four year Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) in April 2012 which sets out the steps that will be taken to achieve the equality objectives. This is the second annual monitoring report for the SEP for the 2013-14 financial year.

2.04 The Council's Welsh Language Scheme, which was prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993, sets out how the Council will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality, when providing services to the public, and in the conduct of its internal business. The Welsh Language Scheme is both a statutory Scheme and a corporate policy document on bilingualism. This is the final annual report for the Welsh Language Scheme. It will be replaced by the implementation of the new Welsh Language Standards in February 2015. The Welsh Language Commissioner has not yet confirmed the future reporting arrangements for the new Standards.

2.05 The Council is required by the Welsh Language Act 1993 to submit an

annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Commissioner. It has been agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner to submit the monitoring report in September 2014. The Welsh Language Commissioner has set out the information which must be included in the report. She will respond to the report and may request additional evidence and make recommendations for improvement.

- 2.06 Both the annual monitoring reports highlight the Council's progress in implementing the SEP and Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) for the period 2013-14 and show case examples of good practice. These reports also include a self assessment RAG status, assessing overall progress and confidence in achieving the equality objectives and Welsh language targets.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Both the annual monitoring reports highlight the Council's progress in implementing the SEP and Welsh Language Scheme (WLS) for the period 2013-14 and show case examples of good practice. These include:
- The Sports Development Team attained the first tier 'Ribbon' standard of Disability Sport Wales' *insport* development programme. This national kite mark award recognises the team's commitment towards the inclusive provision of sport and physical activity opportunities for disabled people.
 - The Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy was launched and supported by training for managers and employees.
 - The Community Services Directorate were runners up in The Minister's Special Award for the best initiative at the Health and Social Care Welsh language awards 2014 for Llys Jasmine Extra Care Scheme. A Welsh language pilot conversation group for tenants has been established at the Llys Jasmine Extra Care Housing Scheme, a housing project for older people and older people with dementia.
 - Within Leisure Services, Welsh speakers and Welsh learners hold impromptu 'Welsh for 20 minutes' over the course of a week, where everyone is encouraged to talk in Welsh. This has improved the confidence of the Welsh learners and also encourages first language Welsh speakers to use Welsh in the workplace.
 - Flintshire Youth Service is working with Welsh Language groups, including the URDD to arrange projects for young people supporting them to develop and use organisational, financial and cookery skills.

- 3.02 However there are areas for improvement in both equality and Welsh language and progress has been inconsistent across services. There is a lack of robust baseline equality data. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to reduce known inequalities; capturing baseline data is critical to being able to measure improvements and to check whether specific inequalities have been reduced by 2016. It was anticipated that more detailed data sets would have been available for this 2013/2014 annual report. Capturing equality monitoring data needs to be accelerated during the next 12 months. Some of the actions from the Welsh Language Scheme that have not been completed are outstanding from 2009, when they were identified as improvement areas by the Welsh Language Board. These also need to be reviewed as relevant actions to meet the new standards.
- 3.03 Further integration of the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh language scheme implementation plan within the business planning framework will facilitate robust and regular reporting and ensure key officers are aware of their responsibilities.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Cabinet endorse the annual monitoring reports for the period 2013 – 2014 for both the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme prior to publication and formal submission to the relevant regulatory bodies.
- 4.02 Cabinet receive a further report on the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards as and when more details are received from the Welsh Language Commissioner.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 There are no financial implications to this report; the annual monitoring reports set out progress that has been made to achieve targets and commitments within the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 Achieving the equality objectives will have a positive impact on people from protected groups who experience poverty.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 An Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required for the annual reports. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan and

the Welsh Language Scheme is to promote equality for, and eliminate discrimination experienced by protected groups and Welsh speakers. Implementing the Welsh Language Scheme will also have a positive impact on the Welsh language.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this report. However, the effective implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme is dependent on staff having an awareness and understanding of their requirements and how they impact on their posts.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None required.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Equality Representatives and managers were consulted in order to update both the action plans and provide information for the annual monitoring reports.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 Annual Report 2013-2014 Strategic Equality Plan
(available in Member's Library and on the Council's website)

Appendix 2 Annual Monitoring Report 2013 -2014 Welsh Language Scheme (available in Member's Library and on the Council's website)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Contact Officer: Fiona Mocko
Telephone: 01352 702122
Email: fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk