



To: The Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategy and Transformation: Councillor Lewis Herbert

Report by: David Kidston, Strategy and Partnerships Manager

Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy & Resources  
19/1/2014  
Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington West Chesterton

## **DRAFT SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2015-2018**

### **Key Decision**

---

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

1.1 The City Council has developed a draft Single Equality Scheme that sets out how the organisation will challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work over the next three years. The draft of the new scheme is attached at Appendix A. It includes five strategic objectives that demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Equality Duty and the requirement to prepare and publish one or more equalities objectives. Public consultation on the scheme will take place for 12 weeks from 2 February to 25 April 2015.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Single Equality Scheme 2015-2018 for public consultation.
2. Approve the objectives of the draft Single Equality Scheme, as set out at 3.11, as the interim objectives for the City Council's work on equalities, pending the outcome of public consultation and approval of the final scheme in July 2015.

#### **3. Background**

3.1 Cambridge City Council has a strong track record of challenging

discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of its work. The passing of the Equality Act 2010 was a significant milestone in the equalities agenda. Coupled with the wider financial context facing the Council, this has challenged the authority to remain focused on its equalities objectives and to consider the impact of all its decisions on the different communities of Cambridge.

3.2 On the 5th of April 2011 the general Public Sector Equality Duty was implemented, which 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 don't.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.

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

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

3.4 To meet the requirements of the PSED and the other specific duties established in the Equality Act, the City Council chose to produce two Single Equality Schemes, the first covering the 2009-2012 period, and the second covering the 2012-2015 period. Both schemes can be found on our website here: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity-policies-and-plans>

3.5 We have also published annual reports setting out our equalities activities and progress in delivering the objectives included in the Single Equality Scheme. Every year we also publish our Equality in Employment Workforce Report, which provides detailed information about the make-up of our workforce. All these reports can be found on our website here: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity-performance>

3.6 Cambridge City Council has chosen to develop a new Single Equality Scheme for the period 2015-2016. Although producing and publishing specific Equality Schemes no longer form part of our public duties under law, the City Council believes that having a Single Equality Scheme will help it to ensure that it complies with the specific and general duties established in the Equality Act (as outlined at 3.2 and 3.3), assist in

promoting community cohesion and improve its knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity issues.

3.7 The new three-year scheme builds on the previous one and all the achievements the Council has made in recent years on the equalities and diversity agenda. It covers all the protected characteristics of Race, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity, and Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3.8 In addition to the nine protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act, the City Council is also committed to tackling poverty and social exclusion. Although poverty or low income are not identified as protected characteristics under the Equality Act, we currently assess the impact of all new major policies and projects on residents and service users who have these characteristics.

3.9 The Council is currently developing a dedicated Anti-Poverty Strategy to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in Cambridge who are currently experiencing poverty, but also to alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures. The Single Equality Scheme focuses primarily on the nine protected characteristics, but references the key actions included in the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy where relevant.

3.10 The draft 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 the organisation's priority areas for action in the next three years. The draft scheme was developed through an understanding of the City Council's achievements to date, an analysis of data available from relevant research and consultation exercises, and an assessment of where the authority needs to focus further effort.

3.11 The draft Single Equality Scheme identifies 5 objectives for the City Council's work on equalities issues from April 2015 to March 2018. It is proposed that these five objectives should be adopted as interim objectives for the Council's activities, until the public consultation has been completed and the final scheme is presented to Strategy and Resources Committee for approval in July 2015. The proposed objectives for the new scheme are:

1. To further increase our understanding of the needs of Cambridge's growing and increasingly diverse communities so that we can target our services effectively

2. To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities
3. To ensure all residents have equal access public activities and spaces in Cambridge and are able to participate fully in the community
4. To tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation and ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together.
5. To ensure that the City Council's employment policies and practices are non-discriminatory and to work towards a more representative workforce within the City Council.

## **4. Consultation**

4.1 In accordance with the principles of the Cambridgeshire Compact, it is proposed that the public consultation on the draft Single Equality Scheme will take place for 12 weeks from 2 February to 25 April 2015. As part of the consultation the Council will:

- Publish the draft strategy and a questionnaire survey on the City Council website. The survey will be publicised via the Council's Twitter account, a media release and other corporate communications channels, and sent directly to relevant partner organisations;
- Hold a series of bilateral meetings with voluntary and community groups that represent particular equalities groups;
- Seek advice from the Equalities Panel at a Special Meeting of the Panel on 2 February 2015.
- Seek the views of City Council staff via existing fora including the Joint Equalities Group, the staff groups and the trade unions.

## **5. Implications**

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

As equalities has been mainstreamed across all Council services, the activities and actions identified in the strategic action plan will primarily be delivered through existing service budgets and will not require additional resources. However, the Strategy and Partnerships Team has a small budget to support equalities projects and publications, and a further budget to finance interpreting 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)

As equalities has been mainstreamed across all Council services, the activities and actions identified in the strategic action plan will primarily be delivered as part of the core responsibilities of staff within the relevant services. The Joint Equalities Group is made up of staff representatives from across all City Council services 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) Equality and Poverty Implications**

No Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out for the Single Equality Scheme. The Single Equality Scheme 2015 -18 will form the framework for the City Council's work to challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work, and includes a range of actions that are designed to promote equality of opportunity. It also includes a range of evidence on the make-up of communities in Cambridge and the issues they face, so it will provide a useful resource for the completion of EqIAs for other projects and policies.

The Council is currently developing a dedicated Anti-Poverty Strategy to improve the standard of living and daily lives of those residents in Cambridge who are currently experiencing poverty, but also to alleviate issues that can lead households on low incomes to experience financial pressures. The Single Equality Scheme focuses primarily on the nine protected characteristics, but references actions included in the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy where relevant.

**(d) Environmental Implications**

The actions identified in the Strategic Action Plan are not anticipated to have any environmental impact, so a 'Nil' rating has been assigned

**(e) Procurement**

The City Council has taken steps to ensure that equalities considerations are embedded in its procurement processes. For example, we have published a Quick Procurement Guide which looks at how to deal effectively with equality issues in procurement projects. By doing this, staff can work to ensure that the suppliers and contractors that work for us don't operate in a way which conflicts with our legal responsibilities and do provide

services/supplies that meet the diverse needs of the people that use our services.

**(f) Consultation and communication**

See 4.1 for details of the proposed approach to public consultation on the draft Single Equality Scheme.

**(g) Community Safety**

The strategic action plan incorporated in the draft Single Equality Scheme 2015-2018 includes a number of actions that will have a number of positive impacts on community safety and cohesion in Cambridge and the experience of particular equalities groups in the city. For example:

- Working with Cambridgeshire County Council's Crime Research Team to use available data on hate crime to improve our understanding of the local issues
- Providing regular outreach surgeries at Cambridge Mosque and the Addenbrookes Hub on services to address racial harassment and anti-social behaviour
- Delivering a 'Prevent' event which will bring community representatives together to look at the issue of radicalisation
- Working to achieve White Ribbon status for the City Council and reduce domestic violence and abuse towards women and men

**5. Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

**6. Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft Single Equality Scheme 2015-2018

**7. Inspection of papers**

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

Author's Name: David Kidston  
Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 457043  
Author's Email: david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk