

Item

## **SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2018-21**



**To:**

Councillor Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Communities

Environment & Community Scrutiny Committee 28/06/2018

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

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

### **Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The City Council has developed a new Single Equality Scheme that sets out how the organisation will challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of its work over the next three years. It includes five strategic objectives that demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Equality Duty and its requirement to prepare and publish one or more equalities objectives.
- 1.2 Consultation on the scheme with key partners in the voluntary and community sector and the public sector, and Equalities Panel members took place throughout March 2018. This report presents the key findings from the consultation (at Appendix A) and a new Single Equality Scheme for 2018-2021 for approval (at Appendix B).

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021 at Appendix B.

## **3. Background**

3.1. In April 2011 the general Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was implemented, which requires local authorities when they are 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 local authorities to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how they meet 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.

3.3 To meet the requirements of the PSED and the other specific duties established in the Equality Act 2010, the City Council chose to produce three Single Equality Schemes: the first covering the 2009-2012 period, the second covering the 2012-2015 period and the third covering the 2015-2018 period.

3.4 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.

- 3.5 Cambridge City Council has chosen to develop a new Single Equality Scheme for the period of 2018-2021. 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 2010 (as outlined at 3.1 and 3.2), assist in promoting community cohesion, and improve its knowledge of equality and diversity issues.
- 3.6 The scheme and the strategic plan incorporated within it do not attempt to capture everything the City Council does related to its PSED, but it sets out the organisation's priority areas for action in the next three years. The 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.
- 3.7 For the City Council's work on equalities issues from April 2018 to March 2021, the Single Equality Scheme 2018-21 carries forward the 5 objectives from the Single Equality Scheme for 2015-2018. The objectives 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 work towards a situation where all residents have equal access to 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 and procurement policies and practices are non-discriminatory and to work towards a more representative workforce within the City Council.

3.8 The previous three Single Equality Schemes were presented to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, but the Single Equality Scheme 2018-21 will be presented to Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee because responsibility for equalities has transferred to the Executive Councillor for Communities.

#### **4. Key changes for Single Equality Scheme 2018-21**

4.1 The key changes that have been made to the Strategy since it was last presented to Committee are:

- Identifying stronger links between our Anti-Poverty Strategy 2017-20 and our equality and diversity work. We have developed areas of work that take into account different experiences of poverty for people from different protected characteristics who may require different types of support related to mitigating and preventing poverty.
- Differentiating between 'business-as-usual' actions/ areas of work undertaken by services, and new areas of work or actions where specific outcomes will be identifiable and that we are held to account for.
- Providing information on the key issues experienced by equality groups in Cambridge. These issues were identified through consulting with partners, undertaking a literature review, using local statistics we hold and using information from community needs assessments carried out in 2013 and 2015.

4.2 The new SES contains actions which relate to all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. However, the Strategy includes additional actions to address a number of key issues identified through the consultation and review of available evidence. These include the following:

**(a) Ensuring that our frontline services support people with mental health issues in the best possible way.**

Some actions identified in the Strategy relating to this issue are to:

- Sign up to the Stop Suicide campaign and develop an action plan for the Council to help ensure people who are at risk of suicide that come into contact with Council services get support they need.
- Continue to provide a trusted single point of contact for people who need additional support from our customer contact centre because of mental health issues. Continue to help these service users to seek support they may need from other agencies through signposting or (with service users' permission) making referrals.
- Improve support services for those with mental health issues or a dual diagnosis with mental health as a primary issue by monitoring the efficacy of the Dual Diagnosis Street Team through ongoing evaluation.

**(b) Helping to tackle discrimination experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, and encouraging them to get support they need from public services.**

Some actions identified in the strategy related to this issue are to:

- Identify further opportunities for collaborative working with Cambridgeshire County Council's Traveller Liaison Officer in order to better support Travellers who set up temporary sites in the city, and Travellers who are high priority need for social housing.
- Work in partnership with neighbouring Councils to provide support for Gypsies and Travellers by attending and following up on actions from the quarterly Travellers Strategy Coordination Group.
- Procure Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness training for our frontline staff that will in part be run by Travellers. This will help staff learn about experiences of discrimination and barriers from accessing public services that are faced by Gypsies and Travellers.

**(c) Helping to tackle loneliness experienced by older people, people with mental health issues and people in new communities.**

Some actions identified in the strategy related to this are to:

- Analyse results from the annual survey of residents within our sheltered housing schemes and users of the 65+ service and identify any additional support that can be provided to address loneliness and isolation.
- Continue to use the Community Chest, consisting of developer contributions, to provide small pots of funding (up to £250) to help kick-start community projects in and around new communities that support them to develop social networks and reduce social isolation.
- Explore the feasibility of letting hard-to-let sheltered housing units to students at reduced rents with the requirement that they undertake 30 hours volunteer work per month to support older tenants with support needs, including helping to combat social isolation.

## **6. 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 that 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**

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 2018 -21 will form the framework for the City Council's work to challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of its work. It also includes a range of evidence on issues faced by different protected characteristics in Cambridge City, so it will provide a useful resource for the completion of EqIAs for other projects and policies.

The Council has developed 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. In developing our new Single Equality Scheme 2018-21, a key priority was to identify links between our Anti-Poverty Strategy 2017-20 and our equality and diversity work (as mentioned at 4.1).

### **(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 Implications**

The City Council has taken steps to ensure that equalities considerations are embedded in its procurement processes. We have produced a guide on implementing The Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012) into our procurement processes for staff to use. This ensures that a key part of our assessment process in procuring contracts is to consider economic, social and environmental benefits suppliers can bring to Cambridge. Additionally, when procuring services it is a requirement that our commissioners abide by

our Equality Value Statement and help us in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty. In the Single Equality Scheme 2018-21, we have committed to identifying further opportunities to maximise social value through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

### **(f) Community Safety Implications**

The strategic action plan incorporated in the Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021 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:

- We will tackle hate crime within the city by continuing to provide a Racial Harassment Service to investigate racial harassment and identify appropriate action to reduce it. As part of the Prevent Duty, we will ensure that people at risk of radicalisation and extremism receive the joined up support they need by delivering Prevent Wrap 3 training for Councillors and City Council staff, and continuing to participate on the Channel Panel for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire (to look at referred cases of individuals identified as a concern under Prevent and identify support for them).
- We will continue to deliver actions to reduce domestic violence and abuse towards women, as set out in the action plan associated with the Council's White Ribbon status.
- We will work with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to review the Council's domestic abuse policies, procedures and practices with a view to developing a joint framework for local housing providers to consider adopting.

## 7. Consultation and communication considerations

7.1 In accordance with the principles of the Cambridgeshire Compact, consultation on the draft Single Equality Scheme took place with voluntary and community sector partners and public sector partners, and Equalities Panel members. As part of the consultation officers:

- Held 12 meetings with the following voluntary and community groups that represent particular equalities groups: The Alzheimer's Society, Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, Cambridge Rape Crisis, Cambridge Women's Aid, Cambridge Women's Resources Centre, Cambridgeshire Alliance for Independent Living, Campaign to End Loneliness, Centre 33, Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise, CPSL Mind, Disability Cambridgeshire, Encompass Network, Lifecraft, and The Kite Trust.
- Invited faith groups to a consultation meeting, which was attended by: Abu Bakr Jamia Mosque, Barnwell Baptist Church, Beth Reform Shalong Synagogue, C3 Church, St John the Evangelist Church, St Lawrence's Roman Catholic Church, St Philip's Church, and Wesley Methodist Church.
- Held 7 meetings with public sector partners, including representatives of Cambridgeshire County Council, NHS Foundations Trust and South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- Participated in a Dementia Action Alliance meeting in April attended by businesses and other public sector representatives to discuss the role of the Alliance going forward in helping to improve lives of people with dementia and their carers.
- Sought advice from the Equalities Panel via email and at a meeting of the Panel on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

- Sought the views of City Council staff via Joint Equalities Group meetings on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

- 7.2 The key issues raised by stakeholders who participated in the above consultation activities are summarised in Appendix A. The finalised version of the SES attached at Appendix B has been updated to reflect those suggestions that can be incorporated.
- 7.3 The City Council has provided a reply to each of the key consultation issues in Appendix A, to explain if each suggestion can be incorporated in the Strategy, or if the City Council already has a means or an alternative way of doing what is being suggested. Where a suggestion cannot be taken forward, the City Council has explained why not.
- 7.4 The stakeholders who took part in the consultation all agreed that the areas we have identified as priorities (as explained at 4.2) for the Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021 are broadly the correct ones.
- 7.5 The content of this report will be communicated to residents through the media using a news release, through the Council website, and on Twitter.

## **8. Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## **9. Appendices**

- (a) Appendix A – Issues raised through the Single Equality Scheme 2018-21 consultation
- (b) Appendix B – Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021

## **10. Inspection of papers**

If you have a query on the report please contact Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, tel: 01223 - 457046, email:

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