



To: The Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategy:  
Councillor Tim Bick

Report by: Andrew Limb, Head of Corporate Strategy

Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy & Resources  
17/3/2014  
Scrutiny  
Committee

Wards affected: All Wards

## **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (2012-2015)**

### **Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 Cambridge City Council published a new three-year Single Equality Scheme in January 2012, which sets out six objectives for the Council's work to advance equality and diversity. An annual review of the Scheme is attached at Appendix A, which: reports on progress against actions for the second year of the scheme (2013/14); highlights some additional achievements during the year; and proposes a number of actions for the third year of the scheme (2014/15)

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- i) Note the progress and achievements during the second year of the City Council's Single Equality Scheme.
- ii) Approve the actions for the third year of the City Council's Single Equality Scheme (as set out in Appendix A).
- iii) Approve the proposed amendment of the Terms of Reference for the Equalities Panel to reflect the role of the panel in reviewing and quality assuring Equality Impacts Assessments.

### 3. Background

3.1 Following the passing of the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty was implemented in April 2011. The Duty requires local authorities and other bodies exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 also requires specific public bodies, including Cambridge City Council, to:

- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the equality duty at least every four years.
- Publish information annually to demonstrate how it meets the Equality Duty.

3.3 Cambridge City Council has a strong track record of challenging discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of its work. To help sustain this level of commitment and to ensure that it complies with the current requirements of the Equality Duty, Cambridge City Council published a new three-year Single Equality Scheme in January 2012. The Scheme, and the strategic plan incorporated within it, do not attempt to capture everything the City Council does to advance equalities and diversity, but it sets out:

- Six objectives for the Council's work in relation to equalities and diversity between 2012/13 and 2014/15;
- Some priority areas for action during these three years; and
- Some more specific actions that were carried out during the first year of the Scheme (2012/13).

3.4 The City Council has carried out an annual review of progress against the Scheme (see Appendix A for the full report). This review:

- Reports on progress against the actions identified for the second year of the Scheme (2013-2014);
- Highlights some additional achievements during the year that were not originally captured in the scheme, but which have contributed to progress towards our equalities objectives; and
- Identifies actions for the third year of the Single Equality Scheme (2014/15) that will further help us achieve these objectives.

3.5 During 2013, the Council's Internal Audit service carried out an audit of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process. The final report from this audit gave the process 'significant assurance' overall, but it identified several actions to improve the process. One of the recommendations from this audit was that the Terms of Reference for the Equalities Panel should be updated to reflect the role of the Panel in quality assuring a selection of EqIAs. As the Panel is a working group of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, any changes to the Terms of reference need to be approved by the Executive Councillor at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. It is recommended that the Terms of Reference should be amended to include the following:

- To review and quality assure a selection of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) of the Council's projects, policies and plans

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

The Strategy and Partnerships Team has a small budget to support equalities projects and publications, and a further budget to finance interpreting and corporate translation services to support fair and equal access to and delivery of services. Other services support corporate and service based equalities initiatives through provision of staff resources and occasionally funds for specific projects. We also work extensively with partner organisations to maximise the impact of our resources.

### **(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)**

Responsibility for promoting equality and diversity has been mainstreamed across the Council and a range of staff in different services will be involved in delivering the actions identified for the third year of the Single Equality Scheme. The City Council's Joint Equalities Group will play a role in monitoring the delivery of the Single Equality Scheme. The Group is made up of staff from across the City Council who are able to input time to supporting the mainstreaming of equalities. These are not specific posts within services but are roles that have been adopted by staff where departments have been able to absorb additional duties.

### **(c) Equal Opportunities Implications**

The Single Equality Scheme 2012-15 provides the framework for the City Council's work to challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work.

#### (d) **Environmental Implications**

The Single Equality Scheme has minimal environmental implications, so it has been given an environmental impact rating of 'Nil'.

#### (e) **Procurement**

The actions for the third year of the Single Equalities scheme will primarily be delivered by Council officers, with support from partner agencies in some instances, and will therefore not require any significant procurement of goods or services.

#### (f) **Consultation and communication**

Significant public consultation was carried out prior to the publication of the Single Equality Scheme in January 2012. The consultation period lasted for 13 weeks between October 2011 and January 2012. The consultation was promoted on our website and through Cambridge Matters, officers wrote to a wide range of relevant voluntary and community groups to publicise the consultation, and a meeting of the Diversity Forum was held to discuss the document with relevant local organisations. The results of this consultation informed the six objectives identified in the scheme and the broad areas of action that were required to deliver these objectives.

Members of the Equalities Panel have been consulted on contents of the Annual Review of the scheme, including the actions identified for 2014/15. The full report on the Annual Review of the Scheme will be published on the Equalities pages of the City Council's website.

#### (g) **Community Safety**

The actions that have been carried out during 2013/14 to help deliver Objective 4 in the scheme have contributed to improving community safety by helping to ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together. It is anticipated that actions identified for this objective in 2014/15 will help promote community safety in a similar way.

### **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Cambridge City Council Single Equality Scheme 2012-15. This report can be accessed on the council's Equalities web pages at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality).

## 6. Appendices

- Appendix A – Cambridge City Council Single Equality Scheme: Year Three Review and Action Plan.

## 7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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