

Report to	Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
Date of meeting	17 March 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Richard Mainon / Nicola Kneale, Strategic Planning Team Manager
Report author	Carol Evans, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer
Title	The Socio-economic Duty for Wales

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The Socio-economic Duty for Wales, which comes into force on 31 March 2021.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To inform the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (henceforth Committee) about the definition of the socio-economic Duty, how key functions in the Council will adapt to provide consideration for the Duty, and the measures being put in place to respond to the requirements.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Committee members note the reasons behind the Duty, its definitions, commits to giving due regard to the Duty, and asks all Members at committees, and officers attending those committees to do so.

3.2. Committee members note the core functions that are adapting to the Duty and ensures the adaptations are made (see 4.3 below for list of core functions).

3.3. Committee members:

- Inspect Well-being Impact Assessments with respect to inequality of outcome that results from socio-economic disadvantage / poverty.

- Ensure they take ownership for Well-being Impact Assessments for which they are responsible.
- Challenge officers to provide evidence or take steps to fill in knowledge gaps in Well-being Impact Assessments and challenge the conclusions of the Assessments, asking Officers whether their conclusions are accurate / are likely to be accurate.
- Avoid and challenge optimism bias.

4. Report details

4.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Welsh Ministers intend to commence Sections 1 to 3 of the 2010 Act in Wales – the Socio-economic Duty.

4.2. As a local Authority the duty requires us, when making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, to consider how our decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

4.3. General training will be offered to all Members and officers, as per the details in 4.4 below. Please see the presentation attached at Appendix A that is being used in training. In addition, briefings have been held with officers who lead on specific decision-making frameworks in order to ensure these frameworks reflect the Duty, namely:

- Strategic Planning (E-learning on Equalities, Well-being Impact Assessment, Equality content on web page)
- Finance & Assets (Asset Management Strategy & County Landlord Statements, SIG Business Case)
- Communications & Engagement
- Internal Audit
- Procurement
- Democratic Services (Committee Reports, Member training)
- Planning Policy
- HR

4.4. Please see key milestones and communication plan below:

Timetable / Communication Plan

Date	Activity
15 January	Update for Equality E-Learning module (which features in corporate induction)
26 January	New version of the Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA) website released on the intranet
Early February	Update for web pages on Equality and Diversity
18 February	Briefing for Members (to include a summary of WIA changes)
19 February, via email	Cabinet Briefing (to include a summary of WIA changes)
26 February, via email	Briefing for SLT (to include a summary of WIA changes)
Early February	Notice on Linc / Notice on Visiontime: awareness of Duty and requirements
11 March	Briefing for Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group
17 March	Briefing for Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (to include a summary of WIA changes)
18 & 22 March	Sessions for Personnel (to include a summary of WIA changes)

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. The Socio-economic Duty forms part of the Equality Act 2010, and will contribute to our Resilient Communities priority.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 No additional costs are envisaged in embedding the Duty within the decision making and scrutiny processes for the Council. Adaptations will be within existing resources.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1 No Well-being Impact Assessment is required for adopting the Duty itself, and all decision making encompasses use of a Well-being Impact Assessment for each project undertaken.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. This report has been shared with Cabinet Members, the Senior Leadership Team and the Chairs and Vice Chairs Committee Group to date.

8.2. The Communications Plan (above in 4.4) offers guidance on how the Duty will be implemented within the Council.

8.3. Lead officers for key decision-making functions have been briefed on the Duty and its requirements, and will adapt policies as appropriate.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 No Statement is required.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 There is a risk that the consideration given to this Duty is piecemeal. This could lead to opportunities to reduce socio-economic disadvantage being missed, and/or risk of legislative breach. To mitigate against this, it's important to consider how effectively tools such as Well-being Assessments and

Engagement activities are being used by officers and members to aid development and scrutiny of strategic decisions, and whether any improvements could be made.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Equality Act, 2010.