

Economic and Community Ambition Strategy – Equality Impact Assessment

For more information please
contact David Morgan or
Mike Horrocks



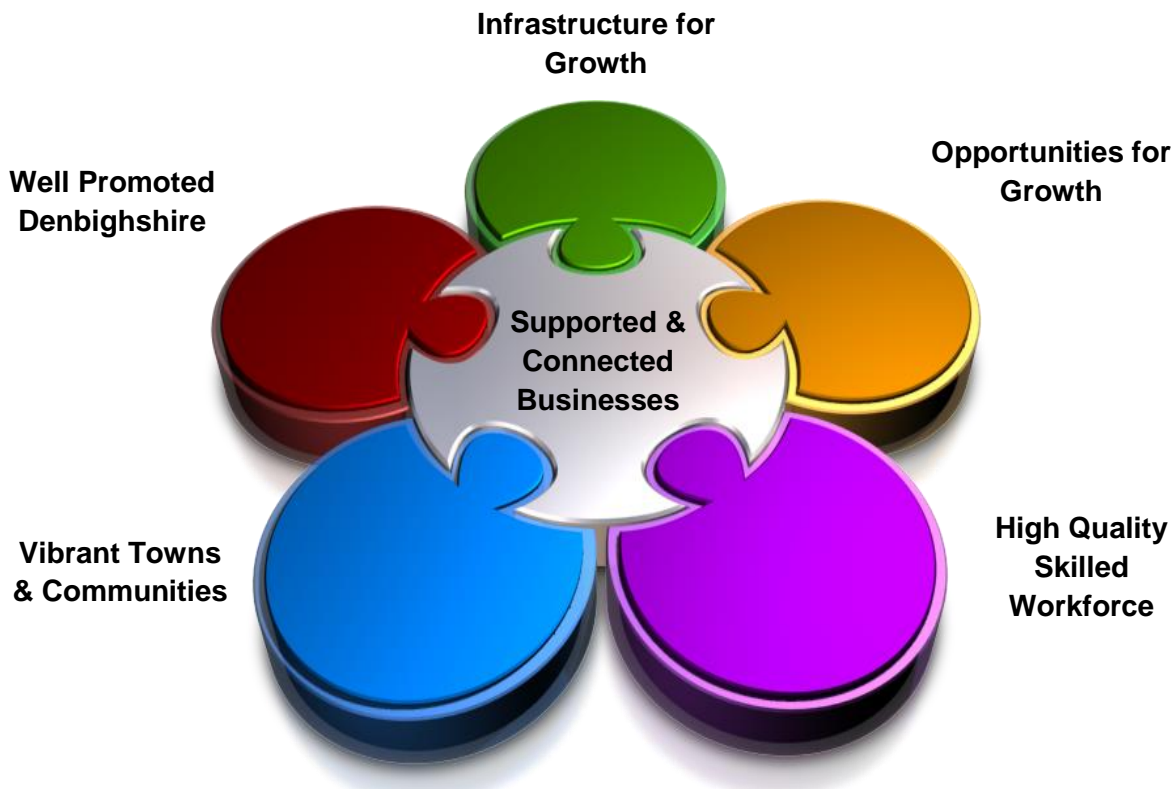
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INTRODUCTION

In common with communities across Wales, Denbighshire residents and businesses have stressed the importance of reviving the local economy to provide a sound base for all other development. Denbighshire County Council has identified 'Developing the Local Economy' as one of its 7 Corporate Priorities and the Economic & Community Ambition Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners will do to achieve this. The Strategy has six main themes:



For our Strategy to have the most positive impact we will have to work hard to encourage as much potential growth and wealth as possible to recirculate within Denbighshire's economy, businesses and communities. To increase this impact further we will also work hard to maximise the benefits of a growing economy to as wide a range of residents as possible.

Our Strategy has seven underlying principles, two of which strongly support our desire to assess equality impact:

- **Inclusive.** The strategy is intended to have impact county wide and to deliver economic and community ambition across Denbighshire's many communities.
- **Welsh Language and Culture.** The Strategy is intended to build on the economic strengths provided by Denbighshire's strong Welsh identity and culture, and to actively promote use of the Welsh language by businesses, residents and visitors.

The Equality Act 2010 is about ensuring a fair deal for everyone and focuses on ending discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and outcome and fostering good relations between different individuals and communities.

It simplifies and clarifies the role of Local Authorities as leaders in achieving equality improvements for their citizens and communities. Specific duties developed by the Welsh Government provide detailed and challenging requirements for Authorities but an overall emphasis on 'due regard' leaves authorities with greater freedom to produce distinctive local solutions and greater accountability to their communities.

Who is protected under the Act?

In actual fact everyone is. The Act sets out a new prescribed list of protected characteristics which replace what have traditionally been referred to as Equality Strands. These groups are protected through the general and specific duties of the Act.

- Protected characteristics:
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The General Duty

Local Authorities and other public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are essentially the aims of the Act. Having due regard for advancing these equality aims involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Equality Impact Assessments

The requirement to conduct equality impact assessments is one of the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales). The primary objectives of an EIA are to:

- assess whether one or more of these groups could experience disproportionate effects (over and above the impacts likely to be experienced by the general population) as a result of a policy being implemented or the way in which a service is delivered;
- identify opportunities to promote equality more effectively or to a greater extent; and
- develop ways in which any disproportionate negative impacts could be removed or mitigated to prevent any unlawful discrimination and minimise inequality of outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT

There have been two major phases of public engagement associated with the development of the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy.

1. Public Engagement to develop the Council's Corporate Priorities
2. Public Engagement on the draft Economic and Community Ambition Strategy

In the first phase we undertook a considerable amount of consultation and engagement work, focusing on residents, staff, and Elected Members. The aim of this work was to help identify priorities to address the needs and concerns of our communities. Some of the key activities undertaken as part of our consultation and engagement work included:

- A residents' survey: of 6,000 households during the summer of 2011, that included questions about the biggest issues facing our communities.
- A public survey: through our website and by posting leaflets in our leisure centres, libraries, One-Stop-Shops and council reception areas. This took place between October and December 2011, and generated 1,228 responses.
- Workshops with young people: through the Denbighshire Youth Council and Student Councils in some of our high schools.
- Staff workshops: with different levels of staff throughout the council.
- Workshops with Elected Members: to consider the conclusions from our research and engagement work and agree draft priorities for our new Corporate Plan.
- Public consultation on draft Corporate Plan priorities: inviting comments from residents, staff, Town & Community Councils and other stakeholders during August and September 2011.

Specific research and engagement was also undertaken, in parallel to inform the equality impact assessment of the Corporate Plan and Council priorities. This involved incorporating views and issues raised by:

General

Equality and Human Rights Commission (Wales and UK)
The Bevan Foundation
Welsh Government
HM Government
North Wales Public Sector Equality Network

Older People

Age Cymru and Age UK
The Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales

Younger People

Children's Commissioner for Wales
NSPCC

Disabled People

Disability Wales
Office for Disability Issues
Denbighshire Self-Advocacy

Trans People

UNIQUE

Women

The Fawcett Society
Welsh Women's Aid
WENWales

Men

GEM Project

LGB People

Stonewall Cymru and Stonewall UK

Race

Runnymede Trust

Religion and Belief

Human Rights and Social Justice Research Institute

In conducting this research we utilised information from the publications of representative organisations and other research papers and where possible discussed these with local groups, who provided further insights. This enabled us to produce reports on the needs and concerns of all the protected groups covering the full range of topics in the Corporate Plan. We also produced a specific topic report on *Equality and the Economy in Denbighshire*.

The draft Economic and Community Ambition Strategy was then developed throughout 2013 building on the earlier evidence from research and engagement, additional research on economic policy themes and the outputs of the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy Task & Finish Group workshop programme.

The second phase of public engagement commenced in July 2013 and ran until mid September 2013, with an extension to this period for City, Town and Community Councils allowing them to provide feedback up to mid October. More than 1800 groups, organisations and individuals were contacted as part of this second phase, with a number of groups / contacts representing protected characteristics or with an interest in equalities issues being contacted directly for comments on the draft strategy. These included:

Action for Hearing loss Wales	NCH-Action For Children
Barnardos	NHS Chaplaincy
Chwarae Teg	NHS Equalities
Clybiau Plan Cymru	North Wales Public sector equality network
Co-op	NWIS
Crossroads	NWREN
CWNE	Quakers
Deaf Association	Rhyl Youth Action Group
Deaf-blind Cymru	Royal National Institute of Blind People
Dial a ride	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Disability Wales	Shopmobility
Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council	Stonewall Cymru
Dyserth chapel	Un llais
EHRC	Unique
Guide dogs	Victim support
Hafal	Vision support
Home call	Viva LGBT
Mediate north wales	Women's aid (Glyndwr)
Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych	

THIS REPORT

This report sets out the socio demographic profiles of groups with statutory protected characteristics and Welsh speakers in Denbighshire. Where we have identified potential benefits / dis-benefits of the Strategy themes these are set out alongside recommendations intended to either maximise positive benefits or minimise dis-benefits in relation to each of the groups with protected characteristics.

At the end of the document the authors have set out overall final conclusions and recommendations to be considered when implementing the Strategy.

AGE

The Economic Ambition Strategy's intention to increase employment and to increase the skills of the workforce (theme 4) are particularly relevant to the age characteristic because available data suggests differing levels of economic activity and participation on learning and qualification levels among different age groups.

At the Wales level, participation in new adult learning declines with age; the 18-24 year old age group most likely to engage in adult learning and the 60+ age group least likely.¹

Although there is some useful data on age and qualification patterns for Denbighshire residents' from the Annual Population Survey there are a number of variables where data is unreliable due to issues with the sample size. Therefore it has been necessary to remove or combine some age bands.

TABLE – QUALIFICATIONS BY AGE

	Jan 2011- Dec 2011	conf
% with NVQ4+ - aged 20-24	17.8	9.9
% with NVQ4+ - aged 25-29	20.4	9.3
% with NVQ4+ - aged 30-39	42.4	7.6
% with NVQ4+ - aged 40-49	35.0	6.4
% with NVQ4+ - aged 50-64	25.7	4.3
% with NVQ3 only - aged 25-29	20.6	9.3
% with NVQ3 only - aged 30-39	16.2	5.7
% with NVQ3 only - aged 40-49	16.1	4.9
% with NVQ3 only - aged 50-64	11.2	3.1
% with NVQ2 only - aged 25-29	29.1	10.5
% with NVQ2 only - aged 30-39	17.7	5.9
% with NVQ2 only - aged 40-49	19.4	5.3
% with NVQ2 only - aged 50-64	17.1	3.7
% with NVQ1 only - aged 25-29	14.8	8.2
% with NVQ1 only - aged 30-39	12.7	5.1
% with NVQ1 only - aged 40-49	13.5	4.6
% with NVQ1 only - aged 50-64	14.3	3.5
% with other qualifications - aged 40-49	6.4	3.3
% with other qualifications - aged 50-64	9.7	2.9
% with no qualifications - aged 40-49	6.1	3.2
% with no qualifications - aged 50-64	15.9	3.6

¹ WLGA, Equality Issues in Education: A resource for Strategic Equality Plans and Equality Objectives in schools and local authorities, (November 2011)

The 50 -64 age band seem most likely to have no qualifications. The 25-29 age group may have a higher rate than other age groups of the middle level qualifications equivalent to NVQ 2 and 3 but broad confidence bands mean that we should treat this conclusion with caution. The lower NVQ1 and equivalent qualifications are fairly consistent across the age bands. The 30-39 and 40-49 age bands have the higher rates of top level qualifications. The above distributions are broadly in common with national trends.

TABLE – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BY AGE

	Apr 2010- Mar 2011	conf
Economic activity rate - aged 16-19	54.3	11.8
Economic activity rate - aged 20-24	78.5	9.4
Economic activity rate - aged 25-34	85.1	5.3
Economic activity rate - aged 35-49	84.3	3.9
Economic activity rate - aged 50-64	62.1	4.7
Economic activity rate - aged 65+	8.9	2.5
% who are economically inactive - aged 16-19	45.7	11.8
% who are economically inactive - aged 20-24	21.5	9.4
% who are economically inactive - aged 25-34	14.9	5.3
% who are economically inactive - aged 35-49	15.7	3.9
% who are economically inactive - aged 50-64	37.9	4.7
% who are economically inactive - aged 65+	91.1	2.5

There are confidence issues in relation to the economic activity and inactivity rates for the 16-19 and 20-24 groups. However, the unemployment rate figures (overleaf) also show higher rates in these age bands and from a policy perspective initiatives to create job opportunities for young people and to prepare young people for work would address both issues. The figures for the 50 – 64 and 64+ age groups show a trend of economic inactivity in the older age bands that begins well before retirement despite the fact that there are relatively fewer people in these age groups claiming unemployment benefits.

TABLE – JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE CLAIMANTS BY AGE

	Denbighshire (level)	Denbighshire (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aged 16 to 64				
Total	1,905	3.4	3.5	3.2
over 12 months	580	1	1.1	1
Aged 18 to 24				
Total	565	7.5	6.9	5.8
over 12 months	125	1.6	1.4	1.1
Aged 25 to 49				
Total	1,020	3.7	3.8	3.3
over 12 months	350	1.3	1.3	1.1
Aged 50 to 64				
Total	320	1.7	1.9	2
Over 12 months	105	0.5	0.7	0.8

The issue of employment rates for older people, and those identified in ‘How Fair is Wales?’ seem to be relevant in Denbighshire too. Furthermore it has been argued that:

the key question [is] not: “Should we focus our limited resources on younger workers or older workers?” but: “How can we grow the economy to ensure that everyone has the skills they need to do the work they want to do for as long as they want to do it and that the economy needs them to do?”. This broader view is the one we need to take forward as we consider difficult questions in relation to employment and other areas of economic and social growth.²

² EHRC, *Just Ageing? Fairness, equality and the life course Final report*, 2009 p22

POTENTIAL IMPACTS - OLDER / YOUNGER RESIDENTS

Strategy theme	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential dis-benefit	Recommended action
Infrastructure for Growth	<p>Effective transport connections improve access to employment / training / services / customers</p> <p>Digital infrastructure improvements overcome digital exclusion of rural residents, services become more accessible, engagement with ICT improved across county</p> <p>Development of land & premises generates local employment opportunity</p>	<p>Decisions based on cost could disproportionately affect those in rural areas</p> <p>Digital divide increases for those not connected as services move online</p> <p>Employment opportunities are unsuitable or are taken up by other more mobile groups within the population</p>	<p>Ensure specific needs of rural and urban older / younger residents are considered when designing transport related projects / activities</p> <p>Identify and remove barriers to use of ICT for the target group through early actions in project activity</p> <p>Encourage development in proximity to concentrations of older / younger residents out of work. Link training activity to job opportunities in advance.</p>
Supported and Connected Businesses	<p>Business support & advice for older / younger people is improved</p> <p>Stronger business networks offer improved support & mentoring</p> <p>Community benefit clauses in procurement activity result in e.g. increased local apprenticeship opportunities, improvements to facilities / services used by group</p>	<p>None identified</p> <p>Barriers to participation reduce benefits for older / younger residents</p> <p>Benefits not delivered if unrealistic targets set or contracts managed poorly.</p>	<p>Tailor advice / support for older / younger residents. Consider targeted business start-up initiatives.</p> <p>Mentoring offers significant benefits to younger people. Identify barriers at an early stage</p> <p>Ensure community benefit contracts managed effectively</p>
Opportunities for Growth	<p>Creation of wider range of employment and business start-up opportunities more suitable to older / younger people</p> <p>Increased local provision of Health & Care services by social / private enterprise</p>	<p>None identified</p> <p>None identified</p>	<p>Town / Area Plans to assess the types of employment that would most benefit younger / older residents in their area. Consider targeted start-up initiatives in these sectors</p> <p>Promote market opportunities around provision of Health & Care goods / services to older residents.</p>
High Quality Skilled Workforce	<p>Significant benefits from targeted actions to develop skills for work & life, include older / younger people in the labour market and stimulate enterprise / entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Potential for reduced benefits where partner contributions cannot be realised and actions cannot be implemented</p>	<p>Provide support to enable <i>effective</i> partnership working</p> <p>Ensure specific benefits to younger / older residents</p>

			are identified in projects / initiatives
Vibrant Towns and Communities	Retention of young people through increased prosperity / attractiveness of local towns	Potential house price rises may increase affordability issues	Ensure young people linked into prosperity
	Local employment opportunity	None identified	Secure employment of local young / older residents
	Reduced household deprivation for younger / older people	None identified	Target initiatives to ensure group see benefits
Well Promoted Denbighshire	Increased employment opportunity	Potential for increased competition for local jobs and housing as Denbighshire becomes more widely recognised	Ensure local people are competitive potential employees
	Increased leisure choice for younger / older residents	Some older residents may find the area less peaceful	Minimise negative impacts of prosperity

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy is likely to result in a number of positive benefits around accessibility and infrastructure for both younger and older people in the county, particularly those living in more rural areas. These are mainly related to improved access to services and employment opportunity. However, many of these benefits will be limited unless the specific needs of these age groups are focussed on.

It is general recommended that older / younger people are included as stakeholders in the actions developed around the strategy themes in order to incorporate often simple adjustments that can increase benefits to the target group.

DISABILITY

The Economic Ambition Strategy's intention to increase employment, to increase the skills of the workforce (Theme 4) and increase household income are particularly relevant to this group because available data suggests differing levels of economic activity and participation in learning and qualification levels among disabled and non-disabled people.

TABLE – ADULT LEARNING, DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED

	Apr 2010- Mar 2011	conf
% with no adult learning - both DDA & also work-limiting	49.8	9.1
% with no adult learning - not disabled	27.7	3.9
% with non-taught adult learning -both DDA & also work-limiting	24.7	7.8
% with non-taught adult learning -not disabled	18.2	3.4
% with taught & non-taught adult learning -both DDA & also work-limiting	13.6	6.2
% with taught & non-taught adult learning -not disabled	30.1	4.0
% with taught adult learning -both DDA & also work-limiting - aged 16-64	12.0	5.9
% with taught adult learning - not disabled aged 16-64	24.1	3.7

We can observe substantial differences between the non-disabled group and the DDA and work limiting combined group. The DDA and work limiting combined group have higher levels with no adult learning and non-taught adult learning but lower levels of taught learning when compared with the non-disabled group. Unfortunately we are not currently able to produce robust data that separates the DDA only category. This trend in adult learning in Denbighshire reflects the position across a wide range of qualifications observed at the Wales level.

'People defined as both DDA disabled and as having a work limiting condition have by far the lowest educational achievements of all the equality categories. Both men and women in these groups are 3 times more likely to have no qualifications compared to non-disabled people.' Rhys Davies et al (2011)³

We find from Rhys Davies et al that:

- *'People who are both DDA disabled and have a work limiting condition experience most disadvantage in relation to employment. Seventy four per cent are not employed. This is more than 3 times the overall UK proportion of 22%.'*⁴

³ WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN WALES, (March 2011) p. xv

⁴ WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN WALES, (March 2011) p.xv

TABLE - DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

	Apr 2010- Mar 2011	conf
Economic activity rate aged 16-64 - disabled	48.0	5.7
Economic activity rate aged 16-64 - both DDA & also work-limiting	32.6	6.8
Economic activity rate aged 16-64 - DDA only disabled	82.2	9.2
Economic activity rate aged 16-64 - not disabled	83.1	2.6
% economically Inactive - aged 16-64 - disabled	52.0	5.7
% economically inactive aged 16-64 - both DDA & also work-limiting	67.4	6.8
% economically inactive aged 16-64 - DDA only disabled	17.8	9.2
% economically inactive aged 16-64 - not disabled	16.9	2.6

The Denbighshire figures demonstrate similar levels of economic activity and inactivity rates between non-disabled and the DDA only group, but a large gap between these groups and the DDA and work limiting group. While it is the case that some people in the latter category may be unable to work, this is unlikely to be the case across the group as a whole because of the range of issues covered by this category. Statistical analysis is unlikely to demonstrate any further useful information on the subject so it is important to engage with disabled people in the work limiting group to get a better understanding of employment possibilities and support needs.

It is difficult to estimate the incomes of individual protected groups in Denbighshire because of the small cohorts of particular protected groups, scarcity of data and the complexity of incomes model which would need to include earnings, pension, benefits and other elements. As ever we must fall back on national evidence and attempt to apply the available Denbighshire insights to this. Rhys Davies et al (2011) inform us that:

*'Approximately a fifth of the Welsh population live in poverty (measured after housing costs). Those living on the lowest incomes are once again the youngest, disabled people, those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity and those living in rented accommodation. However, lone parents are the most susceptible group, with almost half living in poverty.'*⁵

⁵ WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN WALES, (March 2011) p. xvi

POTENTIAL IMPACTS - DISABILITY

Strategy theme	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential dis-benefit	Recommended action
Infrastructure for Growth	<p>Public / community transport improvements will increase access to employment and services</p> <p>Digital connectivity increases opportunity for working from home and accessing services online</p> <p>Local employment creation reduces travel to work issues</p>	<p>Benefits will be reduced if transport solutions do not specify needs of people with a disability</p> <p>Migration to online service provision may increase the exclusion of those with barriers to access</p> <p>None identified</p>	<p>Ensure appropriate involvement / consultation in 'access to work' related initiatives supported by the Strategy</p> <p>Identify barriers to digital access for people with a disability and specify the need for relevant actions in the strategy to address these as pre-requisites. Promote the opportunities and benefits of working from home / employing home workers</p> <p>Increase benefits to people with a disability by ensuring they are prepared for locally available jobs.</p>
Supported and Connected Businesses	<p>Improved business support, networking and mentoring opportunities for people with a disability who wish to start / grow a business</p>	<p>None identified</p>	<p>Increase benefits by identifying specific barriers to business support / networking for people with a disability.</p> <p>Provision of face to face business support and mentoring to overcome mobility issues</p> <p>Promote disability awareness as part of Denbighshire Business Week / Business Awards</p>
Opportunities for Growth	<p>Creation of wider range of employment and business start-up opportunities</p> <p>Improvement in quality of visitor accommodation in Denbighshire</p>	<p>None identified</p> <p>Potential for benefits to be reduced if the needs of people with a disability are not taken into account</p>	<p>Increase benefits by promoting the exploration of opportunities for niche market products and services that appeal to people with a disability.</p> <p>Ensure actions to increase quality of visitor accommodation includes disability improvements</p>

High Quality Skilled Workforce	Targeted support to assist people with a disability to enter the labour market	Potential for benefits to be reduced if the specific needs of people with a disability are not taken into account	Ensure actions under Theme 4 identify and address barriers for those with a disability Targeted promotion of Theme 4 actions to group
Vibrant Towns and Communities	Local employment opportunity Reduced household deprivation for people with a disability Locally available shops / services reduce need to travel	None identified None identified Benefits could be reduced if needs of people with a disability not taken into account during design of initiatives to improve town centres	Promote the engagement of people with a disability in design of projects / initiatives Ensure actions in Town / Area Plans complete equality impact assessments
Well Promoted Denbighshire	Increased employment opportunity Increased leisure choice	Potential increased competition for employment Leisure choices could be limited if the needs of people with a disability are not taken into account	Promote employment opportunities to residents with a disability. Identify and remove barriers. Promote and develop Denbighshire as a destination for people with a disability

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall the Strategy is likely to result in positive benefits to people with a disability. The majority of these are around improved access to transport, employment opportunity, training and provision of goods / services. In order to maximise these benefits proactive engagement with the group is required in advance to ensure that people with a disability are sufficiently well prepared to make the most of opportunities.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

'The terms 'trans people' and 'transgender people' are both often used as umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex, including transsexual people (those who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment to live permanently in their acquired gender), transvestite/cross-dressing people (those who wear clothing traditionally associated with the other gender either occasionally or more regularly), androgyne/polygender people (those who have non-binary gender identities and do not identify as male or female), and others who define as gender variant'.¹

Since the Equality Act 2006 and then more comprehensively in the Equality Act 2010 trans people have been accorded rights and given protection in law from discrimination.

Transgender – refers to an individual who identifies with a gender inconsistent or not culturally associated with their biological sex. Simply put, it defines a person whose biological birth sex conflicts, or is considered by society to conflict, with their psychological gender.

Transsexual – is a term that refers to men and women (referred to as trans men or trans women respectively) who desire to establish a permanent gender role as a member of the gender with which they identify, often (but not always) pursuing medical interventions as part of the process.

There are no official or census figures for the number of trans people in Wales. The Home Office 'Report of the interdepartmental working group on transsexual people' based on research from the Netherlands and Scotland, estimates that there are between 1,300 and 2,000 male to female and between 250 and 400 female to male transsexual people in the UK. However, Press for Change estimate the figures at around 5,000 post-operative transsexual people.

Further, 2008 research by the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) claims there are 6,200 people who have transitioned to a new gender role via medical intervention and approximately 2,335 full Gender Recognition Certificates have been issued to February 2009. The figures are more diverse when looking at the trans community in the UK, where estimates range from 65,000 to 300,000.

The Welsh Government's equality impact assessment for the Rural Development Plan programme has highlighted the need to identify and understand any existing barriers to accessing finance faced by individuals within this equality group (ranging from concerns over being treated differently by financial institutions to instances of outright discrimination).

Our engagement work with local trans support group Unique indicates that Trans people can experience bullying and harassment at work and there are concerns that this may impact on their employment prospects in terms of both recruitment and promotion. National studies also suggest that trans people face harassment, bullying and hate crime in some educational and community settings.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – GENDER REASSIGNMENT

None identified.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have not identified any disproportionate positive or negative benefits for Trans people, although there could be opportunities to maximise benefits for these groups, as with other equality groups, during implementation of individual projects. Within individual projects opportunities may arise to promote fair and inclusive approaches to training, recruitment and employment practices which should be identified in the project specific equality impact assessment.

Continued engagement with trans support groups should be maintained in order to pick up issues in relation to the Strategy if they arise.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

We have not identified any national or local evidence to suggest that our strategy could have any disproportionately negative or positive benefits for people who are married or in a civil partnership.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

None identified.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is not anticipated that there will be any disproportionate impacts of the Strategy on the marriage and civil partnership characteristic.

Apart from working to ensure that illegal discrimination against people who are married or in a civil partnership is excluded from project practices, there are no specific recommendations regarding implementation for this protected characteristic.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

It is anticipated that there will be no disproportionate impacts on this protected characteristic.

Nonetheless, pregnant women and new mothers can be at risk of being made redundant, something which has not been helped by the recent recession. Even before the recession, the Equal Opportunities Commission had already estimated that 30,000 women lost their jobs each year as a result of being pregnant.

As such, during implementation it will be important to ensure that projects are tailored to ensure that they work to eliminate discrimination against pregnant women and those on maternity leave and that they improve equality of opportunity for this group (for example, by encouraging and supporting flexible working arrangements and other forms of support amongst employers (as outlined in the section on 'Sex / Gender'). Addressing labour market mobility and flexibility is key to this, and provision should be made to accommodate the particular constraints facing women planning to start a family.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

We have not identified any disproportionate positive or negative benefits for pregnant women and new mothers, although there could be opportunities to maximise benefits for these groups, as with other equality groups, during implementation of individual projects.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy is not likely to result in disproportionate benefits / dis-benefits for pregnant women and new mothers however individual projects opportunities should be taken to promote fair and inclusive approaches to training, recruitment and employment practices and flexible working.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The Economic Ambition Strategy's intention to increase employment, the skills of the workforce (Theme 4) and household incomes are relevant because we can observe differences in these outcomes among different ethnic groups.

It is difficult to estimate the incomes of individual protected groups in Denbighshire because of the small cohorts of particular protected groups, scarcity of data and the complexity of incomes model which would need to include earnings, pension, benefits and other elements. However, we may fall back on national evidence and attempt to apply the available Denbighshire insights to this. Rhys Davies et al (2011) inform us that:

*'Approximately a fifth of the Welsh population live in poverty (measured after housing costs). Those living on the lowest incomes are once again the youngest, disabled people, those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity and those living in rented accommodation. However, lone parents are the most susceptible group, with almost half living in poverty.'*⁶

The EHRC's 2010 triennial review has tentatively suggested that, in Wales, participation in adult learning is higher among ethnic minority populations than in the white population with the exception of people from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds.⁷ In addition Winkler et al have pointed out the complexity of the situation in relation to levels of qualification among ethnic minority groups.

*'Fewer people from an ethnic minority origin hold at least level 2 qualifications than the population as a whole (55 per cent compared with 68 per cent). However, persons from an ethnic minority origin are equally likely to hold degree-level qualifications as the population as a whole (26 per cent) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007w). Amongst ethnic minority groups who are out of work, the Future Skills Wales survey (2004) found that they had similar higher-level qualifications and generic skills as the general population but that they had better entrepreneurial and foreign language skills.'*⁸

National research has also found:

*'Women are disadvantaged in employment terms: in almost all population groups women face an above-average incidence of non-employment. This is particularly the case for some ethnic minority groups in Wales, particularly women of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani and Chinese ethnicity.'*⁹

⁶ WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECON. INEQUALITY IN WALES, (Mar 2011) p. xvi

⁷ EHRC (2010) How Fair is Britain?, page 322

⁸ Bevan Foundation for EHRC Wales, Equality issues in Wales: a research review, (2009) p.156. The Welsh Government report referred to is Welsh Assembly Government, Proposals for a Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2008 (2008w)

⁹ WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN WALES, (March 2011) p.xv

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – RACE AND ETHNICITY

Strategy theme	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential dis-benefit	Recommended action
Infrastructure for Growth	Lower levels of car ownership mean public transport improvements can bring significant benefit	Potential for benefit to be reduced where other factors act as a barrier e.g. fear of race hate crime No evidence to suggest that digital inclusion issues exist	Personal security concerns to be identified and addressed in transport improvement initiatives Review digital inclusion issues for race & ethnicity group as part of Digital Denbighshire
Supported and Connected Businesses	No disproportionate benefits identified	Potential for benefits to be reduced by barriers to engagement with business support e.g. language, terminology, accessibility	Provide information through cultural or community centres in areas where populations within this group are concentrated Undertake impact assessment of individual actions
Opportunities for Growth	No disproportionate benefits identified	None identified	None identified
High Quality Skilled Workforce	Employment and skills development opportunities for women from the group	Benefits could be reduced if women from minority groups are not effectively supported to access learning employment	Projects should seek to remove barriers and be flexible enough to meet any particular employment and skills needs of members of minority communities
Vibrant Towns and Communities	Reduction in deprivation for households in poverty will have a disproportionate benefit	None identified	Ensure initiatives are targeted to take account of minority group needs Promote the benefits of cultural diversity and highlight the contributions to the county made by those from diverse backgrounds
Well Promoted Denbighshire	No disproportionate benefits identified	None identified	Ensure that all communications are accessible to people from minority groups

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy has limited potential to deliver disproportionate benefits to people in this group, mainly around improved transport and reduced deprivation. No dis-benefits have been identified. In order for positive benefits to be secured it will be necessary for individual projects / initiatives to identify and assess barriers specifically in relation to race and ethnicity.

RELIGION AND BELIEF

There is no specific list that sets out what religion or belief discrimination is. The law defines it as any religion, religious or philosophical belief. This includes all major religions, as well as less widely practised ones.

A person's actual or presumed religious identity can overlap with other elements of identity, such as ethnicity or political views. This can be a positive choice, for example many Jews define themselves as being of Jewish ethnicity as well as of Jewish faith, but it can also form part of negative or inaccurate stereotypes, for example many people from Asia report being subjected to islamophobic abuse.

Feedback from local engagement events¹⁰ suggest that some business owners in North Wales have regular experience of islamophobic abuse. We note that such abuse can occur to people regardless of whether or not they are of Islamic faith, another faith or none.

We are also aware of concerns in the Islamic faith around the operation of credit, loans and interest on debts. These concerns will be included in the individual impact assessment of any project that includes such financial mechanisms, should any be developed in the course of implementation of the strategy.

A number of cases involving matters of conscience and religious expression in the employment context have come to prominence nationally, in recent years, involving Christian, Sikh and Islamic people. While none relate directly to the work of the strategy, there may be opportunities in the implementation of projects to promote fair and inclusive approaches to training, recruitment and employment practices.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – RELIGION AND BELIEF

None identified.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have not identified any disproportionate positive or negative impacts of the Strategy for individuals committed to religions or beliefs systems, although there could be opportunities to maximise benefits for these groups, as with other equality groups, during implementation of individual projects. Within individual projects opportunities may arise to promote fair and inclusive approaches to training, recruitment and employment practices. Each individual project will have its own separate equality impact assessment.

¹⁰ North Wales Public Sector Equality Network, Public Engagement Event (Conwy, 2011)

SEX / GENDER

The Strategy intention to increase employment, skills and household incomes are relevant because we can observe differences in these outcomes between men and women.

TABLE – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BY SEX

	Apr 2010- Mar 2011	conf
Economic activity rate females - aged 16-64	70.4	3.8
Economic activity rate males - aged 16-64	77.1	3.7
% of males who are economically inactive - aged 16-64	22.9	3.7
% of economically inactive males who do not want a job	73.1	8.1
% of economically inactive males who want a job	26.9	8.1
% of females who are economically inactive - aged 16-64	29.6	3.8
% of economically inactive females who do not want a job	86.2	5.1
% of economically inactive females who want a job	13.8	5.1

The rate of female economic inactivity due to looking after the family home (in Wales) has declined substantially since 1992 and throughout the 2000s as more women have entered the labour market. This has contributed to an overall reduction in the rate of economically inactive females although this has been partially countered by increases in the rates of female students and female disabled or long-term sick. Nevertheless the gap (in Denbighshire in 2010) of 9.5 percentage points between Male and Female levels of inactivity is significant and may have consequences for policy makers who also need to consider the higher levels of economically inactive female who want a job compared to the proportion of economically inactive males who want a job.

There is some evidence that historic gender stereotypes around apprenticeship and vocational training persist.

The results for males and females are more comprehensively reliable (the exception being females with trade apprenticeships). We see more females with the higher NVQ4+ qualifications, we can assume more trade apprenticeships among males and we see broadly similar rates for other levels of qualifications.

TABLE - MALE AND FEMALE QUALIFICATIONS

	Jan 2011-Dec 2011	conf
% with NVQ4+ - males aged 16-64	22.3	3.8
% with NVQ4+ - females aged 16-64	32.4	4.1
% with NVQ3 only - males aged 16-64	16.8	3.4
% with NVQ3 only - females aged 16-64	15.0	3.1
% with Trade Apprenticeships - males aged 16-64	7.3	2.4
% with Trade Apprenticeships - females aged 16-64	0.7	* ¹¹
% with NVQ2 only - males aged 16-64	20.5	3.7
% with NVQ2 only - females aged 16-64	23.1	3.7
% with NVQ1 only - males aged 16-64	16.1	3.4
% with NVQ1 only - females aged 16-64	13.3	3.0
% with other qualifications - males aged 16-64	6.3	2.2
% with other qualifications - females aged 16-64	5.6	2.0
% with no qualifications - males aged 16-64	10.7	2.9
% with no qualifications - females aged 16-64	9.9	2.6

¹¹ Where ever * is displayed see Metadata for Charts and Tables for explanation

The national picture with respect to earnings is a complex and uneven one.

Amongst those who are in employment, pay gaps are one of the most significant areas of inequality. [...] The hourly wages of full-time women workers, disabled workers and Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers are less than men's and non-disabled people's wages. This remains a deep-seated inequality¹².p8

In Denbighshire we have substantial evidence in relation to male and female difference and have analysed it in detail below. We do not have this level of evidence for other protected characteristics.

TABLE – ANNUAL EARNINGS 2010

	number	conf %
Male	20,882	9
Female	13,220	15*

At the headline level the gap between male and female earnings in Denbighshire appears¹³ substantial but the reasons for this are complex. A significant factor is the different working patterns of male and female workers. Many more women work part-time, although social and economic changes mean that the balance has altered overtime. Since 1998 we have seen a small increase in the number of men working part-time but a much more significant change in relation to the overall number of women in employment (which has increased) and the pattern of employment. In 2008 more women were employed full-time than part-time.

¹² WISERD for EHRC Wales, AN ANATOMY OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN WALES, (March 2011) p.8

¹³ The figure for female earnings has a wide confidence interval and is not as precise as we would like.

DIAGRAM - MALE AND FEMALE WORKING PATTERNS (DENBIGHSHIRE) NUMBERS

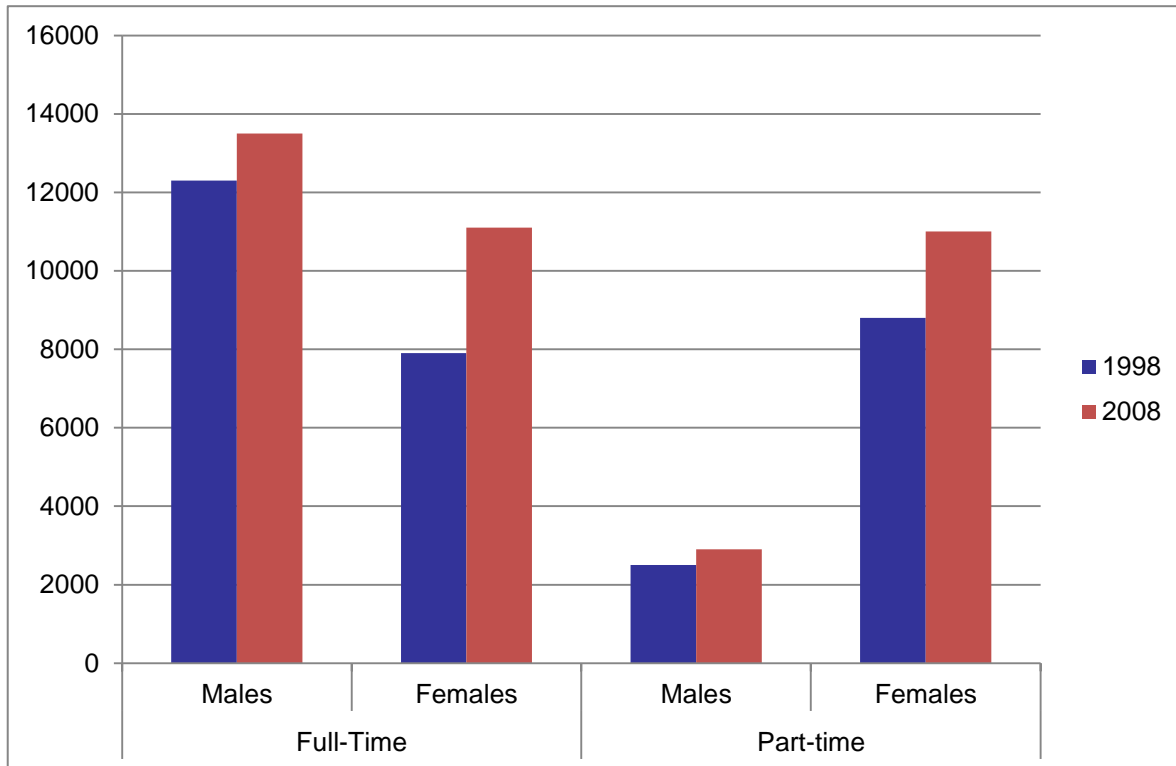


TABLE - MALE AND FEMALE WEEKLY EARNINGS (FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES)

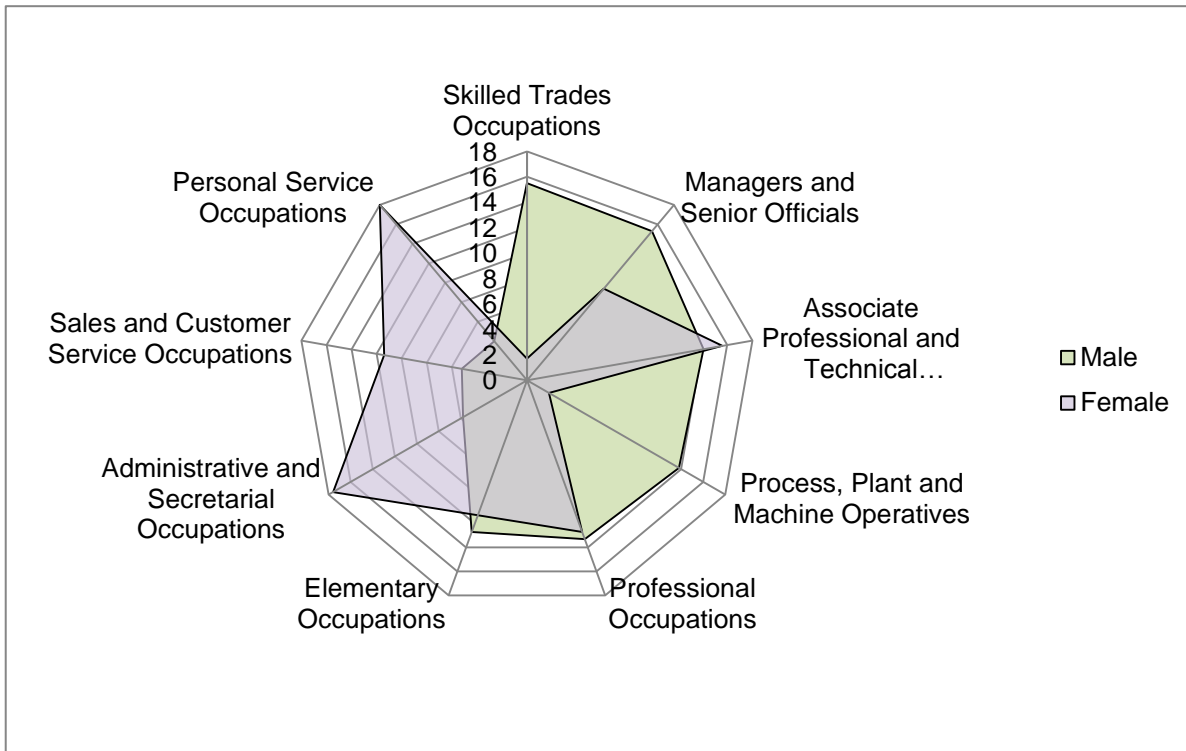
Year	1999		2010	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Area				
Wales	391.9	300.5	547.8	469.9
Denbighshire	366.4	299.2	537.5	473

The gap in gross weekly earnings of full-time employees between males and females was smaller in Denbighshire than in Wales in both 1999 and 2010. However, the rate of gap reduction has been greater in Wales than in Denbighshire. The gap in Denbighshire of 12 per cent remains substantial and the reasons for this gap are complex. One factor relates to hours worked where in 2010 male full-time workers worked an average of 40 hours per week and female full-time workers worked 37 hours.¹⁴ Other factors also play a part including occupational segregation and equal pay (pay difference) issues.

Analysis of the pay gap in relation to part-time employees is impossible for Denbighshire because of the low number of male part-time workers.

¹⁴ annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis

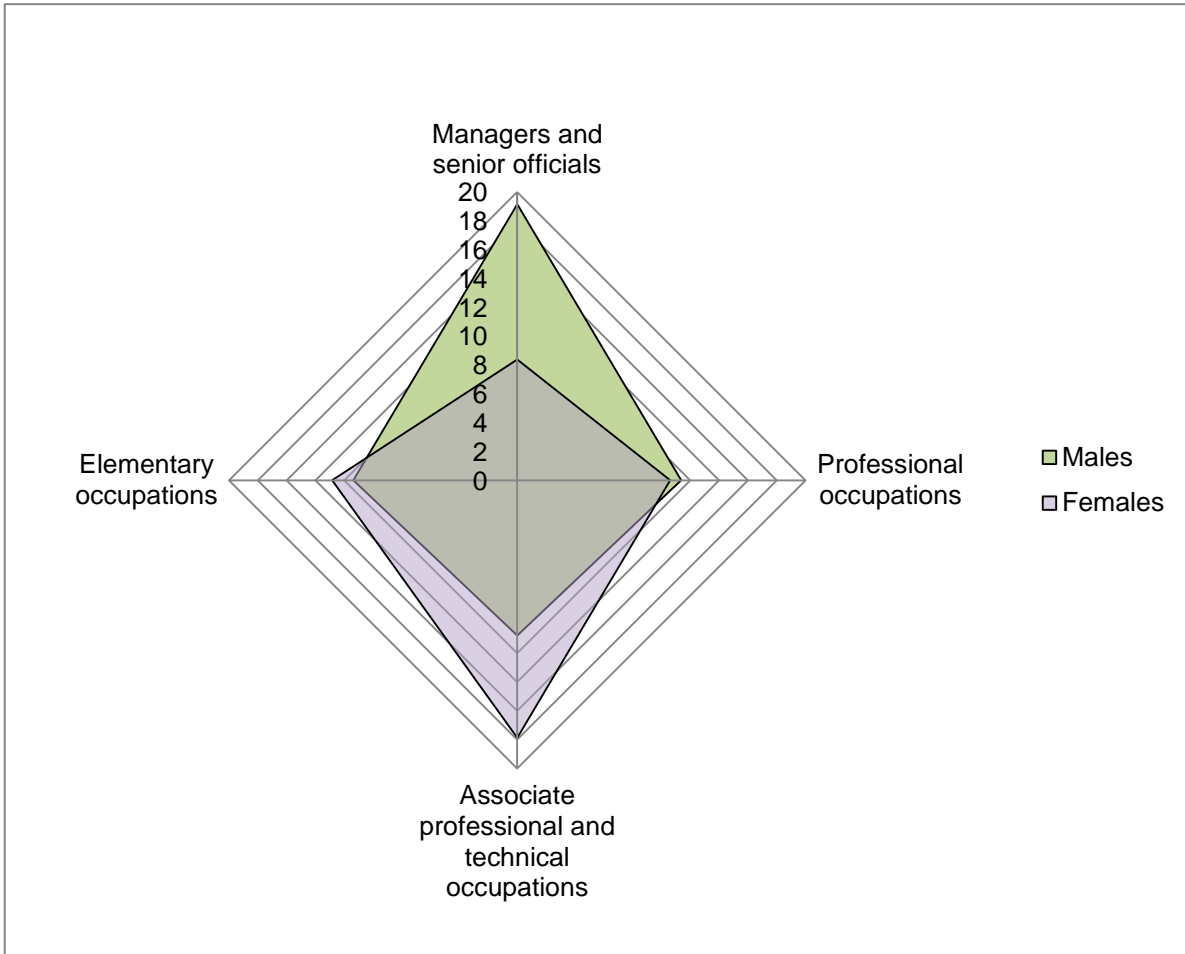
DIAGRAM - OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION (WALES)



One reason for the gap pay gap between men and women in Wales and Denbighshire is that men and women tend to be employed at different occupational grades. At the Wales level we see male jobs clustered around the Skilled Trade, Managers and Senior Officials, Associate Professional and Technical, Process, plan and Machine Operators, Professional Occupations and Elementary Occupations. There are also many female jobs in Associate Professional and Technical, Professional Occupations and Elementary Occupations but very few in Process, Plant and Machine Operators, and Skilled Trades. Managers and Senior Officials make up almost twice the proportion of male employment than female. In contrast very few male employments are in the Administrative and Secretarial, Sales and Customer Service and Personal Services occupations.

Unfortunately, because of the size of survey samples and the low numbers of either males or females in specific occupations it is impossible to show precise rates for all occupational groups for Denbighshire. Those available with sufficient precision are illustrated below. It largely illustrates the difference in relation to Managers and Senior Officials, which make up a high percentage of male jobs and the Associate professional and technical occupations, which make up a high percentage of female jobs.

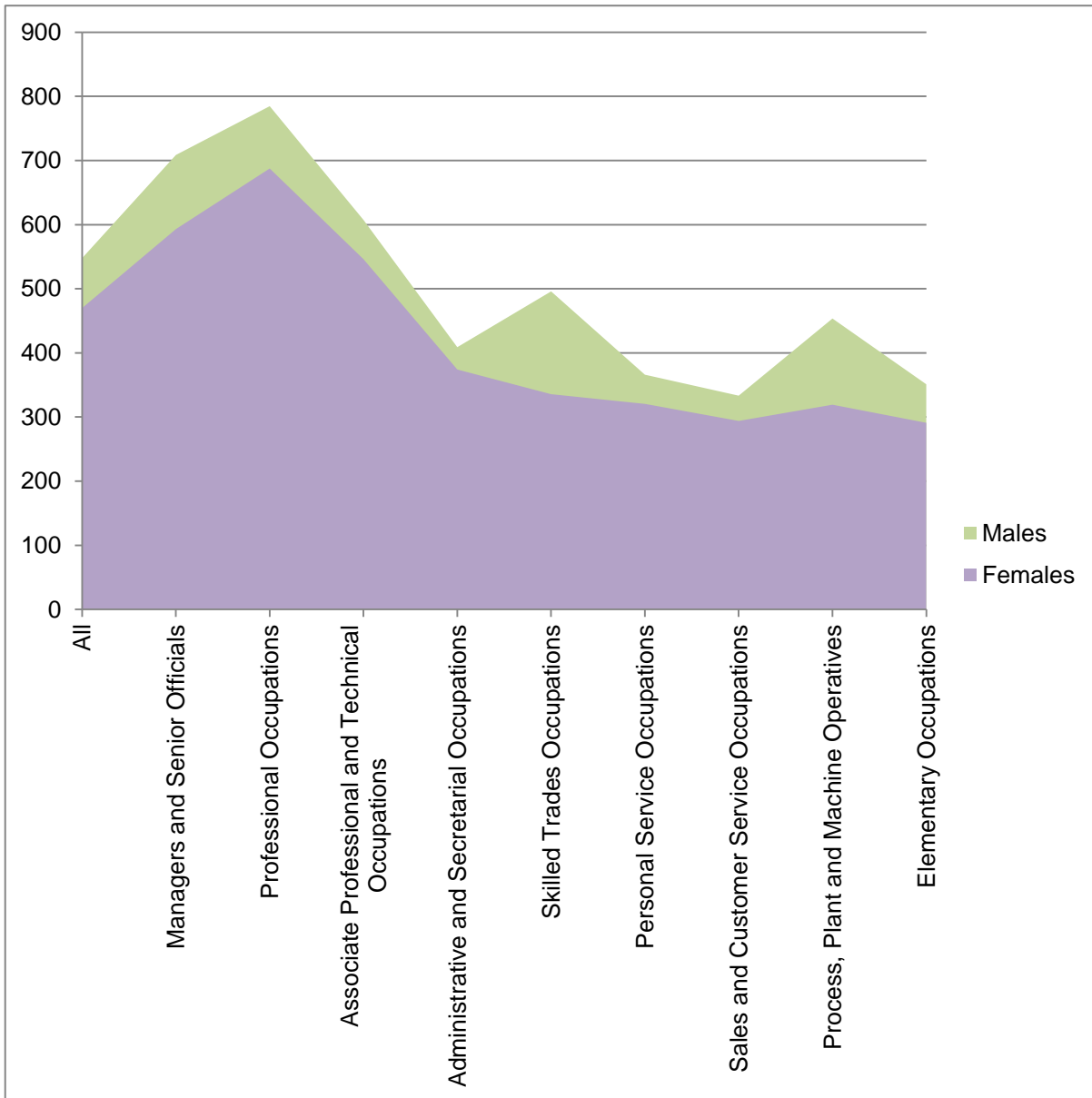
DIAGRAM - OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION (DENBIGHSHIRE)



One reason that these occupational patterns are important is the different wage and salary levels in each occupational grouping. Furthermore we can observe at the Wales level that there is also a variation in the male / female pay gap within each occupational group. Pay gaps exist in all occupational groups but in those which make up the bulk of female employment such as Administrative and Secretarial, Sales and Customer Service, Associate Professional and Technical and Personal Services occupations, the gap is small. The widest gaps are in the male dominated occupations including Skilled Trade, Managers and Senior Officials, Process, Plant and Machine Operators, and Professional Occupations.

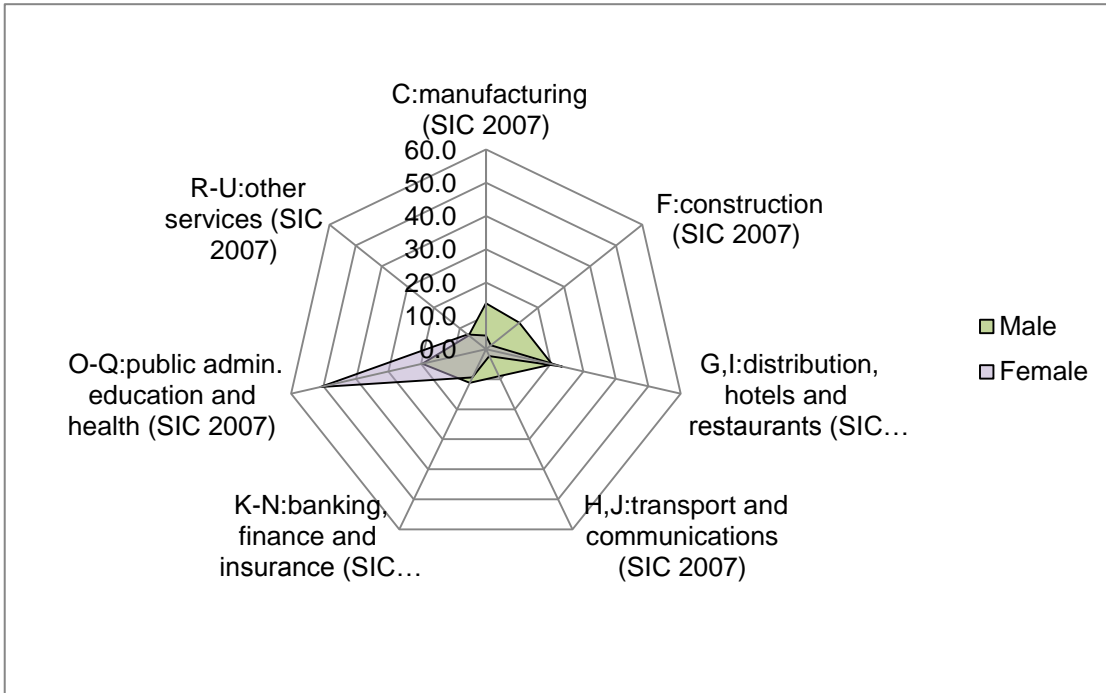
These pay gaps reflect differences in hours worked, illegal differences in pay and vertical segregation (the tendency for males to occupy the more senior positions even within occupational groups).

DIAGRAM - PAY GAPS BY OCCUPATION (WALES)



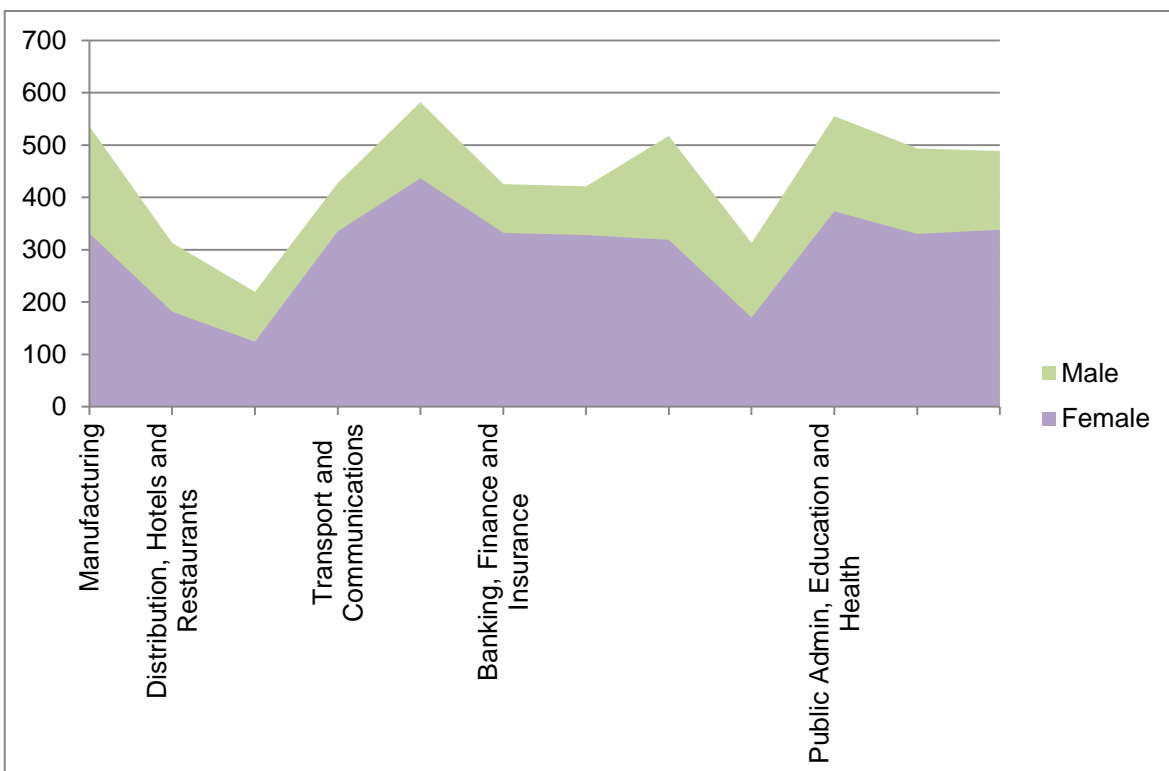
The degree of segregation by industrial sector (among Denbighshire residents) is even starker than that between occupations. Over 50% of female jobs are within the public administration, education and health sector. Male jobs are much more evenly spread across different industries and are substantially higher in manufacturing and construction and also transport and communications. The percentage of jobs in both the agriculture and fisheries and the energy and water sectors has been removed from the analysis because of a lack of precise figures for female jobs.

DIAGRAM - SEGREGATION BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR (DENBIGHSHIRE) %



When we analyse the weekly earnings by sex and industrial sector we can again observe gaps across all sectors, at the Wales level. Unlike the occupational analysis we do not see smaller gaps in the female dominated sectors. The reasons for the gaps are again complex and include differences in hours worked, illegal differences in pay and vertical segregation (the tendency for males to occupy the more senior positions within industrial sectors).

DIAGRAM - PAY GAPS BY INDUSTRIAL SECTOR



POTENTIAL IMPACTS – SEX / GENDER

Strategy theme	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential dis-benefit	Recommended action
Infrastructure for Growth	Digital infrastructure improvements enable home-working for people who wish to balance work / family commitments Development of land & premises generates local employment opportunity for women	None identified Potential for reduced benefit where women are not linked into new employment opportunity or opportunities are inflexible	Promote the benefits and availability of female home workers through broadband connectivity Ensure women are linked into employment opportunities at strategic development sites Encourage new developments that offer higher paid jobs for women
Supported and Connected Businesses	No disproportionate benefits identified	None identified	None identified
Opportunities for Growth	Potential to increase number of women outside public sector employment	None identified	Remove barriers to female business start-ups in male dominated and growth sectors Map specific opportunities for employment of women at growth locations
High Quality Skilled Workforce	Potential to impact significantly on female rates of pay by connecting women to opportunities in male dominated growth sectors / roles	Failure to connect women to higher paid opportunities will increase gaps	Identify and address barriers to female employment in under-represented occupations e.g. skilled trade, managerial, technical
Vibrant Towns and Communities	No disproportionate benefits identified	None identified	None identified
Well Promoted Denbighshire	No disproportionate benefits identified	None identified	None identified

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall the Strategy presents significant opportunity to deliver positive benefits for women around the gaps in pay, occupational and sectoral representation identified in the evidence. These benefits are only likely to be realised through the pursuit of targeted measures designed specifically to address the barriers faced by women, which should be identified at individual project level.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation concerns whether a person's sexual attraction is to their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.

There are no comprehensive official or census figures for the number of LGB people in Wales and different surveys have produced different results. Denbighshire's resident's survey reports the following:

TABLE – NUMBERS OF LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL RESIDENTS

	Count	% ¹⁵
Heterosexual	1503	97.03%
Bisexual	9	0.58%
Gay or Lesbian	22	1.42%
Other	15	0.97%
Blank	206	11.74%
Total	1755	100.00%
total - blank	1549	88.26%

Our engagement work with national and local groups indicates that LGB people can experience bullying and harassment at work. There is also perception (and case study evidence) that prejudice against LGB people can have an impact on their employment prospects in terms of both recruitment and promotion.¹⁶ We have not been able to identify any specific information on such discrimination in Denbighshire or local case examples.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – SEXUAL ORIENTATION

None identified.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have not identified any disproportionate positive or negative impacts for LGB individuals, although there could be opportunities to maximise benefits for these groups, as with other equality groups, during implementation of individual projects. Within individual projects opportunities may arise to promote fair and inclusive approaches to training, recruitment and employment practices. Each individual project should have its own separate equality impact assessment.

¹⁵ Percentages are calculated using total minus blanks.

¹⁶ Numerous publications including case examples of discrimination can be found at www.stonewallcymru.org.uk/cymru/english/at_work/research_and_guides/8360.asp

WELSH LANGUAGE

The Welsh language is an integral part of Welsh people's culture and heritage and the Strategy recognises that it should be protected. The 2011 Census found that more than 24,425 people living in Denbighshire professed to being able to speak Welsh - the 6th highest level by local authority area in Wales - representing almost 24.6% of the county population.

In terms of percentage of population, a greater percentage of people identify themselves as Welsh speaking in the south of the county compared with the north, with the highest percentages being in the electoral divisions of Gwyddelwern (60.8%); Betws Gwerful Goch (59.8%), Llandrillo (59.2%); Cynwyd (59.1%); Clocaenog (54.4%) and Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch (51.2%) whilst the lowest percentages are in the wards of Prestatyn (15.1%) and Y Rhyl (14.2%).

POTENTIAL IMPACTS – WELSH LANGUAGE

Strategy theme	Actual or potential benefit	Actual or potential dis-benefit	Recommended action
<p>Infrastructure for Growth</p>	<p>Increased local employment opportunity will support retention of Welsh speakers</p> <p>Digital infrastructure will enable Welsh speakers to secure employment without need to leave the area</p>	<p>Reduced benefits if employment opportunities are distanced from Welsh speaking communities.</p> <p>Reduced benefits if barriers to ICT prevent uptake and usage</p>	<p>Ensure development of employment sites in priority Welsh speaking areas</p> <p>Assess the impact of individual developments on Welsh language</p> <p>Ensure Digital Denbighshire addresses barriers to ICT for Welsh speakers</p> <p>Identify and promote home-working opportunities for Welsh speakers</p>
<p>Supported and Connected Businesses</p>	<p>Increase in value of Welsh language to business</p> <p>Increased use of Welsh in business</p>	<p>Reduced benefits if opportunities to promote use are missed</p> <p>Reduced benefits if DCC Welsh Language Scheme is not adhered to</p>	<p>Include Menter Iaith and Menter a Busnes in multi-agency Business Advice & Support Partnership</p> <p>Encourage the adoption of voluntary Welsh language policies in the private sector</p> <p>Promote the benefits of Welsh language as a means of securing customer loyalty</p> <p>Promote Welsh language awareness as part of Denbighshire Business Week / Business Awards</p> <p>Pro-actively offer language choice in the delivery of council services and monitor soft outcomes around creating a bilingual atmosphere</p> <p>Provide specific written guidance for staff and contractors delivering services</p> <p>Consider introducing a requirement to</p>

	Local businesses win more business from DCC		<p>bilingualise signage, corporate identity etc as a condition of obtaining grants from the public purse</p> <p>Ensure effective implementation of DCC Welsh Language Scheme and procurement policy</p>
Opportunities for Growth	<p>Increased use of Welsh language and culture in the branding and marketing of tourism, food and drink</p> <p>Development of specific Welsh language and culture tourism products</p> <p>Potential for bilingual accommodation sector improvements</p> <p>Development of the agricultural sector sustains / develops employment opportunity for Welsh speakers</p> <p>Employment opportunity for Welsh speakers in growth sectors</p>	<p>Benefits reduced if support is not available through the medium of Welsh</p> <p>Benefits reduced if barriers to accessing growth sectors are not removed e.g. public transport connections from stronghold Welsh speaking communities to strategic sites such as St Asaph Business Park</p> <p>Potential negative impact if bilingually delivered council services migrate to non-bilingual social enterprise delivery</p>	<p>Incorporate use of Welsh language into all actions</p> <p>Assist private sector business to explore and understand the Welsh market</p> <p>Incorporate use of Welsh language into all supported actions</p> <p>Ensure the provision of support and advice through the medium of Welsh</p> <p>Promote opportunities in agriculture to young Welsh speakers</p> <p>Establish which jobs require bilingual skills and promote job opportunities for Welsh speakers in growth sectors</p> <p>Encourage growth sector businesses to incorporate bilingual service provision</p> <p>Ensure social enterprise approaches to service provision are bilingual</p>

<p>High Quality Skilled Workforce</p>	<p>Work to improve local provision from Careers Wales</p>	<p>Potential for benefits of activity under Theme 4 to be reduced if barriers to access / engagement for Welsh speakers are not addressed</p>	<p>Identify barriers to specific initiatives and actions at the project level</p> <p>Promote investment in bilingual skills of the workforce</p> <p>Encourage Careers Wales to market the advantages in the job market of bilingual skills</p> <p>DCC to stimulate Welsh language demand by offering work placements, jobs fairs, school visits etc that highlight the need for Welsh language skills</p> <p>Encourage Workstream 4.4 to explore Welsh language as the source of enterprise or products within an enterprise</p>
<p>Vibrant Towns and Communities</p>	<p>Increased employment opportunity in rural areas will support retention of Welsh speakers</p> <p>Welsh language and culture profile increased as part of vibrant & prosperous towns work</p>	<p>Failure to place language at the heart of new rural employment opportunities could lead to a high negative linguistic impact</p>	<p>Establish baselines and on-going monitoring to enable assessment of Welsh language use in communities</p> <p>Ensure Town & Area plans identify opportunities to promote Welsh language and culture</p>
<p>Well Promoted Denbighshire</p>	<p>Welsh language and culture profile increased as part of wider destination marketing activity</p>	<p>Increased competition for employment from non-Welsh speakers</p>	<p>Ensure development of Welsh language and culture is embedded in project actions under Theme 6</p> <p>Targeted employment and skills development planning could reduce negative impact</p>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over its lifetime the Strategy offers significant potential benefit to the Welsh language in line with growth in the economy. Benefits range from an increase in employment opportunity for Welsh speakers to a higher profile for the language in marketing and communications activity and in product development. There are also potential dis-benefits that must be managed.

Positive benefits are unlikely to accrue without a concerted effort to implement the recommendations above and other similar actions that seek to prepare Welsh speakers for a competitive employment market.

Staff responsible for design and implementation of activities supported by the Strategy should take account of Welsh language impact at the project level in particular, seeking to identify and remove barriers to engagement, participation and progression. The Economic & Business Development Manager, 3 geographically focussed teams (Coastal, North & South), the specialist European and Other Funding Team and the Tourism, Marketing and Events Team will need to work in collaboration with the Council's lead officers on Welsh language to ensure that linguistic themes are considered from the outset, explicitly outlined in Service Plans and delivered in both a meaningful and supportive manner

Adopting bilingualism in terms of developing the economy in the context of a global recession needs to be handled sensitively and in a manner which garners wide general support - it is not an easy task. However, it is imperative that the language does not become a divisive and unwarranted additional cost issue so highlighting the context and benefit will be essential to ensuring greater support and ownership.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The Economic and Community Ambition Strategy and accompanying Programme is a positive programme of investment and support. It aims to bring focus and funding to a range of interventions that will achieve positive outcomes. By its very nature there will be few dis-benefits or disproportionate negative impacts on the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, or the Welsh language (as covered by the Welsh Language Act).

The Strategy is directed towards support for infrastructure, businesses, labour market development and participation, regeneration and the alleviation of poverty (experienced by many members of equality groups), and a higher profile for the area, including its language and culture. As such there are likely to be beneficial effects overall.

Some of the protected characteristics will be amongst the key beneficiaries of some interventions either because they are the specific intended recipients of support (for example, young people, who are the focus of a number of actions under Theme 4); or in other cases they are likely to benefit disproportionately due to their propensity to experience certain economic, social or accessibility barriers (for example, older people, people with a disability and women).

There are many opportunities to maximise the potential benefits and impacts (as in the case of the Welsh language and for Welsh speakers), and what runs through the Strategy at its very core is the need and desire to ensure that benefits accrue to local businesses and residents; it will be crucially important that these are not missed.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the view of the authors that the Programme has the potential to realise benefits for some equality groups. However, in the majority of cases, the positive impacts are reliant to a great extent on the way in which specific needs are accounted for in project design and ongoing delivery. Opportunities must be taken to secure additional benefits for equality groups wherever possible, and for benefits relating to protected groups to be identified, monitored and reported back into the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board.

It will be important for staff and partner organisations involved in delivery of actions to be guided on equality issues and to have access to relevant training and support. Engaging and working with equality organisations and groups representing those with protected characteristics will be an important factor in good quality project design, enabling the identification of real current barriers to participation and subsequent action to reduce or remove them.
