

Agenda item 5: Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024 (Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer)

Cambridge City Council has a legal obligation to publish equality objectives at least every four years to assist it in its performance of the Public Sector Equality Duty. To meet this obligation the Council produces a Single Equality Scheme every three years. The Scheme for 2021 to 2024 will be presented to Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on 7 October for approval by the Executive Councillor for Communities.

This item will provide an opportunity for members of the Equalities Panel to provide feedback on the objectives and key priorities for the Scheme.

The Council's approach for the Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024 will draw upon updated evidence on the nature of inequality and discrimination experienced by equality groups. It will build on learning from consultation findings, a literature review of research on issues impacting on people with protected characteristics and learning from the Single Equality Scheme 2018 to 2021.

It is recommended that the objectives of the Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024 remain the same as they were for 2018 to 2021. This is because they are drawn from the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty obligations and reflect the Council's approach to meeting the Duty. Consultation feedback to date has not identified a need to change the objectives, but some consultees have suggested that we should change some priorities and approaches relating to them. 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.

It is proposed that some key priorities for the Single Equality Scheme over the next three years should be to:

- Identify opportunities to hear from people with protected characteristics about their experiences of inequality and discrimination, and to provide opportunities for them to help shape the direction of the Council's equalities work. People experiencing discrimination and disadvantage are best placed to understand what is needed to tackle it.
- Collaborate with voluntary and community sector, public sector, and private sector partners, and people directly experiencing discrimination and disadvantage to address equality issues. For example, the Council has worked in different ways with partners during the pandemic to address communities' different needs relating to COVID-19. It is recommended that the Council continue to develop these partnerships in the next three years. It is also recommended that the Council consult annually with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations with expertise on supporting different equality groups around the progress of the Scheme and priorities for the year ahead.
- For services to consider intersectionality in responding to residents' and customers' needs. Many equality-related issues intersect and are not experienced in the same way or to the same extent by different communities or groups of people. People have more than one protected characteristic and they interrelate and shape experiences of discrimination and disadvantage.