

27 March 2015

Paper Title	Equality Annual Report 2014/15, Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and Action Plan
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 21.15
Sponsored by: Paper Prepared By:	Ashleigh Dunn Derek Carpenter

Purpose of Paper:	Decision - To seek agreement to publish the Equality Annual Report 2014/15 - To seek agreement to publish the Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan
Recommendation:	- To agree the Equality Annual Report - To agree the Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan
Decision Required:	Yes

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: We help people to understand the benefits of a good environment and actively promote the use of the natural resources of Wales to all. Through respecting our workforce, people will contribute more effectively to taking care of our environment. Impact on the Economy: Encouraging the use of the natural resources of Wales, across the diversity of the population, should have a positive impact on the economy. Impact on Community: As an employer of staff in Wales and working with partners and communities across the country, it is essential that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) sets high standards across all aspects of equality and diversity. Impact on Knowledge: The Equality Annual Report is NRW's second to date and will help people to understand progress over 2014/15. Through the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-19, we will gather evidence to inform our future ambitions for equality and diversity and monitor progress.
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Issue

1. To seek the Board's approval to NRW's Equality Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan, to be published as required by The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Summary

2. We want to be an exemplar public service organisation that respects our customers and gives excellent customer care. Providing everybody with the opportunity of experiencing our services is key to our success. We also care for our staff and recognise that we get the best out of people when they are treated fairly and can be themselves. This guiding belief reflects our values and behaviours (Roadmap) which enables our journey to success.
3. The draft Equality Annual Report 2014/15 and the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan give NRW a clear direction of travel to achieve our ambitions.

Background

4. **NRW Equality Annual Report 2014/15** (Annex 1): The Annual Report indicates a number of key achievements. These include the benchmarking results from the Stonewall Cymru Workplace Equality Index where NRW has improved by 58 places in the listing of top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff.
5. Three new staff networks have been established. These are the Assisted User Group, which focuses on the accessibility of NRW computer and telephony systems, NRW's Faith Network (the Christian Fellowship is the first group to be established) and the People's Network which focuses on gender issues.
6. NRW's Equality and Diversity (E&D) Forum now has more focus and fuller representation from Board, Executive Team, Trade Unions, each Directorate and our staff networks.
7. The new Finance and HR system, MyNRW, creates an opportunity to develop better information to support equality and diversity improvement. Staff will be encouraged to self-disclose diversity information, with assurances on confidentiality.
8. **Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19** (Annex 2): The Board¹ meeting in October 2014, gave approval to proceed with consultation on the draft Equality Objectives.
9. The draft Equality Objectives were made available on the NRW website for comment from 28th October 2014 to 6th January 2015. Both staff and the public were invited to review the objectives and to submit consultation responses. Those who attended our involvement events in the summer were made aware of the consultation process.

¹ NRW B B 70.14 Establishing a Strategic Equality Plan (2015-19) for Natural Resources Wales

10. While the level of response was low, they were of good quality. This, together with the feedback received from the involvement events, have helped shape the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and the supporting Action Plan. The draft objectives have undergone minor edits since they were last presented to the Board to give more focus and clarity.
11. The draft Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan was discussed at NRW's E&D Forum meeting on the 14th January 2015 and the Executive Team meeting on the 3rd March 2015.
12. To achieve these Equality Objectives, the Action Plan contains a number of key tasks, together with areas of responsibility and milestones. Performance will be managed through the E&D Forum and periodic reports on key issues will also be made to the Executive Team and Board.
13. Key areas that the Action Plan covers include:
 - a. continual engagement with protected characteristic groups so that NRW understands the impact our work can have on communities.
 - b. engaging with and training staff to encourage a healthy working culture where all are cherished and respected.
 - c. looking at policies to ensure they are inclusive, and
 - d. understanding how natural resource management can deliver improved outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

Next Steps

14. The agreed Equality Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan will be published on the NRW website and will be submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commissioner. Following publication, the Action Plan will be implemented through the Directorate Delivery Plans so as to embed equality and diversity in all that we do. The E&D Forum will steer the work and regularly review progress made and report in future Equality Annual Reports.

Risks

15. The publication of our Equality Annual Report and our Strategic Equality Plan and supporting Action Plan enables NRW to meet its legal obligations. Failure to do so would present significant risks to the organisation, in terms of legal requirements, governance and reputation.

Financial Implications

16. A budget has been identified for 2015/16 to support the growing number of Staff Networks as well as benchmarking NRW against other similar organisations.

Communications

17. Once approved, the Equality Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19 and supporting Action Plan will be published on our website. Those who have contributed will be informed of these publications. An Easy Read version of the Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan will also be produced.

18. Internally, various channels will be used including an intranet highlight, Yammer and management updates. Managers of public facing facilities will be sent a personal copy and given the opportunity to meet with the Equalities Senior Advisor to discuss implementation.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

19. An EqIA has been completed and attached (Annex 3).

Index of Annex

1. Equality Annual Report 2014 - 2015
2. Strategic Equality Plan 2015 – 2019 and Equality Action Plan
3. SEP Equality Impact Assessment