



Equalities Panel

2 February 2015

Draft Single Equality Scheme 2015-2018

1.0 Executive summary

1.1 Cambridge 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 from for 12 weeks from 2 February to 25 April 2015.

2.0 Background

2.1 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 do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 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.

2.3 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>

2.4 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>

3.0 Single Equality Scheme 2015-2018

3.1 Cambridge City Council has chosen to develop a new Single Equality Scheme for the period 2015-2018. 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 2.1 and 2.2), assist in promoting community cohesion and improve its knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity issues.

3.2 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, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity, and Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3.3 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.

3.4 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. Members of the Equalities Panel commented on the Anti-Poverty Strategy at the last meeting in November 2014.

3.5 The draft Single Equality Scheme and strategic action 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.

3.6 The draft Single Equality Scheme identifies 5 objectives for the City Council's work on equalities issues from April 2015 to March 2018. These 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.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 In accordance with the principles of the Cambridgeshire Compact, 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 City 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 the views of City Council staff via existing fora including the Joint Equalities Group, the staff groups and the trade unions.

4.2 As part of the consultation, members of the Equalities Panel are invited to comment on the Single Equality Scheme. In particular, members of the panel are asked to advise on:

- Are there any additional sources of evidence that could be included in the Scheme to strengthen our understanding of equalities groups in Cambridge?
- Do the 5 objectives identified for the Single Equality Scheme and the associated actions set out in the action plan address the key issues currently facing equality groups in Cambridge?
- Within the context of the reduced resources available to the City Council over the period of the SES, are there any other activities or areas of focus that should be included in the action plan?

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