



Board Paper

Paper Title:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
Paper Reference:	20-09-B09
Paper Sponsored By:	Prys Davies Director for Corporate Strategy and Development
Paper Presented By:	Julie Newton HR Team Leader

Purpose of Paper:	To agree the Strategic Equality Objectives and the development of an NRW-specific plan that supports its implementation.
Recommendation:	To approve our Strategic Equalities Objectives

Issue

1. Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) for 2015–2019 was extended by one year to 2020 to align us with partner public bodies. This was to enable us to work with partner public bodies on a new SEP in line with the five ways of working outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
2. During 2019/20, we have been working in partnership with the following public bodies:
 - Arts Council for Wales
 - Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
 - Careers Wales
 - ESTYN
 - Health Education and Improvement Wales
 - Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
 - National Museum Wales
 - Sport Wales
 - Velindre University NHS Trust
 - Welsh Language Commissioner
 - Welsh Revenue Authority
3. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) supported the eleven public bodies to develop the shared strategic objectives set out in the proposed SEP. In addition, [Diverse Cymru](#) co-ordinated public consultation for a period of 9 weeks, between 25th November 2019 and 26 January 2020. A total of four public events were held across Wales between 26 November and 2 December, and NRW hosted one of the events in Aberystwyth.

4. The outcome of this joint-working has been to develop a set of Shared Equality Objectives to help achieve the eight strategic aims of the Welsh Government. Annex A shows the shared objectives. These eight strategic aims are to help address inequalities across Wales identified by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) most recent report '[Is Wales fairer?](#)'.
5. To be compliant with our [Public Sector Equalities Duties](#) we need to publish our Strategic Equalities Plan by the end of September. This has been extended from March due to Covid19.
6. A draft Strategic Equality Plan was shared with the Board in March. As a result of that discussion, it was agreed that a small working group, made up of Zoe Henderson, Julia Cherret, Catherine Brown, Prys Davies, Gareth O'Shea and Steve Burton would consider whether the Strategic Equality Plan was fit for purpose set against the Corporate plan objectives and, more critically, how we make diversity and inclusion an intrinsic part of NRW's culture and way of working.

Our Revised Strategic Equality Plan

7. The working group has met on a number of occasions. The discussions have highlighted that we have a good starting place in terms of our engagement with a variety of external stakeholders (albeit we have recognised this may be narrow in focus), we have a variety of internal networks which support our work and our values support this agenda .
8. However, there was also a recognition that we need a clearer strategic articulation of how a focus on diversity and inclusion can help us deliver our strategic objectives as an organisation. Embedding inclusion into our everyday work, particularly in terms of how we engage all elements of the communities that we serve, was seen as critical. Securing external expert support to help us develop our strategic plan was seen as essential. This will help us consider how we engage effectively with stakeholders as well as ensure that equality and diversity is reflected in all we do, from SMNR, corporate planning, our policies and procedures as well as the working culture in NRW. The Group were clear that this was not solely a HR issue – creating a genuinely inclusive and diverse organisation and culture was a collective challenge for the Board and the Executive
9. The Working Group concluded that we should publish the Shared Strategic Equality Plan (**Annex 1**) as the initial basis on which to develop a more specific NRW Strategic Equality Plan and objectives. Publishing at the shared SEP - Annex 1 will ensure that we are compliant with our Public Sector Equalities Duties. This is similar to how other public sector partners have used the shared objectives.
10. The actions and timescales for developing the NRW plan are as follows

When	What	Expected Outcome
September	Commission external support	To help us develop a plan to ensure we embed diversity and inclusion as

		an intrinsic part of NRW way of working with communities and forms part of our culture
October/November	Work with existing internal network groups and staff engagement sessions	Staff and stakeholders have a voice into the plan.
December	Finalise the plan	A 4-year action plan
January Board	Plan presented to Board	Approval

11. Once the NRW action plan has been developed, it will be brought back to the Working Group and then the Board for discussion and approval.

Recommendations

12. We recommend that the Shared Strategic Equalities Plan (**Annex 1**) are adopted as NRW's Strategic Equalities Objectives.

13. We also recommend that work continues on the development of a full implementation plan, with external support to assist implementation. We will continue to involve the Working Group on the development of this plan and aim to bring back the completed plan by January 2020.

Next Steps

14. To commission external support and publish our Strategic Equalities Plan on our website, with a covering note from Clare Pillman (CEO) and a note to advise the supporting action plan is being developed.

Risks

15. Given the recent high-profile issues regarding race and diversity in general, we do not become an employer of choice nor an organisation that listens.

16. We fail to meet our Corporate objectives because we don't listen to the variety of community voices.

17. Securing good external support may be difficult to source get in within the timescales.

Equality Impact Assessment

18. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the Shared Equality Plan and attached in **Annex 2**.

Index of Annexes

Annex 1 – Shared Equality Objectives

Annex 2 – Equality Impact Assessment