

Stronger, Fairer, Greener

Our Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan

2023-2027

April 2024

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

What is this document?

This document is the Council's Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan, which sets out our well-being objectives, and what action we need to take to deliver them.

The purpose of this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan is to present the well-being priorities for Powys County Council for the years 2023 to 2027.

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We are committed to making our services, including our websites and applications, accessible to all, removing barriers (where reasonable), and giving due regard to all groups when making decisions.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format or larger font, please contact us using the details on this page.

How was this plan developed?

To develop this plan, we used information to make sure that our plans are based on the evidence of what is needed, and what matters most to people in different communities in Powys. This helped us to better understand the situation so that we could prioritise what we plan to do.

We were able to use a lot of the information from the recent [Powys Well-being Assessment](#), the [Well-being Information Bank](#), and the [Population Needs Assessment](#). Alongside this, we also undertake an annual [self-assessment](#), which informs our future direction. We asked the people of Powys for their thoughts using an online engagement survey, which was available between Monday 28 November and Friday 23 December 2022. The consultation was published on Monday 28 November 2022, and was promoted through social media and circulated to a number of stakeholders representing people with protected characteristics. All responses to the consultation were then considered when finalising the content of this Plan. The results of the survey are available [here in the Corporate Plan Survey](#).

We would like to hear from you. Please let us know what you think of this plan or about any problems you have experienced or are currently experiencing. We value your views and will use them to change and improve services in the future. If you would like to tell us how you think we are doing or to share your thoughts about our plan or any of our other work, please contact us using the details above, or use our online engagement tool called [Have Your Say](#).

Key facts about Powys County Council

- Powys County Council covers Powys, which is the largest county in Wales geographically (5,200 km²) and has a population of 133,200 people (2021 Census, ONS).
- About the people of Powys (Census 2021, ONS):
 - 50.7% female, 49.3% male
 - 16% are aged 0-15, 57% aged 16-64 and 28% aged 65 and over
 - 55.8% of people aged 16+ are economically active, including 53.9% in employment and 1.9% unemployed. 43.1% are economically inactive, including 29.5% retired, 3.6% homemakers and 4.3% long term sick or disabled.
 - 16% are Welsh speakers.
 - 50.7% of people are religious, with 48.9% identifying as Christian, 0.4% as Buddhist and 0.3% as Muslim
 - 2.3% of people are Black, Asian and minority ethnic (*Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African, Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups or other ethnic groups*). 97.7% are white.

- 4.2% of people were born in EU countries or other countries, 95.7% were born in the UK.
- 2.3% of people are Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, or other sexual orientation, 89% are straight/heterosexual (8.7% did not answer the census question)
- 0.3% of people's gender identity is different from their sex registered at birth, 92.7% of people's gender is the same as their sex registered at birth
- There are 60,184 households with an average household size of 2.2 people
- 34.7% of households are not connected to the gas network and heat their homes through oil, wood, solid fuel or tank/bottled gas. Further information surrounding types of tenures and household numbers is available in our [Census overview](#).
- 42% of people volunteer (National Survey for Wales, Welsh Gov, 2023) (This was 45% in 2022, but despite the reduction it remains the highest in Wales)
- 11% of people reported feeling lonely (National Survey for Wales, Welsh Gov, 2023) (This was 9% in 2022)
- 14% of people are in material deprivation (National Survey for Wales, Welsh Gov, 2023) (This was 9% in 2022)
- The county consists of 13 localities made up of the main market towns and the surrounding area, with the largest population living within Welshpool and Montgomery locality (18,438), and the smallest population living within Llanfair Caereinion locality (6,216) (2021 Mid-year estimates, ONS).
- Powys covers a quarter of Wales' landmass and with a small population and large geographical cover, the average population density is only 26 people per square kilometre (Welsh average 153 km²). To put this in perspective, Cardiff's population density is 2,620 people per km², and London has a population density of 5,727 people per km². Powys is the most sparsely populated local authority in all Wales and England.
- Powys County Council has 68 elected Councillors representing 60 wards. They are from a range of political parties, including Welsh Liberal Democrats, Welsh Conservatives, Welsh Labour, Independents, Independent's for Powys, Plaid Cymru, Green Party, and several who are non-aligned. Of these councillors, 68% are male, 31% are female and 1% are non-binary. (30/09/2022)
- Powys County Council has a large workforce totalling 3,038 people (which equates to 2,685 full-time equivalents (FTE)). If you include all school staff, the workforce is 5,732 people (4,559 FTE) on 31st December 2023. The workforce consists of 1,924 females, 1,112 males and 2 people who have not specified (including school staff, there are 4,170 females/1,560 males and 2 people who have not specified). These staff support the organisation in

delivering a range of statutory and non-statutory services to the people of Powys. (Trent, 2023)

Contents

What is this document?.....	1
Accessibility/Contact us	1
How was this plan developed?.....	2
Key facts about Powys County Council	2
Our Council	5
About Us.....	5
Our Objectives	8
Stronger, Fairer, Greener Powys	8
What do we need to do to get there?	8
How do our well-being objectives support the seven Well-being Goals for Wales?.....	9
What other areas do we need to consider throughout the plan?	11
How do we plan to deliver this?	13
Objective 1 - We will improve people’s awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices	13
Objective 2 - We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.....	17
Objective 3 - We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys	21
How do we support equalities within Powys?	24
How will money be spent to support the plan?	26
What other plans and strategies do we have in place to support these objectives?	27
Reviewing the plan	28
An Open and Democratic Council: Governance and Performance.....	28
Appendix.....	30
Appendix A.....	30

Our Council

About Us

The diagram below shows Powys County Council's Cabinet. At each local government election, the majority political party nominates one of its members to be the Leader of the party and of the Council. The last elections were held in May 2022, and at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 26 May 2022, Councillor James Gibson-Watt was elected Leader. The Cabinet is made up of a group of councillors that are chosen by the Leader of the Council in consultation with other political groups. The members of the Cabinet are each responsible for specific areas of the Council's work, called a portfolio, and so members of the Cabinet are also called Portfolio Holders. The members of the Cabinet are responsible for the activities and policies within their portfolio, and they are key decision makers for the Council. They make decisions about how your money is spent and how services are delivered. The Cabinet is responsible for making sure that Council activities help to meet the Council's plans, including overseeing the delivery of this plan – our Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan. A full list of all Powys County Councillors, including information about how to find your local Councillor, is available on our website by visiting

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/findmycouncillor>

Powys County Council Cabinet Members

- Leader and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys – Councillor James Gibson-Watt
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys – Councillor Matthew Dorrance
- Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys – Councillor David Selby
- Cabinet Member for a Caring Powys – Councillor Sian Cox
- Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys – Councillor Richard Church
- Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys – Councillor Pete Roberts
- Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys – Councillor Jackie Charlton
- Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys – Councillor Jake Berriman
- Cabinet Member for Future Generations – Councillor Sandra Davies
- Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation – Councillor David Thomas

Leader and Chief Executive Joint Introduction

This is the first annual update of our 2023-2027 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan for Powys County Council, which focuses on what we aim to do during 2024-2025 to 'Build a stronger, fairer, greener Powys'. As the local authority for the people of Powys, we are continuously adapting our services and activities to respond to changing needs. Recent years have seen significant unexpected events in the wider world, not least the impacts of conflicts in both the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as the cost-of-living crisis, and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. As well as these global headlines, the Council, and people of Powys face further, local, challenges.

The Council continues to be adversely affected by budgetary restraints, and we know that we need to respond to the financial pressures by reviewing what we do. We are forecasting a funding gap of over £64 million within our Medium-Term Financial Strategy by 2029. Whilst it's important to recognise that the future will continue to be difficult, we remain both ambitious and optimistic about the many opportunities that we want to pursue to make our county and its communities robust. That is why we are working on 'Sustainable Powys', a proactive approach, working with partners and engaging with communities to explore innovative solutions to our shared challenges.

During 2024-2025, we will be focusing on how we can contribute to addressing both the Climate Emergency, where we need to reach the goal of Net Zero by 2030; and the Nature Emergency, where we need to set out the part we will play in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) key action of protecting and restoring the many species and habitats at risk of extinction by effectively managing 30% of our land, freshwater and sea for nature by 2030. This is a key action of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and will help to support and recover existing habitats, which in turn will positively impact upon a range of species in Powys and beyond. We want to make a positive difference to the physical environment of Powys, and we know that we cannot do this alone. We rely on all organisations and the people of Powys to contribute to create a greener, sustainable environment. Throughout the next year and beyond, we will be working with other public services and the third sector, including Bannau Brycheiniog, Natural Resources Wales, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Powys Teaching Health Board, and PAVO, on a countywide climate project as part of the work of the Powys Public Services Board. Together, we aim to assess the county's carbon footprint to better understand what it means and what options are available to improve the environment, reduce carbon emissions, and increase nature recovery and biodiversity.

Representing and serving *everyone* in Powys is an honour, and throughout this next year we will continue to develop our equality and diversity activities to keep our communities fair, welcoming, places in which to live, work, visit, and socialise. This includes being open and transparent about what we plan to do, why we think it should be done, and who may be affected. All proposals need to be sustainable and evidence-based, considering both short- and long-term impacts on the people and environment of Powys.

Our staff are the heart of the organisation and the most important resource we have. We are committed to providing fair work within the Council and to supporting and encouraging our suppliers and organisations throughout the county in their fair work efforts. We consult and engage with the workforce through recognised Trade Union representatives, and, with their help and feedback, we will continue to develop our long-term plans and the well-being objectives detailed within this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.

Over the next four years (2024-2027) we will invest time, effort, and over £5 million to improve the digital services that are available to the people of Powys. We want to make it easier for people to access our services and add to the services that are available on the 'My Powys Account'. Accounts are available to both residents and businesses so, if you haven't already registered online for your account, now is a fantastic time to join the 68,000+ people that use 'My Powys Account' to access services and receive updates. For more information, please visit our website at www.powys.gov.uk and click on the 'Login / Register' button.

We hope that this introduction to our 2024-2025 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan has helped you understand some of our main aims for the year, but further information about our activities is available throughout this document. We are *your* Council and, whether you are an individual, or represent a group, community, or partner organisation, we continue to ask for your help in developing our county as a vibrant and sustainable place to build a stronger, fairer, greener Powys for all. *Your* views matter and we encourage you to get involved and help us by sharing your thoughts and suggestions at any time, no matter how big or small, so that we can develop what we do for the people of Powys. Please see page one for details of how to get in touch.

Our Objectives

Stronger, Fairer, Greener Powys

Our ambition is that by 2027, we will be:

- **Stronger** - We will become a county that succeeds together, with communities and people that are well connected socially, and are personally and economically resilient.
- **Fairer** - We will be an open, well-run, Council where people's voices are heard and help to shape our work and priorities, with fairer, more equal, access to services and opportunities. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.
- **Greener** - We want to ensure a greener future for Powys, where our well-being is linked to that of the natural world, and our response to the climate and nature emergencies is at the heart of everything we do.

What do we need to do to get there?

To achieve our ambition, we have set the three objectives below that are the core aims of this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan:

1. We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.
2. We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.
3. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.

However, it is important to note that not all activities outlined in the Council form part of this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan. Some activities that will help us achieve our ambition and key aims are already underway, managed by different Council services, and these will be improving continuously. These either form part of our Integrated Business Planning process or form part of the Council's Transformation Portfolio.

How do our well-being objectives support the seven Well-being Goals for Wales?

In developing the well-being objectives for the Council, we considered the seven important Goals that have been identified for Wales as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and how our objectives will help to achieve the national Goals. All three of our objectives contribute to the following national goals and themes:

Seven Well-being Goals

- A Prosperous Wales
- A Resilient Wales
- A Healthier Wales
- A More Equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
- A Globally Responsible Wales

Five Ways of Working

- Long-Term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Climate Emergency

Nature Emergency

More information about these areas is available [here](#). Further details of how this supports those with protected characteristics is available in [Appendix A](#) and in the Impact Assessment. The Impact Assessment assesses how each objective might impact upon different types of people and communities, considering the seven well-being goals, five ways of working, protected characteristics, socioeconomic disadvantage and the climate and nature emergencies. It can be viewed by visiting [Impact Assessment – Corporate Plan](#) .

What other areas do we need to consider throughout the plan?

Climate and Nature: Tackling the Climate and Nature Emergency

To support the Council's declaration of a [Climate Emergency](#) in September 2020, and [Nature Emergency](#) in October 2022, we are working to become a net-zero Council by 2030 and will support Powys to become a net-zero County by 2050, and a national leader in protecting and enhancing nature. To achieve this, the following dedicated plans are in place:

- [Nature Recovery Action Plan \(Biodiversity and Resilience of Eco-Systems Duty - Section 6, Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016\)](#)

The Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan (PNRAP) has been developed in consultation with the Powys Nature Partnership, a group of organisations and individuals committed to reversing the declines in biodiversity across Powys. The PNRAP is intended to guide the work of the Partnership, to stimulate project ideas, to direct conservation efforts, and to provide a rationale for local action.

- [Climate Strategy](#)

This is a strategy that is "fair to all" meaning outcomes will be fair, transformative, evidence-based, collaborative, and able to evolve in line with emerging technologies, changing individual and community behaviours, and new scientific findings. All people in the County will be involved in the delivery of climate action. The action plans which will support the delivery of this Strategy and its outcomes will enable a transition for the county that is accessible and possible for all.

- [Powys Public Service's Board \(PSB\) Well-being Plan](#)

We are working with our key partner organisations as part of the [Powys Public Service Board](#) to take collective action to make a positive difference to improve the climate and nature approach in Powys and the thriving natural world that we all depend on. The Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan forms part of the Council's contribution to this work. The PSB's Well-being Plan sets out a series of Well-being objectives and steps we are looking to take in collaboration with other public bodies to tackle big, systematic issues which impact upon the people of Powys. One of the key steps within this plan is "Responding to the Climate Emergency", which aims to undertake collective action, as both partners and within communities, to tackle this issue and work towards the United Nations Race to Zero framework. More details of this work and how to get involved is detailed within the [PSB's Well-being Plan](#).

We understand the importance of the environment, as Powys is a large, rural county with a range of green and blue spaces, such as woodland, national parks, rivers, and lakes. We are committed to increasing our focus on climate and nature. In order to achieve this, alongside our Climate and Nature programme, we have been further embedding climate and nature within our governance processes. This includes strengthening our impact assessment process to further emphasise these emergencies, adding this as an area for consideration for Cabinet and Scrutiny papers, so that these are seen as key areas to consider when decisions are made; as well as embedding these within our performance monitoring cycle, both on a quarterly basis and as part of our annual Self-Assessment. This ensures that we consider climate and nature in everything that we do as a council.

Our staff are a key asset in meeting the challenges of these emergencies. To support them, we have created a Green Network, which are a group of officers from across the Council who are empowered to share ideas, research and best practice as to how we can meet these emergencies. Alongside this, we are also developing a training programme to equip as many people with the skills (such as climate literacy) to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

Equalities

We continue to make improvements to our services and employment practices to meet the diverse needs of the people of Powys. This includes removing barriers and helping to improve the lives and experiences of those who are disadvantaged. Fairness is central to everything we do as a Council, and we are on a mission to tackle inequality and create better opportunities for all people in Powys. Our internal Community of Practice group meets on a regular basis to work together to ensure fairness is central to service delivery. We have a regular fairness networking event to promote equalities to a range of officers within the Council, which aims to have a comprehensive understanding of what people are doing to support these areas, understand what the challenges are alongside planning for future opportunities.

Developing Prosperous Towns and Villages: The Local Development Plan

We are developing our new [Local Development Plan](#), which will support the aims of this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan. It will shape the future of Powys as it will outline opportunities for future development and land use in the county. It considers a variety of topics, including making sure that decisions consider the impact to the planet, that housing is built in the areas where people need or want to live, and that services are provided in the places where they are needed.

How do we plan to deliver this?

Objective 1 - We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices

We are committed to running an open and democratic Council that regularly engages with people and communities. We will work to ensure that the people of Powys understand what services the Council provides. We want to make information easy to access, so that people can find what they need in ways that best suit their needs. We will monitor our services and our communications so that we are confident that we are sharing information with people quickly and effectively. We will support communities, whether it be our large towns or rural hamlets, to help them co-produce solutions to meet their own needs where possible.

What do we know?

- The Cultural and Community chapter of our [Well-being Assessment](#) considers how many elements of communities come together to improve their well-being; including topics such as volunteering, food banks, participation in cultural life and anti-social behaviour. An engagement activity, [Living In Powys](#), that was undertaken as part of our well-being assessment identified how communities coming together, re-connecting people and places, and supporting independence were amongst the most important areas to improve well-being.
- The [Population Needs Assessment](#) reflects upon the situation for children and young people, older people, carers, and those with physical and learning disabilities in Powys (on a locality basis where possible) and how they interact with Services
- [Future Proofing Powys](#) identified that 51% of people believe that it is very important that we “continue to develop innovative ways of working which will ensure long term sustainability of support”, with 24% supporting the need to “develop and promote more online services” for the future.
- The [Development of Community Hubs in Powys libraries](#) consultation highlighted how residents felt the “lack of places where I can get face to face support” as the largest barrier to accessing services, with many seeing the cost of broadband and coverage as the main barriers to accessing services digitally.

What are we already doing?

- We keep reviewing how effective our work is in helping people to access the advice and support they need from us. This includes finding out how easy people feel it is to find what they need, and how quickly they can access support, through work such as our ongoing public survey, [Have Your Say](#), alongside our [complaints, compliments, and comments](#) process.
- We are working to make sure that people access our services at the earliest possible time, to either stop something before it happens (prevention) or to provide help quickly once something has happened (intervention).
- We are constantly adding new information to our website so that people can search for what they need or want. This includes introducing tools that help to make it easier to use, like better search options, and more accessible options for people who use screen readers or British Sign Language.
- We have welcomed the opportunity for the public to participate in Council meetings and have been looking at ways that we can do this better.
- We are undertaking extensive engagement with all tenants of the Council to allow us to understand what and how we need to improve in our role as a landlord – reaching just under 10% of all households in Powys through “Tell Us” feedback, Keeping in Touch visits and bi-annual STAR surveys.
- The leisure review has undertaken an in-depth analysis of the current leisure provision in Powys, including the following:
 - Creation of a detailed dashboard to visually present data including facilities/activities available, usage and travel distances to leisure centres
 - Condition surveys and net zero carbon assessments of all leisure buildings, to identify future maintenance and the potential costs needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions
 - Public leisure engagement survey, which investigated current and future leisure needs and the mental, physical and social wellbeing benefits of being active, as well as leisure centre use
 - Schools’ engagement survey, helped identify schools’ needs and use of leisure facilities
 - Investigation of alternative delivery models including community and school managed public leisure provision and other private, commercial or informal leisure activities available for the people of Powys

- Engagement with other partners who have a strong focus on wellbeing, to identify joint working potential to achieve better outcomes for the people of Powys
- Analysis of running costs and projected financial metrics for the next 20 years

All of the information and data gathered will support the development of options for the future as part of the Sustainable Powys Place Based planning approach.

What will we do?

- By March 2025, we will have implemented a customer experience strategic framework to enhance overall customer satisfaction, improve interactions, and create a positive, memorable experience
- By March 2025, we will have evaluated the leisure provision within Powys and will have developed an updated plan for our service offering and facilities, and how people access them.
- By March 2026, we will have reviewed the ways that people can access Council services and will consider what options may be available to make our services more accessible to people within our communities.

How will we measure performance against this objective?

Measure Type	Measure
How much?	2. Number of people in Powys with access to preventative digital solutions 42. Number of contacts made to Customer Services 43. Number of contacts made to Housing 44. Number of contacts made to Income and Awards 45. Number of contacts made to Adult Social Services (ASSIST) 46. Number of contacts made to Children’s Social Services (Front Door) 4. Number of visits to leisure centres (a high number is better) (cumulative – year to date) 39. Number of ‘keeping in touch’ visits (Housing) (a high number is better) (cumulative - year to date)
How well?	5. Percentage of customers satisfied with their responses when contacting the Council (a high number is better) (cumulative - year to date) 6. Net Promoter Score of leisure users who are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service (report in quarter 1 and 3) (a high number is better) 47. Number of contacts to Adult Social Services (ASSIST) receiving information and advice

	<p>48. Number of contacts to Children’s Social Services (Front Door) receiving information and advice</p> <p>9. The number of (active) user participations (a high number is better) (cumulative - year to date)</p> <p>10. Percentage of children, young people and their families report that they achieve their family goal through accessing Early Help (a high number is better)</p> <p>11. Percentage of young people who use the Intervention and Prevention services demonstrate positive progression (a high number is better)</p>
What difference?	<p>12. Percentage of children who the Intervention and Prevention Service work with around family breakdowns will remain with their families safely</p> <p>14. The percentage of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live (a high number is better)</p> <p>49. Percentage of respondents who agree that they are satisfied with the opportunities given to have their say and participate in our decision-making process (a high number is better)</p> <p>50. Percentage of respondents who agree that the community can engage effectively with decision making processes and council actions (a high number is better)</p> <p>51. Percentage of respondents satisfied with the ability to contact us using their preferred method and language (a high number is better)</p>

As well as the measures that show how well things are going by using numbers, we will also use information about the quality of our activities that support this objective. This type of information includes case studies and is known as ‘qualitative’ measurement.

Objective 2 - We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation

We understand the importance of running a Council that is efficient so that it can deliver its services to the people of Powys in an effective way. We are committed to creating a workplace that provides worthwhile work and sustainable careers. We will ensure that the Council is a fair employer and though we already pay our staff and apprentices a Real Living Wage, we will seek to become an accredited real living wage employer to help encourage our suppliers and partners to participate and support as many people as possible to meet the basic costs of living, whilst supporting the wider economy and also helping us to deliver reduced carbon emissions.

What do we know?

- The Economy chapter of our [Well-being Assessment](#) (that was undertaken in 2022) considers many areas where economy impacts such as jobs and wages, tourism, businesses and connectivity, and what the current situation is for Powys. An engagement activity, [Living In Powys](#), that was undertaken as part of our 2022 Well-being Assessment identified how jobs and wages and businesses were amongst the most important areas to improve well-being.
- The [Population Needs Assessment](#) (undertaken in 2022) reflected upon the situation for children and young people, older people, carers, and those with physical and learning disabilities in Powys (on a locality basis where possible) and how there is a need to build the future workforce to be able to support people of Powys
- An [Employment and Skills](#) survey in 2022 highlighted how recruitment is the most significant challenges affecting businesses, alongside the geographical location and type of work being the most significant challenge to retention.
- The 2023 staff survey highlighted how 80% of the employees that responded felt proud to work for Powys County Council, and 75% felt valued as someone who provides a service that benefits Powys residents.
- The 2021 [Child Poverty In Powys survey](#) identified that 96% of people felt that the Council needs to do more to attract local, well-paid jobs, whilst 93% felt that the Council needs to do more to provide skills and training opportunities.

What are we already doing?

- We continue to provide apprenticeship opportunities for people to develop the skills needed for the roles within the Council. These are advertised on our main [recruitment](#) website.

- We offer staff relevant development opportunities, including leadership development, short courses, and qualifications so that Council staff can maintain their continuous professional development and provide an effective and efficient service.
- We provide specific training schemes for jobs that we find it difficult to recruit to, like the ‘Grow Our Own Social Worker’ project, which focuses on providing training for staff that wish to become qualified Social Workers.
- The Council completes comprehensive workforce planning each year to ensure that it has the right staff in place with the right skills and experience. A corporate learning and developing plan will be delivered to meet the identified needs.
- The Council already pays the Real Living Wage to all its staff and Apprentices and is now working with other areas, supported by the Real Living Wage foundation to make [Mid and West Wales a Living Wage region](#).
- We provide an employee assistance programme, which includes a 24-hour confidential support service that is available for staff to access voluntarily. It provides advice, guidance, and counselling services, as well as tips to help staff improve their general well-being.
- [Communities for Work Plus](#) continues to support people to get into work.
- We continue to provide support to adults with disabilities to seek employment or volunteering opportunities. We obtained the first stage accreditation status from ‘Disability Confident Employer’ in 2023 and intend to obtain higher level accreditation in 2024.
- The [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership](#) continue to develop workforce skills based upon local need.
- Young people are being supported to develop their education and skills through the [Transforming Education](#) programme.
- In 2023 we signed an economic deal with Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Monmouthshire councils called the Marches Forward Partnership, which will help us to work across borders on activities throughout our rural counties including transport, skills, housing, energy, climate change, tourism, and digital connectivity.
- We signed the age-friendly employer pledge in 2023, which is a nationwide programme for employers who recognise the importance and value of older workers. We are committed to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s and will help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce.
- We have implemented a range of initiatives to attract more people with the right skills to apply for jobs with the council through targeted advertising, recruitment events and easier processes.

- We have launched a People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan that sets out the priorities for the employment journey of our workforce.

What will we do?

- By March 2027 we will have implemented actions identified in the People Strategy and 3-year Workforce Development Plan.
- By March 2026, we will establish a fair pay commission that will set out how the Council will become a fully accredited living wage employer. Council employees and apprentices already receive a real living wage, so we will continue to lead by example and will develop our supply chains by encouraging and supporting our suppliers to adopt the real living wage. We will do this in consultation with trade unions and our partners.
- We will continue to monitor and seek to reduce pay differences to create a fairer, more inclusive workforce, including narrowing the gender pay gap.
- By March 2025, we will provide or commission community cohesion related training, for local authority staff, other public bodies staff, third sector, elected officials, or others with a key role to play in building community cohesion.

How will we measure performance against this objective?

Measure Type	Measure
How much?	15. Number of new apprentices within the Council (a high number is better) 40. Number of apprentices employed by the Council (on the last day of the quarter) (a high number is better) 17. Percentage of individuals paid through contractors being paid the real living wage (cumulative - year to date)
How well?	18. Number of vacancies (excluding Schools) 19. Staff turnover rate during the quarter 20. Sickness absence rate per full time equivalent employee 21. Percentage of recruitment exercises leading to a successful appointment on first advertisement of the role (a high number is better) 22. Number of guaranteed interviews offered to Armed Forces veterans who meet the criteria
What difference?	23. Percentage of staff who feel valued/highly valued as someone who provides a service that benefits Powys residents (reports in quarter 1) (a high number is better) 24. Percentage of staff who feel proud/very proud to work for the Council (reports in quarter 1) (a high number is better)

	<p>25. Percentage of staff who report good/excellent well-being (reports in quarter 1) (a high number is better)</p> <p>26. The equality and diversity of the workforce better compares to the demographics of the people of Powys (a number close to zero is better)</p> <p>27. The applicants and staff appointed [to jobs] reflect (generally) the equality and diversity of the people of Powys (a number close to zero is better)</p> <p>41. Mean gender pay gap (reports in quarter 4) (a low number is better)</p>
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As well as the measures that show how well things are going by using numbers, we will also use information about the quality of our activities that support this objective. This type of information includes case studies and is known as ‘qualitative’ measurement.

Objective 3 - We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys

We understand the importance of our role in tackling the cost-of-living challenge absolute income poverty (where income falls below a point to support to someone to meet their basic needs), and the housing emergency. We will focus on giving people the best possible quality of life and will provide post-16 education opportunities within Powys so that young people have access to more choices without leaving the county. We will also work to ensure that children's rights to play, be safe, to have an education, to be healthy and be happy are upheld. We will encourage well-connected communities within Powys that support vulnerable people and will provide activities to increase our communities' access to more affordable energy, food, and transport, supported by the community's use of Council assets. We will also aim to make Council homes warmer and greener to help them become more energy efficient with lower energy costs.

What do we know?

- The Social chapter of our 2022 [Well-being Assessment](#) considers the importance of home life, independent living, education, and health and lifestyle to the people of Powys, and the current situation across the county. The Economy chapter of our 2022 [Well-being Assessment](#) considers poverty, and how this is experienced by the people of Powys. An engagement activity, [Living In Powys](#), that was undertaken as part of our well-being assessment in 2022 identified how home life, educating our children and tackling poverty and deprivation were amongst the most important areas to improve well-being.
- The 2022 [Population Needs Assessment](#) reflects upon the situation for children and young people, older people, carers, and those with physical and learning disabilities in Powys (on a locality basis, where possible) and how they experience inequalities based on their situation, and how everything done by the Council needs to ensure they are considered equitably.
- The 2021 [Child Poverty in Powys](#) survey highlighted that 87% of people were worried about child poverty increasing by 2026, and the key areas identified by the people of Powys where they felt that the Council can tackle child poverty were access to education, job security, housing and the use of community events and groups.
- The percentage of households in Powys who are in fuel poverty was 17% (Welsh average: 12%). Powys ranks third highest amongst all local authorities in Wales (Gwynedd is highest (23%) and Ceredigion second highest (21%) (Welsh Gov, 2018)

What are we already doing in this area?

- We have published our asset strategy, which outlines how we will review these based upon criteria such as community, social and cultural value.
- We publish a gender pay action plan each year on our website. We use the action plan to monitor whether people of different genders are being paid equitably, and to show what work we will be doing to make sure that everyone is being paid fairly.
- Our 2021-2030 [Climate Strategy](#) is based on the principle of “fair for all”, meaning the areas of climate action will support the county in securing wider benefits of social, economic, and environmental equality.
- We have rolled out the Welsh Governments 'Universal Primary Free School Meal' Programme to Powys primary-aged pupils up to Year 3, which equates to around 14,000 meals served and will have completed the programme roll out by April 2024 to all primary-aged pupils.
- We are a member of the Proud Councils network which aims to create a unified and collaborative approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion across Wales, supporting member local authorities with their commitment towards creating equal, diverse, and inclusive workplaces and communities, where the LGBTQ+ community can be free from discrimination or prejudice.
- We provide a free and confidential [money advice service](#), which is available to all people in Powys. The team help people to access welfare benefits, manage fuel costs, manage debts, and to create a personal budget that will help them to keep track of their money.
- We will continue to expand [Flying Start](#) within Powys to more communities to provide support for parents and families.
- In 2022, the Cabinet created a Child Poverty Task force, which works with partner organisations to help to reduce poverty within Powys.
- The [Transforming Education](#) programme is working to improve learner entitlement and experience across the county.
- In 2023 we signed an economic deal with Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Monmouthshire councils called the Marches Forward Partnership, which will help us to work across borders on activities throughout our rural counties including transport, skills, housing, energy, climate change, tourism, and digital connectivity.
- In 2023, the Council gave unanimous support to joining the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network.

- In 2023 the Council signed up to UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter. The signing commits the Council to a range of pledges to help eliminate racial discrimination. The pledges in the charter include championing a racially diverse workforce, having a clear programme of anti-racist initiatives and providing training for employees. It builds on the zero-tolerance policy to racism in Wales signed in early 2021.
- We have been accredited by Disability Confident Employer, which recognises an employer's commitment to providing an environment that is inclusive and accessible for all staff.
- Powys has committed to work towards becoming a County of Sanctuary, meaning that we will be a welcoming place of safety for all, and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence, persecution, famine, or natural disaster.

What will we do?

- We will work to mitigate the impacts of the cost-of-living challenge and use the Council's resources and partnerships to support residents and businesses, collaborating as partners to ensure effective shared data and insight to be able to provide support to people.
- We will work to develop community enterprises across the county that provide support to households and businesses through various projects, based upon sustainable energy, technology and building community initiatives.

How will we measure performance against this objective?

Measure Type	Measure
How much?	28. Complete 350 new council homes for social rent between 2025 to 2031 (subject to availability of land, securing planning consents and resolution of phosphate management) (cumulative - year to date)
	29. Acquire ten homes per year, for letting by the Council, at social rents on secure contracts (cumulative - year to date)
	30. The percentage of rental income lost through the Council's unoccupied housing (known as housing voids) (a low number is better) (cumulative - year to date)
	31. Number of new homes created by bringing empty properties back into use (a high number is better) (cumulative - year to date)
	32. Carbon accounts status (kg of CO2 equivalents) [Reported annually in quarter 2]
How well?	33. Number of households registered with 'Homes in Powys' for an affordable and secure home (a low number is better) (cumulative - year to date)

	34. Number of households who are living in temporary accommodation (those owed S68 interim duty who are/may be homeless and in priority need) (a low number is better)
What difference?	<p>35. The child absolute poverty rate (reports in quarter 1) (a low number is better)</p> <p>36. Number of children living in absolute poverty (reports in quarter 1) (a low number is better)</p> <p>37. Number of households who are homeless (those owed S73 duty to relieve homelessness and final S75 duty to help secure accommodation for those in priority need) (a low number is better)</p> <p>38. Number of rough sleepers (a low number is better)</p>

As well as the measures that show how well things are going by using numbers, we will also use information about the quality of our activities that support this objective. This type of information includes case studies and is known as ‘qualitative’ measurement.

How do we support equalities within Powys?

This plan sets out our objectives between now and 2027, with action plans for making Powys a fairer place to live where people can achieve their potential, thrive, and prosper. It focuses on four things: improving people’s awareness of services and how to access them, improving our communities, and making our organisation a better place to work and access to training, and improving equality (for example, housing, education) and socio-economic disadvantage (for example, poverty) for the people of Powys. We have placed climate and nature at the heart of the plan and everything we do as a Council, as we know these areas will adversely impact those who experience inequalities. This plan demonstrates how the Council will play its part in helping eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The objectives set out in this plan provide an overview of the approach we will take to achieve these ambitions and we also detail how we will measure our success in delivering them.

The overall aim is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience inequality and socio-economic disadvantage. Our approach ensures that one single form of inequality is not isolated from one another (so that it is intersectional) and recognises the way that inequality is created by for example, gender, race, sexuality, disability, class, age, and faith. By addressing inequality as a part of the objectives we aim to create a Powys that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

We already do things that help more people to use our services, and some examples of this are:

- We are proud of our country's language, and we ensure that the Welsh and English languages are both treated with equal importance. We work to ensure we comply with our statutory obligations under the Welsh Language Standards. This means that we design services which are easy to use, accessible, and do not treat Welsh any less favourably than English, and we are working to be more proactive in the services we offer through the medium of Welsh. We also consider how, when formulating a policy or revising an existing policy, what affects, whether positive or negative, this would have upon opportunities to use the Welsh language.
- We use [Wales Interpretation and Translation Service](#), to provide face-to-face interpretation services for languages other than Welsh or English. This enables the Council to communicate with those people whose use of the Welsh or English language may not be proficient enough to easily access our services in a seamless and professional manner.
- We work to ensure our work is both accessible and inclusive. We've designed our website with features that make it easier to use by everyone, including those with visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, or neurological disabilities. You can access our accessibility statement [here](#).
- All Councillors and members of staff are required to undertake mandatory Equalities training as well as Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASW) training to understand the role we play in safeguarding women and girls, and we play a key role in supporting this through our role as a partner with [Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board](#). We are also committed to ending violence from men towards women by our commitment to becoming a [White Ribbon](#) accredited Council.
- We welcome the breadth and diversity of tradition, belief, and culture of the community. The Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in employment and service delivery. Individuals are selected and treated based on their relevant merits and abilities and are given fair and equal opportunities within the Council.
- We work to champion anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion within all we do as a Council, and within our communities, as we want to make sure Powys is a good example of how we can live together regardless of where we came from, or the colour of your skin. This will be achieved through the implementation of the [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the Anti-Racism Charter](#).
- The Council is working to become a county of sanctuary and in doing so is sending a message to everybody that we will be a welcoming place of safety for all, and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence, persecution, famine, or natural disaster. We have

endorsed the charter and agree to act in accordance with city of sanctuary values and challenge anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found.

- We work with schools, Careers Wales, further and higher education providers and our own service areas to ensure that we can maximise opportunities for apprenticeship placements within the authority. We have created an [Apprenticeship Talent Pool](#) (ATP) which people can apply to online to be notified directly when opportunities that match their areas of interest arise. ATP members are also offered support to complete application forms and coaching in interview technique.

We believe this plan will assist in helping those who experience disadvantage, contributing to the social, economic, and emotional well-being of our workplaces and the local communities.

How will money be spent to support the plan?

The Council is required under the Local Government Act 2003 to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year; the Medium Term Financial Strategy reports a balanced budget for 2024/25. There is no requirement to set out a balanced position beyond the next year but the five year strategy has been developed to enable longer term planning and transformation.

The Council's [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-29](#) (MTFS) sets out the financial strategy for Powys County Council for the period 2024 to 2029. It has been developed as part of the overall strategic planning process and aligned with this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan, and includes the details of key drivers, medium term financial plans, risk and sensitivity analysis and resilience.

This strategy identifies service area's budgets, which are managed as part of their Integrated Business Plan, which recognises the work being undertaken by service areas and resources such as finance and people needed to support the delivery of these workstreams. These plans also include the actions identified throughout this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan which are being taken forward by each service within the Council.

Further work is being undertaken to identify the specific resources required and to provide a consolidated view of how we will deliver the actions within this Plan. This page will be updated when the further information is available.

What other plans and strategies do we have in place to support these objectives?

This plan has considered the following legislation during the process:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- Equality Act (2010) (including the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales (PSED)) and Socio-economic Duty 2021
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

This plan does not contain detail about all the Council's work, as it focuses on delivering our well-being priorities. It is important that this plan should be read alongside the rest of the Council's work, including the large-scale change priorities that are detailed in the Transformation [Portfolio](#) and other plans and strategies, and day-to-day activities of the Council (which we call 'Business as Usual'). We have some focused strategies and plans that are already directing work within the council that will influence and support the delivery of our well-being objectives. Existing strategies and plans will continue to be monitored as part of their own processes and will not be duplicated within this plan. These include (but are not limited to):

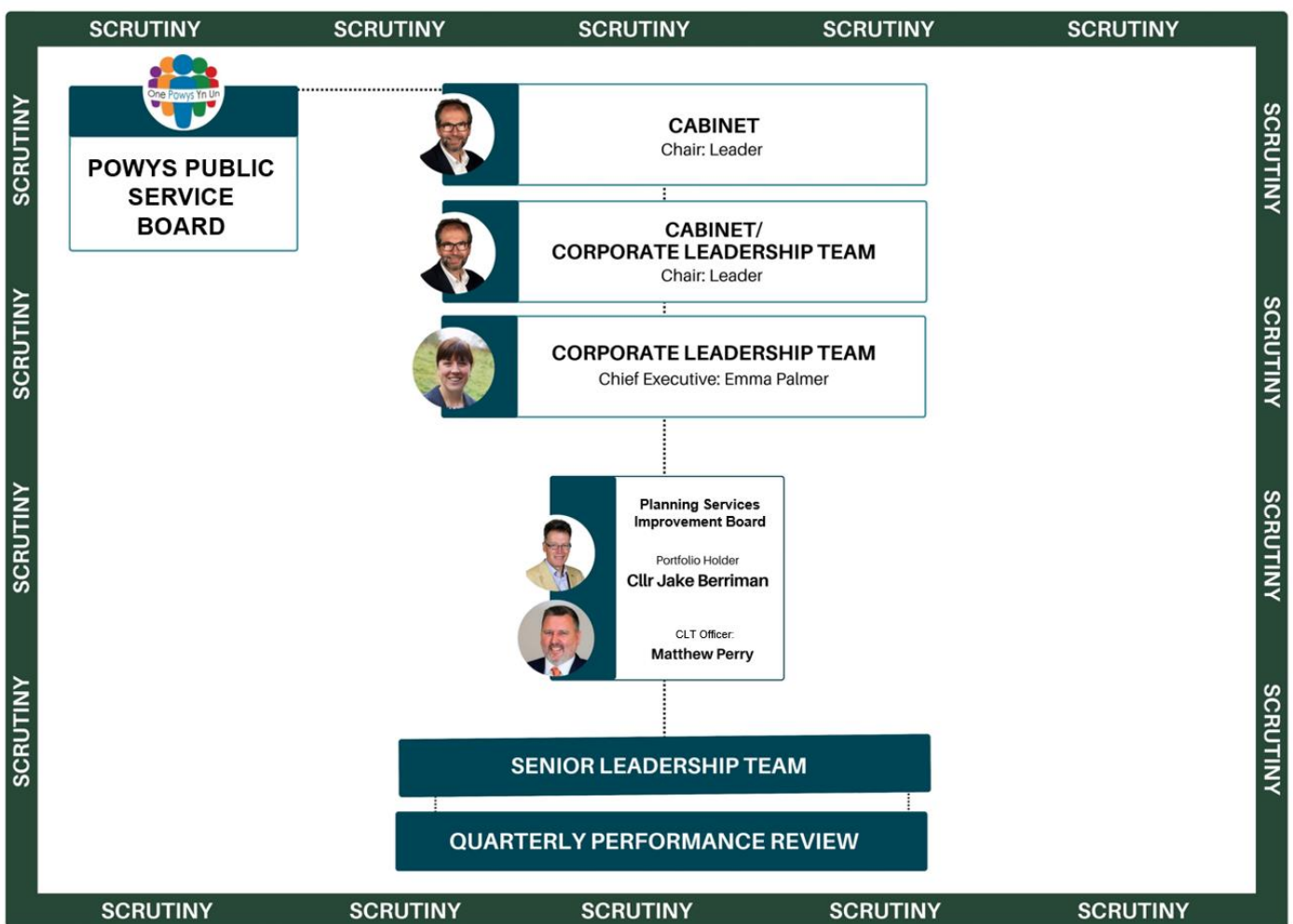
- [Climate Change strategy](#)
- [Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)
- [Welsh Language Standards Action Plan](#)
- [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#)
- [Health and Care strategy \(Regional Partnership Board\)](#)
- [Well-being Plan \(Public Service Board\)](#)
- [Procurement strategy](#)
- [Mid-Wales Regional Skills Partnerships \(Mid Wales Growth Deal\)](#)
- [Start Well, Live Well, Age Well \(Social Care\) Strategies](#)
- [Growing Mid Wales](#)
- [Affordable Housing Programme Delivery Plan Prospectus](#)
- [Powys Digital Strategy](#)
- Housing Revenue Account Thirty Year Business Plan
- [Powys Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26](#)
- [Powys Asset Strategy](#)
- Powys Local Area Energy Plan

Reviewing the plan

We will review the plan every year to so that we are sure that it focuses on what matters most, including making any changes to our corporate focus or how we plan to meet our objectives. The updated plan will be available on our website at the beginning of April each year.

An Open and Democratic Council: Governance and Performance

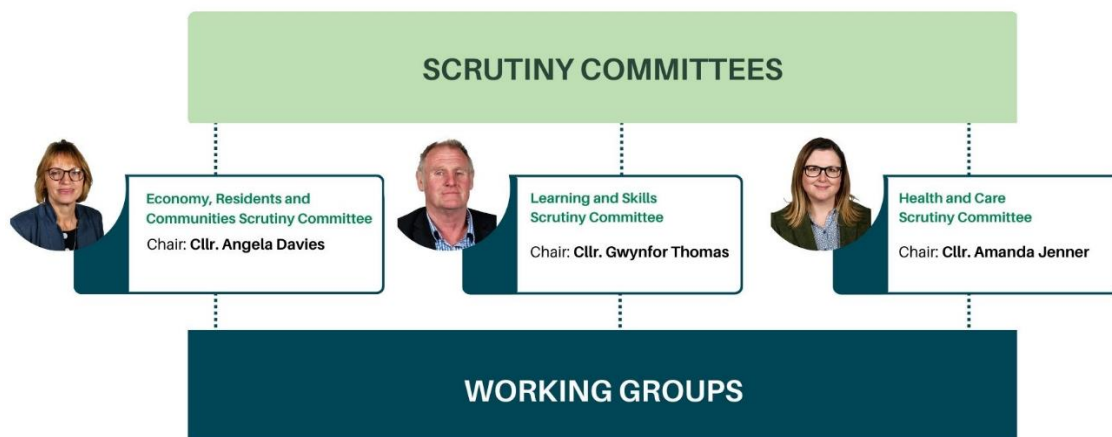
We are committed to sharing clear information about what we are doing to achieve our plan, and how well things are going. To do this, we have a governance framework for implementing, monitoring, and reporting against our plan. It shows which people and groups within the Council are responsible for making sure we achieve our well-being objectives, the Transformation Programme, and the day-to-day activities of the Council.



To check that we are doing the things that we said we would do, and that they are going to plan, we use a Performance Document. The document makes sure that we have a consistent way of reviewing how we are progressing towards achieving our plans and ambitions sustainably so that we can understand what is working well and what is not, and how we can improve things in the future.

We use self-evaluation to think about our work, and to show the people of Powys, our partners, and our regulators if we are doing the right thing in the right way. This information about our performance helps us to make sure that we are investing our time, effort, and money in the right things to make good changes that support our well-being objectives and other work.

The Council has three Scrutiny Committees, which are groups of people that are responsible for asking questions about the Council's performance by looking at what work is being done, and if it is being done well. They act on behalf of the people of Powys, our partners, and regulators to make sure that their views are included in the Council's decision-making and help Council services to better consider what community concerns, issues, or risks may impact the Council's work.



There are also other scrutiny activities that help the Council to review and develop its performance, proposals, policies, and decision making. For example, there is a Finance Panel, a Governance and Audit Committee, a Public Service's Board Scrutiny Committee, and a Growing Mid Wales Joint Scrutiny Committee (with Ceredigion County Council).

Appendix

Appendix A

Protected Characteristics	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
Age	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disability	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gender re-assignment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	Yes	Yes
Race	Yes	Yes	Yes
Religion or Belief	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sex	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sexual Orientation	Yes	Yes	Yes