

Item 6 - Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy

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Cambridge City Council is currently consulting on how recent changes to the Council's Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy may impact on different equality groups.

The Council's policy sets out its commitment to promoting equality and diversity, including through its role as an employer and a provider of services to the public. A revised and updated version of the policy was approved at the Council's Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2018.

The papers for this meeting, including the revised policy, an Equality Impact Assessment and a report explaining the changes to the policy, are also included as background papers for the meeting.

Following independent legal advice, the Council has now made changes to its policy to ensure that it is consistent with the Equality Act 2010. In the revised policy, we have replaced the term 'gender' with the term 'sex', and we have replaced the term 'transgender' with 'the protected characteristic of gender reassignment'.

We have included the following commitment in the revised policy:

"We will recognise and treat people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment according to the gender in which they present unless it is necessary, in exceptional circumstances, to use the services and employment exceptions as a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim in line with the Equality Act 2010."

The commitment above replaces the following two commitments contained in the previous policy:

- "We will not exclude transgender people from positions which require a gender-appropriate candidate
- Transgender people will not be excluded from gender-appropriate single sex/sex segregated facilities operated by the council"

The public consultation on the impacts of these changes includes:

- An open survey on the Council's website
- Consultation with voluntary and community organisations supporting different equality groups.
- Consultation with Council staff.

The results of this consultation will help inform how the Council implements the policy going forward.

As part of the consultation, members of the Equalities Panel are asked to provide feedback on how the above changes to the policy will affect people. At the meeting on 19 November, there will be group discussions focussing on the following specific consultation questions:

1. Do you think the change in our policy outlined above will have an impact on people? What specific positive or negative impacts do you foresee?
2. What steps do you think the Council could take to mitigate any negative impacts?

Please note that during the Committee meeting a revision to the Policy was made so that the revised provision above would refer to 'services and employment exceptions', as opposed to 'single sex exemption'.