



To: Leader of the Council
Report by: Head Of Strategy and Partnerships
Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 11/10/2010
Wards affected: All Wards

ANNUAL EQUALITIES REVIEW 2010 AND EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN 2010-2011

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In April the new Equality Act 2010 became law. The new Act paves the way for the introduction of Single Equality Schemes (SES) as a replacement for the current requirement to produce three separate schemes for disability, gender and race. However, at least until the first phase of the Act is implemented from 1 October 2010, the current requirement to provide an annual published update on progress against each of the three schemes, is still required. We have chosen to do this through the publication on our website of an Annual Equalities Review.
- 1.2 We also use the review as a way of recording and celebrating progress against our general equalities agenda as set out in our annual Equalities Action Plan. This year, to fit in with the new proposals for the Council's service planning and performance management framework, the Plan will be more strategic and focussed on those vulnerable groups identified through our Equalities Impact Assessment processes as currently needing further support, or as being likely over the coming year to experience particular inequalities. See Appendix A.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that the high level objectives/actions identified in the Plan will then be picked up and reflected in more detail within the proposed new Annual Portfolio Plans and, where necessary, in more detail still in individual operational plans produced by each Head of Service.

- 1.4 Under this proposed performance management framework individual Executive Councillors will be responsible for 'championing' the progress of equalities implementation within their portfolio.
- 1.5 One of the projects being developed by the Making Cambridgeshire Count initiative was for participating authorities to adopt an Inequalities Charter for Cambridgeshire. The Charter is intended to encourage closer working between partners to tackle inequalities across Cambridgeshire. See Appendix B.
- 1.6 The City Council adopted a new Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy in 2006. Since then there have been changes in the law and in the Council's internal structures and processes that need to be reflected in the Policy, and it has been amended accordingly. See Appendix C.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

2.1.1 Approve the Equalities Action Plan for publication and the proposed new performance management framework for the delivery of equality in employment and service delivery within the Council and in the Council's role as a community leader.

2.1.2 Approve the adoption by the City Council of the Inequalities Charter for Cambridgeshire.

2.1.3 Approve the up-dated Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy.

3. Background

3.1 Equality and diversity in Cambridge continued to face significant change over the past year. Nationally the most notable event was the passing of the Equality Act 2010 in April. The Act brings together all the existing strands of equality and discrimination legislation, with the aim of clarifying existing law, extending it to cover some anomalies in existing discrimination law and creating a stronger set of obligations on public bodies to promote equality.

3.2 Those areas of the Act that are of particular relevance to the City Council include:

- The introduction of a new **Public Sector Equality Duty** from 2 April 2011 which extends the Council's existing duties to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good

relations between different groups to the 'protected characteristics' of age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and religion and belief, as well as disability, gender and race.

- The introduction of a new public sector duty to consider reducing **social and economic inequality** which will require the Council to take into account how social and economic inequality can be reduced when making strategic decisions about spending and service delivery.
- Banning age discrimination outside the workplace. Age discrimination in the workplace was made illegal in 2006. The Act will make it unlawful to discriminate against someone aged 18 or over when providing services or carrying out public functions.
- Introducing gender pay and equality reports.
- Using public procurement to improve equality.
- Strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people.
- Protecting people from direct discrimination when they have a combination of two protected characteristics e.g. race and disability (**dual discrimination**)

The Act is due to be implemented in three stages. The first stage is due to be introduced from 1 October 2010 and its provisions include the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions; premises; work; education; associations, and transport.

3.3 Locally, the effects of the economic downturn and now the impact of expenditure cuts by government to reduce the national debt are likely to be felt in terms of the numbers of Cambridge citizens who may be 'financially excluded' from accessing some services and having opportunities to fully participate in the life of the city. Many of our voluntary and third sector partners with whom we work on addressing inequality within the city, are beginning to be adversely affected as grants and funding are withdrawn or are cut back. The Council will continue to give priority to important services and functions of which we are the only provider, and will work to protect the basic services provided for the most vulnerable citizens of the city.

3.4 The government's decision to scrap Regional Spatial Strategies and with them the requirement for the City Council and South Cambs District

Council to provide a specified number of sites in or near the perimeter of the city has prompted a rethink on the way forward on meeting this need, though both councils are committed to working together to improve provision in the area.

3.5 On a positive note progress is being made towards a county-wide coordinated approach to the provision of better services for victims of domestic abuse and their families. Also, over the past year the City Council has been able to take advantage of Local Public Service Agreement reward grant funding from our Local Strategic Partnership and Investing in Communities funding to work on a number of projects to promote community cohesion in the city.

3.6 In a further recent development, it is hoped that by the end of October seven public authorities in Cambridgeshire, including the City Council, will have signed up to an Inequalities Charter. The charter sets out the key social, economic and environmental aspects of inequalities across Cambridgeshire and is designed to inform strategic and project planning in the adopting authorities and to encourage improved partnership working in tackling these issues.

3.7 The charter's priorities are intended to improve performance and save money by:

- Encouraging the redesign of our collective approach to tackling inequalities
- Focussing on one set of priorities
- Using resources better
- Examining whether preventative actions can reduce longer term problems and costs
- Working closer together as a public sector to better coordinate services on behalf of residents.

3.8 The charter is not intended to duplicate or supersede other strategies and action plans that address inequalities within Cambridgeshire. Rather, it aims to pull together the principles that underpin these strategies and plans and capture current thinking about working creatively together across organisational boundaries.

3.9 Within the Council, departments and services have looked to see how they can better identify who their customers are and identify any particular needs groups or individuals might have, and how these might be met. It is a measure of the extent to which the concept of equality has become embedded in the culture of the City Council that at practically every level within the organisation and within every service, activities are happening that aim to improve community relations or mitigate

inequalities without these being badged as 'equalities actions'. They are simply how we do things around here.

3.10 The progress made on embedding equalities within the organisational culture is one of the factors that has prompted a rethink of the nature and role of the corporate Equalities Action Plan for 2010-2011. It is proposed that, instead of the Plan being essentially a detailed compendium that runs to many pages of all equalities activities to be undertaken across the authority across all the equality strands, it should be a short high-level strategic document.

3.11 Over the coming year, to ensure that we use our available resources to best effect, we propose to focus on eight aims. Instead of aiming to take forward our equalities work across all of the nine equalities strands, we propose to narrow the focus of our activities down to where it is most needed. We have done this by identifying through the results of our Equalities Impact Assessments those groups, who our evidence suggests, may experience particular inequalities or be adversely affected by the current national economic situation or by the Council's policies and processes and the decisions that we are making about how and what services the Council delivers into the future.

3.12 To ensure that we meet the aims expressed within the Plan, Executive Councillors and their relevant Directors and Heads of Service will be asked to identify the top-level actions needed to achieve the aims within their portfolio and include these in their Annual Portfolio Plans. Heads of Service will then include more detailed delivery activities within their operational plans as appropriate. In turn these may cascade down into objectives and actions for inclusion in individual performance objectives.

3.13 Addressing inequality is often best done through working in partnership as more often than not inequality for any one individual or community is experienced across a number of areas of life such as health, housing, education, employment or being a victim of crime. We will continue, therefore, to work with our partners in the public and third sectors to ensure that we maximise the impact of the resources we have available.

3.14 The City Council adopted a new Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy in 2006. Since then there have been changes in the law, which have led to a broadening to the concept of inequality and introduced the concept of a Single Equality Scheme rather than individual thematic schemes. In turn this has changed the way in which our work to address equalities and diversity is externally validated. Our own structures and processes have also changed, for example we have

recently launched a new simpler Equalities Impact Assessment process that enables assessment to be made across the new broader definition of inequality. We have now amended the Policy to reflect these process changes whilst maintaining the sound principles upon which the City Council's approach to equalities and diversity are based.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

Strategy and Partnerships 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.

4.2 Staffing

Staff have been identified from across the Council who are able to input time to supporting the mainstreaming of equalities as Equalities Link Officers. 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. To further equalities work within services and departments it is important that these staff are supported in their role by their Heads of Service.

4.3 Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities is the subject of this report.

4.4 Procurement

The City Council is currently leading a joint tendering process with Cambridgeshire County Council, Northamptonshire County Council, South Cambs District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and East Cambs District Council for the procurement of a framework contract for face-to-face interpretation, telephone interpretation, translation and specialist services such as Braille and audio transcription, British Sign Language and lip speak and speech to text provision. The contract is due to be awarded in December with the new contract due to start in January 2011.

The City Council currently uses Cintra for interpretation and translation, Language Line for telephone interpretation, and Clarion for specialist communication support such as British Sign Language.

4.5 Community Safety

There are a number of areas where equalities and community safety overlap such as domestic violence, hate crime and the safety of public spaces. We are working with the Police and other partners to address these issues.

4.6 Environmental

The Council continues to work to improve the energy efficiency of its own stock and to promote this within the private and leasehold sectors, to help reduce fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions. We have used our programme of refurbishment of Sheltered Housing as a means by which to introduce energy saving technologies into these properties.

5. Background papers

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

Annual Equalities Review 2010. This report can be accessed on the Council's Equalities web pages at <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/council-policies-and-plans/equality-and-diversity/>

A list of all completed Equalities Impact Assessments to date is attached as an appendix to the Annual Equalities Review document.

Equalities Action Plan Update 2009-2010. This document can also be accessed on the Council's equalities web pages.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Equalities Action Plan 2010-2011

Appendix B: Inequalities Charter for Cambridgeshire October 2010

Appendix C: Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy – Amended September 2010.

7. Inspection of papers

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

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