

# STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2024-2028

## Consultation Document and Questionnaire

*This document is also available in Welsh.*

*If you require this document and questionnaire in any other formats or languages, or would like more information, please use the contact details on the next page.*

## OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's 2024-2028 Strategic Equality Objectives.

The themes and objectives from the 2020-2024 plan are still important, and we are asking whether anything else needs to be included.

The purpose of the Equality Objectives is to ensure that we are strengthening our due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**HOW TO RESPOND:** Questions are summarised in Appendix 1. The questionnaire is accessible using the following link;

[Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 Online Questionnaire](#)

Paper copies of the questionnaire and this consultation document are available in the Civic Centre or you can request a copy to be printed and collected.

Please use this questionnaire or the online form to provide your feedback.

If you require support in completing the questionnaire please use the contact details below.

The consultation documents and questionnaire can also be accessed from our corporate website at: [Our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#)

Responses can be emailed or posted using the contact details below.

## CONTACT DETAILS:

Equalities

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Civic Centre

Castle Street

Merthyr Tydfil

CF47 8AN

Email: [equalities@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@merthyr.gov.uk)

Tel: 01685 725000 and ask for the Equalities section.

## **OUR EQUALITIES VISION**

*“A place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.”*

The Council will work towards achieving this Vision through our role as a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer, and we will work in partnership to reduce inequalities, tackle discrimination, and to improve the well-being of the residents of the County Borough.

## **OUR CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES 2023-2028**

The new Corporate Well-being objectives were approved in April 2023. These are shown in the table below, and are contained within the Statement of Wellbeing 2023-2028.

<p><b>‘An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning’</b>          We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential.</p>
<p><b>‘A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil’</b>          We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives.</p>
<p><b>‘A Safe &amp; Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil’</b>          We will support how our economy recovers and grows; ensuring people feel safe in their local area.</p>
<p><b>‘A Clean &amp; Green Merthyr Tydfil’</b>          We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future.</p>

Figure 1.1. Table showing MTCBC Well-being objectives 2023-2028

## **EQUALITY ACT 2010 AND PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for Local Authorities. As stated above, this places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

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

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public bodies/local authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies, the delivery of services, and that they are kept under review.

The Act replaced the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality and extends across all of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, which set out the actions the Council must take in order to comply. Public bodies must set equality objectives and publish a Strategic Equality Plan every four years. In developing these objectives, the Council must involve people who represent the interests of people who share one or more of the protected characteristics and have an interest in the way that the Council carries out its functions. There are also other duties the Council must ensure to meet the Act.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

The Socio-Economic Duty places a responsibility on the Council to actively consider (pay due regard) how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. The new duty came into force on 31 March 2021.

Those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage are more likely to have poorer outcomes in the areas of work, living standards, health, justice, and participation in public life.

The duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

The duty is a key mechanism in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

### **WHAT IS THIS CONSULTATION ABOUT?**

The purpose of this consultation is to ensure we are engaging with our communities on setting our new Equality Objectives, and giving people the opportunity to participate and work with us in the development, whilst also meeting our statutory duties.

The Council has a duty to publish Equality Objectives to ensure we are making progress in advancing equality and inclusion for all protected characteristic groups. The objectives as set out in the Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Council's approach to equality and diversity in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil and equality and diversity to the workforce of the Council.

The Council's Strategic Equality Plan ensures that the Local Authority focuses on the outcomes that matter to the community and people who use Council services; and that services are accessible and delivered effectively. The plan will also capture a range of actions that will contribute towards the Equality objectives.

The existing Equality Objectives for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council were published in March 2020.

In October 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published *'Is Wales Fairer?' 2018*. This examines the evidence of how Wales is performing on equality and human rights and highlights the challenges and solutions to make Wales fairer. It sets out recommendations for key partners to implement.

The EHRC looked across six themes of life:

- Education
- Health,
- Living Standards,
- Justice and Security
- Work
- Participation

An *'Is Wales Fairer?' 2023* is scheduled to be published in October/November of 2023. This consultation document focuses on the objectives and the long term aims. This document does not include any actions that will contribute to achieving the objectives.

### **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out a duty to maximise the contribution to the seven well-being goals. We need to incorporate the goals into all of our work and ensure that we consider the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. The Council's Equality Objectives will contribute to delivering the seven Well-being Goals in particular *'A more equal Wales'* and *'A Wales of cohesive communities'*.

The seven well-being goals are shown below;

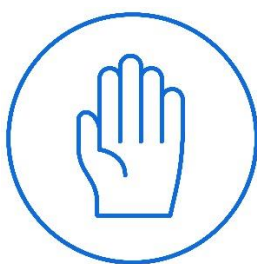


This Act also requires us to apply the sustainable development principles, the five ways of working in all of our work. The five ways of working are:

- Looking to the **long term** so that we do not negatively impact future generations. Balancing short term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet longer-term needs.
- **Preventing** problems from occurring or getting worse in the future and examining how we can understand the problem to find solutions.
- **Collaborating** with others to share and find sustainable solutions and that could help meet the well-being objectives.
- **Integrating** approaches with internal strategies, well-being goals, objectives of the Council, and the objectives of other public bodies.
- **Involving** people in decisions that affect them and with an interest in the well-being goals, ensuring the people represent the diversity of the area.



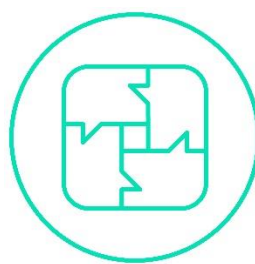
Long Term



Prevention



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement

These principles will be used to guide the development of our Equality Objectives and the actions we will take to deliver each objective.

We will develop Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) actions will support in the delivery of these objectives. We will also ensure we review our plan regularly to identify progress.

### **KEY WELSH GOVERNMENT PLANS**

The Welsh Government, working with key partners and communities, has developed the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales and Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The Welsh Government has brought together their existing commitments and set out how they intend to advance equality and inclusion, to make a real difference to the lives, prospects, and outcomes for LGBTQ+ people, and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, today and in the future.

### **LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales**

The plan will act as the framework for LGBTQ+ policy development and sets out the concrete steps they will take to challenge discrimination and strengthen equality for LGBTQ+ people.

This LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales has been established to help coordinate action by the Welsh Government and other agencies. The plan sets out an overarching vision to improve the lives of, and outcomes for, LGBTQ+ people. It includes a wide range of policy-specific actions relating to human rights, education, improving safety, housing, health and social care, sport, culture, and promoting community

cohesion. In particular, through this Action Plan, the Welsh Government commits to defend and promote the rights and dignity of trans and non-binary people, and to make those communities feel welcome and included in Welsh society, and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

**Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on people from ethnic minority communities. This is underscored by social and structural differences, leading to health disparities and a range of other inequalities.

The vision is to make Wales an anti-racist nation. The purpose of the plan is ‘to collectively make a significant change to the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people’. In developing the action plan, the focus was on 6 ways in which racism impacts on the lives of ethnic minority people, for example, experience of racism in everyday life, when experiencing service delivery, being part of the workforce, gaining jobs and opportunities, seeing visible role models in positions of power, and experiences as a refugee or asylum seeker.

**OUR CURRENT EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

<b>EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2020-2024</b>
<p><b>THEME: INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION</b></p> <p><b>Objective: Engage with our Citizens to participate and have their voices heard to understand and respond to the needs of our communities.</b></p> <p>Community engagement, inclusion and participation is vital to the Council in achieving positive change for the community. Without knowing more about the people that make up the communities in Merthyr Tydfil we are unable to identify specific issues or barriers that may prevent them accessing our services or engaging with the Council when they need to. A clear understanding of who lives within the local area is essential in providing services to the public. Involving residents in decision-making creates strong communities. Some protected groups face significant barriers on a daily basis which can impact on their participation in community life and when accessing services. By understanding these barriers, we are able to provide better services to our residents. Engagement is not only a key means of improving services, but also a statutory responsibility in relation to Equality, as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).</p>
<p><b>THEME: COMMUNITY COHESION</b></p> <p><b>Objective: Promote and facilitate inclusive, safe and cohesive communities.</b></p> <p>Although Merthyr Tydfil has a proud and diverse heritage, we recognise that under reporting of hate crime still needs to be addressed. We need to raise awareness of what a hate crime is and ensure the public know how and where to report hate crime. Community cohesion is essential in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on together and enables a sense of belonging. This enables people to effectively feel safer and more secure in their communities. A community where people have increased contact and are able to forge greater relationships</p>



with others and an increased understanding of different cultures is less likely to foster extremist views.

**THEME: INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

**Objective: Create an inclusive and diverse workforce, which reflects the communities in Merthyr Tydfil.**

Nationally there is a need to ensure understanding of requirements to collect and use employment information on all protected characteristics. Also nationally, IT systems or alternative solutions need to support the collection, recording and use of required employment information. We need to do more to raise awareness about what support is available to those with protected characteristics, not just at recruitment but also throughout the workplace journey. To get the best out of our employees and ensure they provide the best services to our residents we need a workplace culture that is safe and inclusive. To do this we need to know more about the diversity of our workforce and continue to ensure our services are inclusive.

**THEME: GENDER / EQUAL PAY**

**Objective: Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.**

As a Council we are required to consider any pay differences that exist across the organisation and to identify an objective that will address any difference identified. Nationally whilst pay systems are important in determining pay equity, there are a number of other issues that are relevant in determining what women and men are paid. These include occupational segregation; availability of full/part-time work in different occupational groups, e.g. lower paid job roles being mainly part-time whilst higher paid more senior roles being mainly full time; availability of family friendly policies and support and organisational culture.

**THEME: ACCESSIBLE SERVICES**

**Objective: Understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing our services.**

Barriers experienced by groups and individuals may include physical access to buildings, access to information in appropriate formats to suit their needs, transport, unemployment, mental health difficulties, access to technology etc. We want to find out more about how people access our services to ensure that the services we offer and how we offer our services reflect the diversity of our communities. We need to raise awareness and improve our understanding of the issues people face when accessing our services to remove barriers. Effective engagement and monitoring of information will assist in informing us of the accessibility of services to our customers. We want to empower groups with protected characteristics to be able to access the services offered by the Council. More services are being accessed digitally which allows people to be more engaged and allows us to reach more a wider audience. We need to consider mechanisms for reaching all members of the community. Ensuring that there is clear signage, lighting, readable formats for service users ensuring that physical access and digital access is appropriate.



## **WHAT ARE WE ASKING YOU TO CONSIDER?**

We are asking you to consider the following when answering the questions:

- **What challenges are people facing within the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil?**
- **Do the themes and objectives adequately address these challenges?**
- **Should these themes and objectives continue into the 2024-2028 plan?**
- **Is there anything missing that we need to consider?**
- **What more could we do to improve?**
- **How can we better provide our services to meet the needs of our communities?**
- **What do you think needs to be included within our 2024-2028 Strategic Equality Plan?**

Note: This is not exhaustive, as we want to capture all of your views.

## **LINKING OBJECTIVES TO ACTIONS**

For each of the objectives, a number of key actions will be developed and we aim to identify how each demonstrates how the objective will be achieved.

This consultation does not include the specific actions that will be included in the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028. These will be developed during and following the consultation, working with senior managers, leaders and staff. The final plan may also not include all of the actions the Council intends to undertake but will focus on key actions.

## **WHAT WE WILL DO AFTER THE CONSULTATION**

The consultation will begin in August 2023 and will be ongoing over the following months. Outcomes will be analysed to develop our four year Strategic Equality Plan. The plan will be published on the corporate website by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it reflects the needs of the communities, and any new developments in legislation or guidance. Stakeholder groups will be engaged with and involved with in this process. This approach will allow us to better understand the needs of our communities and enable us to have more insight into providing better services through better understanding of lived experiences.

We will consider all views when finalising our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.

## **HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION**

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is committed to upholding your privacy rights. We will only use your personal information for lawful purposes. If you would like to find out more about how we use your personal information please read our privacy notice which is available on our website using the following link. [Privacy Notice | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)

**APPENDIX 1**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**1. Are you responding as;**

	As a resident of the County Borough
	As a member of staff
	As an elected member
	As a business person
	Representing the third sector
	Other, please state.

**2. Do you agree with the Council's Equality vision?**

	Yes		I'm not sure		No
Please tell us why you think this.					

**3. Do you agree with the objective: Engage with our citizens to participate and have their voices heard to understand and respond to the needs of our communities?**

	Yes		I'm not sure		No
Please tell us why you think this.					

**4. Do you agree with the objective: Promote and facilitate inclusive, safe and cohesive communities?**

	Yes		I'm not sure		No
Please tell us why you think this.					

**5. Do you agree with the objective: Create an inclusive and diverse workforce, which reflects the communities in Merthyr Tydfil?**

	Yes		I'm not sure		No
Please tell us why you think this.					



**6. Do you agree with the objective: Ensure equity of pay across Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council?**

Yes	I'm not sure	No
Please tell us why you think this.		

**7. Do you agree with the objective: Understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing our services?**

Yes	I'm not sure	No
Please tell us why you think this.		

**8. Do you think we should consider and include any other objectives within the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028?**

Yes	I'm not sure	No
Please tell us why you think this and what other objectives could be included.		

**9. Are there any areas of inequality that you feel are not covered by the previous Equality Objectives outlined?**

Yes	I'm not sure	No
Please tell us why you think this.		

**10. Are there problems you face, or think you may face, when trying to access our services?**

Yes	I'm not sure	No
Please tell us why you think this.		



**11. How could we do better/what needs to change/what can we do differently?**

**12. What actions should we take to ensure that we reduce inequalities in the workforce and communities, to assist us in delivering services?**

**13. Please tell us if you think we need to focus on any specific measures or initiatives in our 2024-2028 plan, and what those areas are?**

**14. Any other comments.**



## INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

In order to ensure we capture the views and lived experiences of all protected characteristic groups, it would be really helpful if you could answer the following questions about yourself. These questions are optional.

<b>WHICH WARD DO YOU LIVE IN?</b>	Aberfan/Merthyr Vale <input type="checkbox"/>	Bedlinog/Trelewis <input type="checkbox"/>	Cyfarthfa <input type="checkbox"/>	Dowlais/Pant <input type="checkbox"/>
	Gurnos <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Penydarren <input type="checkbox"/>	Plymouth <input type="checkbox"/>
	Town <input type="checkbox"/>	Treharris <input type="checkbox"/>	Vaynor <input type="checkbox"/>	I don't live in Merthyr Tydfil <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>I AM</b>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer to self-describe <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR GENDER?</b>	Man <input type="checkbox"/>	Woman <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer to self-describe <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>AGE</b>	16-25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26-39 <input type="checkbox"/>	40-49 <input type="checkbox"/>	50-65 <input type="checkbox"/>	66-75 <input type="checkbox"/>	76-85 <input type="checkbox"/>	86-95 <input type="checkbox"/>	95+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Asexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay or Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>		Please describe:		

<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	Civil Partnership or Married <input type="checkbox"/>	Living with a Partner <input type="checkbox"/>	Single <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
	Separated <input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:



<b>DISABILITY</b>	I am not disabled <input type="checkbox"/>		Hearing Impaired <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Difficulties <input type="checkbox"/>
	Physical/Mobility Impaired <input type="checkbox"/>		Speech Impaired <input type="checkbox"/>	Visually Impaired <input type="checkbox"/>
	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:		

<b>MAIN LANGUAGE</b>	English <input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh <input type="checkbox"/>	British Sign Language (BSL) <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
	Please describe				

<b>PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY</b>	Pregnant <input type="checkbox"/>	On maternity <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC GROUP?</b>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>						
	<b>WHITE</b>						
	Welsh <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish <input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	British <input type="checkbox"/>	Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy or Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other White Background <input type="checkbox"/>			Please describe:			
	<b>MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS</b>						
	White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>		White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/>		White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background <input type="checkbox"/>		Please describe:				
	<b>ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH</b>						
	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>		Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>		Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>		Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/>			Please describe:			
	<b>BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH</b>						
	African <input type="checkbox"/>		Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Other Black background <input type="checkbox"/>			Please describe:			

	<b>OTHER ETHNIC GROUP</b>		
	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic background <input type="checkbox"/>	Please describe:

<b>RELIGION OR BELIEF</b>	Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/>	Christian <input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu <input type="checkbox"/>	Humanist <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
	Jewish <input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim <input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh <input type="checkbox"/>	No Religion <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Please describe:				

**PRIVACY NOTICE**

You have a number of rights in relation to the information including the right of access to information we hold about you and the right of complaint if you are unhappy with the way your information is being processed. For further information on how we process your information and your rights please click the following link: [Privacy Notice | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)

**Thank you for taking the time to give your views.**

**We will use your feedback to help develop our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.**