

Board Paper

09 October 2015

Paper Title	Equality and Diversity mid-year update and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Paper Reference:	NRW B B 57.15
Paper Prepared By: Sponsor: Author:	Ashleigh Dunn Derek Carpenter

Purpose of Paper:	Information and decision
Recommendation:	This paper gives a mid-year update on E&D key milestones and events for information; and includes the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Annex 2) for agreement.
Decision Required:	To seek the Board's agreement to publish the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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: This paper is a mid-year update on equalities developments within NRW. It also provides through two annex documents an update on how we are progressing with the 2015/16 Equality Action Plan and a copy of the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
--	--

Background

1. At the Board meeting on the 27th March 2015, the Board agreed to publish the Equality Annual Report 2014/15 and Strategic Equality Plan 2015/19. These documents have been published on our website.
2. The Board fed back that the Annual Report provided a baseline but that for some areas there was further work to do to understand the current position and that the full functionality of MyNRW will support this development.

Current Position

Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan.

3. The Equality Action Plan was discussed at the last E&D Forum meeting and much progress has been achieved. Many of the objectives focus on getting out and engaging with our customers and raising awareness of what we offer people.
4. A particular example of doing this is a case at Cors Y Llyn. Visitor numbers suggested the wheelchair friendly routes either weren't good enough or people simply weren't aware. As a result we invited Powys Physical Disability and Sensory Loss (PDSL) engagement forum to help us identify improvements. As a result we have completed a lot of work on site. PDSL member Margaret Seaman told us, "I sat on all the new seats! It's a lovely trail in the wildflower meadow – lots of butterflies, lots of scents and sounds. I'm looking forward to using this as a location for regular day trips from now on!"
5. A six month update on the Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan is in Annex 1 and a full report will be made to the Board at the next update on 17 March 2016.

E&D Forum

6. The E&D Forum have met twice since the last Board update. A face to face meeting/training day was in April where general diversity and inclusion training was delivered and also a talk given by Roz Owen (Wales Recreation and Access Manager) explaining our four enabling plans and how they tie-in with the Strategic Equality Plan.
 - Outdoor Recreation and Access
 - Communities and Regeneration
 - Education and Skills
 - Interpretation and Engagement
7. The 'golden threads' linking all four plans and equality are partnership & integrated delivery, national principles for public engagement, Wellbeing of Future Generations principles, behavioural change, improved social equity and community cohesion and reducing poverty.
8. At the our recent Skype meeting in August, we welcomed two new staff networks, Gender Equality Network and People's Network, discussed the Shared Parental Leave Policy and made recommendations for consideration by the Partnership Forum.

9. The Gender Equality Network will work in partnership to create a safe, inclusive and diverse working environment that encourages respect and equality for all, regardless of their gender. As part of the Terms of Responsibility, we will be looking at this group to explore issues around gender balance across seniority. It is recognised that some future issues may benefit by having either specifically a female or male leading on the topic but the overall lead on gender equality as a staff network is David Jones.
10. The People's Network is the umbrella for all of our protected characteristic staff networks. In addition it will be a 'go-to' intranet page for coaching, sports and social clubs, staff benefits and rewards etc.

Self-disclosure

11. We now have a mechanism to collect self-disclosure data using MyNRW. This went live at the beginning of October following work to conclude IT security issues and communications going out across the organisation.
12. Data will be available for the end of the financial year Equality Annual Report.

Our Policies

13. Progress is currently being made on two documents, the NRW Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our Transsexual Policy.
14. **The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** once signed-off will set out how we will treat all partners, employees, prospective employees, contractors, visitors, clients and suppliers. The policy will meet the business and operational needs of Natural Resources Wales and also complies with the Equality Act 2010 with particular reference to the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
15. A key principle of the policy is that we recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and we will strive for fairness and equality of opportunity in all areas of employment, identifying and removing barriers that prevent any employee from progressing and developing their potential and supporting and encouraging employee networks to provide peer group support.
16. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been shared with the Partnership Forum and is included at annex 2 for Board approval.
17. **The Transsexual Policy** currently being drafted states that we will recognise the gender in which an individual chooses to live their life. This includes recognising and supporting a person's self-identity as male or female irrespective of the physical gender to which they were born.
18. There is a specific need for this policy as Section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 prohibits employers from making known the gender of an individual who is protected by the Act and carries criminal sanctions. Both line managers and staff need to have as much information to hand as possible to give clear guidance.

Stonewall benchmarking

19. During July and August, a team consisting of the Equalities Senior Advisor, members of the LGBT+ Network and Procurement drafted our Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submission.

20. Our third annual submission was submitted on the 3rd of September and we hope that the improvements in E&D across the organisation will help us to again rise up in the rankings. There is a staff survey which also contributes to our score which Board Members are more than welcome to complete.
21. Making this submission completes an action in our Equality Action Plan and contributes to our Corporate Plan “benchmarking ourselves against the very best”.

Staff Networks

22. The number of staff networks has grown since the last Board update and we now have five. These are...

- Assisted User Group (IT & Telephony) – Part of the wider disabilities networks
- Christian Fellowship – Part of the wider faith networks
- Gender Equality Network
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Network
- People’s Network

23. The Equalities Senior Advisor is continuing to support the networks, help to embed them into the organisation and ensure they work together to achieve the greatest outcome for the organisation. Each network lead contributes to the E&D Forum.

Training

24. Building on previous training, we have approached Stonewall Cymru to put together a training package covering general equality and diversity.
25. Stonewall delivered our first course to the E&D Forum in April and was very well received. Following this a further course was delivered to the Transformation portfolio leads. Training for Board Members has been postponed until the new Board Members are in place.
26. Internally Derek Carpenter has delivered E&D training to our Harvesting teams in two sessions, north and south Wales, during September.

Risks

27. None; this paper is for information only.

Financial Implications

28. None; this paper is for information only.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

29. This paper does not require an EqIA as it is an update on equality and diversity and will not be able to impact on people either directly or indirectly.

List of annex

- Annex 1 – Six month update on SEP and Action Plan
Annex 2 – DRAFT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy