

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Andrew Limb, Head of Corporate Strategy

TO: Equality Panel

20/06/2011

WARDS: All

DRAFT SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2012-15

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cambridge City Council is reviewing its Single Equality Scheme, as the previous scheme expires in March 2012. The Council intends to publish this revised scheme by or before April 2012, and to include in it equality objectives, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 This draft is submitted to the Equalities Panel as a work in progress, on which we would very much welcome the Panel's early comments and contributions so we can develop the scheme further.

1.3 The draft Scheme would then be subject to public consultation before being submitted to the City Council's Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee for adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Equality Panel:

- Comments on the draft Single Equality Scheme attached at Appendix A
- Suggests any amendments they feel would be appropriate to the Scheme.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Cambridge City Council developed and published its first Single Equality Scheme (SES), during 2009 in anticipation of the Equality Bill becoming law.

3.2 In April 2010 the Equality Act was passed by Parliament bringing with it some specific duties for public bodies, including local authorities and the NHS. On 5th April 2011 further parts of the Equality Act were implemented.

3.3 The specific duties in the Act require specific public bodies including Cambridge City Council to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how we meet the General Duty
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aim of the General Duty at least every four years starting no later than 6th April 2012.

3.4 Producing and publishing specific Equality Schemes no longer form part of our public duties under law, however, Cambridge City Council believes that having a Single Equality Scheme will help it to ensure that it complies with the general and specific duties, assist in promoting community cohesion and improve its knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity issues.

3.5 The City Council's Single Equalities Scheme covers all the protected characteristics of Race, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3.6 This draft SES for 2012-15 builds on the previous scheme and all the achievements the Council has made in recent years on the equalities and diversity agenda.

3.7 The Scheme and the strategic plan incorporated within it do not attempt to capture everything we do on diversity and equalities, but set out our priority areas for action in the next three years. This draft has been developed building on our track record, our analysis of where we need to focus further effort, feedback from communities and residents and input from the recent peer review.

3.8 In February 2011, the Council invited Local Government Improvement & Development (LGID) to undertake a peer review of our equalities work. The review team made a number of recommendations for improvements, as shown in bold below, with our response underneath each recommendation:

- **Ensure that the Member Equality Lead is represented on the Equalities Panel.**

It is planned that the Leader will attend future meetings of the Panel.

- **Consider increasing the frequency of the meeting of the Equalities Panel from twice a year.**

The frequency of the Panel's meetings need to be driven by its work programme and the views of Panel members.

- **Consider reviewing the organisational structure for the delivery of equality (Equality Panel, JEG, Diversity Forum) to ensure that the reporting and monitoring mechanisms are aligned and duplication is avoided.**

We feel the structure is broadly right, and will reflect on how we use it to get the maximum benefit.

- **Review the progress of the Joint Equalities Officer Group to consider how the group could work together to ensure that there is a consistency of approach to equality planning and monitoring in departments.**

We agree that improvements could be made in this area and address this in the action plan.

- **Overhaul the Council Staff Groups to re-establish the confidence of the membership by developing mechanisms through which they can bring issues forward to deliver improvements.**

This is addressed in the action plan.

- **Revisit current equality training for managers to ensure that they have a range of tools to assist staff with**

application of equality related issues, such as disability, discipline, sickness management, childcare and family friendly policies in a consistent manner.

This is addressed in the action plan.

- **Use the forthcoming staff survey to probe the issues highlighted to the Peer Team.**

This is addressed in the action plan.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The draft Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's approach to equality and diversity, and contains the strategic plan in which we set out the areas we will focus on over the next three years. We will need to add more detail to some of the actions in the action plan over the coming months, but Officers would very much welcome the Equality Panel's comments on this initial draft.

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