

Single Equality Scheme Annual Report 2023/24

**To:**

Councillor Rachel Wade, Executive Councillor for Communities
Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2024

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is an annual update on the Council's Single Equality Scheme, which covers the period from 2021 to 2024 and sets five objectives to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The report provides an update on the delivery of key actions during 2023/24 set against the objectives. It also sets out the activities that are new for 2024/25 and details of how larger ongoing projects will progress in 2024/25.
- 1.2 Additionally, the report includes a recommendation to extend the end date for the current Single Equality Scheme for a further year, to March 2025.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
 - (a) Note the progress in actions promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion during 2023/24.
 - (b) Approve new actions proposed for delivery during 2024/25.
 - (c) Extend the end date of the existing Single Equality Scheme from March 2024 to March 2025.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council produced the Single Equality Scheme in 2021 to set equality objectives in order to assist in the performance of its Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). The Scheme covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024, and sets out five objectives:
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.
- 3.2 Under each objective sits business as usual activity, project work and individual actions. These are reported on annually, and new actions and activities are also set each year under the five objectives.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the end date for the current Single Equality Scheme is extended for a further year, from March 2024 to March 2025. The Council is legally required to publish equality objectives every four years, but it can choose to do this more frequently. For several years Cambridge City Council has published equality objectives every three years. The current Scheme covers a three-year period. Therefore, in extending the Scheme by one year, the Council will still meet its legal obligations.
- 3.4 Extending the Single Equality Scheme for another year will ensure that the development of new equalities objectives will be informed by changes to the Council's ways of working as part of the Our Cambridge transformation programme. The Council is currently developing a new People and Culture Strategy, which will include a focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion in its workforce. As part of the Our Cambridge Programme, the Council is also considering how it needs to be

structured in future, and the mechanisms/processes that need to be in place, for it to meet its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and its future aspirations around promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

4. Progress during 2023/24

4.1 This section of the report provides an update of key actions delivered during the year 2023/24 under each of the five objectives of the Council's current Single Equality Scheme for 2021 to 2024.

Objective 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.

4.2 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2023/24 included:

- Developing a three-year Youth Strategy and action plan. The strategy, whilst still in draft stage, makes commitments relating to the five following themes:
 1. Supporting young people to be heard and have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and that shape their city.
 2. Making sure there are good, accessible opportunities for all young people to engage in activities outside of school.
 3. Helping young people to take part in all that our city has to offer.
 4. Helping young people feel safe and welcome in their city.
 5. Making sure that Council's assets work effectively for young people, including leisure facilities, community buildings, parks and open spaces, community grants and community-facing staff.
- Supporting staff from a range of council services with 31 equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to help ensure the Council pays due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty in making decisions. An additional EqIA was completed as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.
- Considering the impacts of decisions on people of all ages with care experience following the Council passing a motion on 15th February 2024 to treat care experience as a protected characteristic.

- Holding two Equalities Panel meetings. These discussed implications of findings of inclusion and engagement questionnaires for ethnic minority people, lessons learnt from engagement with communities as part of Our Cambridge, the Community Wealth Building Strategy, and the Youth Strategy.
- Supporting Cambridgeshire County Council with its district [Demand profiles forecast](#) relating to specialist supported accommodation for adults aged between 18 and 64. Cambridge City Council will use this as part of the evidence base in considering need for specialist accommodation in new developments in the city.
- Continuing partnership work with other public sector organisations on Changing Futures to identify means to better support homeless people who have multiple disadvantages relating to disability, mental health, and addiction. Changing Futures aims to involve people with lived experience in redesigning services to make sure they take a trauma informed and holistic approach to support.
- Employing a Health Prevention Programme Officer to develop and coordinate a programme of work funded by the Integrated Care System about preventing ill health. Examples of work undertaken in 2023/24 include:
 - Running a 'Power Up' festival event at Netherhall School providing information and advice on mental health to young people.
 - Running a project in Abbey with South Cambridgeshire District Council to support people with long-term health conditions or disabilities into employment.

Objective 2: To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities.

4.3 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2023/24 included:

- Employing a Community Development Officer (CDO) to support Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people in the city. The CDO provides advice and support on a range of topics at drop-in sessions in South Cambridgeshire, Fenland and at Brownsfield Community Centre. The CDO has also worked with the NHS to organise health clinics, as well as CPR and baby first aid training for the communities.

- Continuing to provide an interpretation and translation service. In 2023/24 there were 412 interpretation appointments made and 39 translations booked. The Council also continues to provide a British Sign Language interpretation service for Deaf people contacting customer services by phone.
- Building 236 new homes that can be adapted to become wheelchair accessible and 12 additional homes that are fully wheelchair accessible at the outset.
- Supporting 156 refugees to resettle in Cambridge. The Council expanded its Asylum Seeking and Refugee service to support those with newly granted refugee status following positive asylum decisions and commissioned employment support for refugees. It also awarded £95,892 to 26 projects through United with Ukraine grants as part of its response to supporting Ukrainian refugees.

Objective 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.

4.4 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2023/24 included:

- Using the Council's main community grants to fund 31 voluntary and community sector organisations explicitly organising activities for protected characteristic groups to reduce social and/or economic inequality.
- Giving smaller community grants (up to £2,000) to five organisations for seven activities supporting ethnic minority communities.
- Awarding Area Committee grants to 18 organisations for local activities explicitly aimed at equality groups.
- Supporting a programme of events which celebrate diversity and/or promotes community cohesion including:
 - Black History Month
 - Disability History Month
 - International Holocaust Memorial Day
 - International Women's Day

The Council also provided small amounts of funding to support events for Caribbean, Chinese, East Asian and South East Asian communities at different times throughout the year.

- Jointly funding (with the NHS) a Women and Wellness event at Cambridge Central Mosque. There were a number of talks, especially around the topic of health, and the Independent Living Service, Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre, Cambridge Women's Resources Centre and Cambridge Women's Aid attended to share awareness of support they provide. Approximately 300 women attended.
- Running a Women's Health group which is open to all women across the city, although this group has a larger proportion of minority ethnic women including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Chinese, Arabic, Ukrainian, African, and Afghan women.
- Continuing to provide the Shopmobility service at the Grand Arcade and Grafton East car parks to support disabled people to access the city. The service was used 3,707 times in 2023/24.
- Implementing and delivering the next stage of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning (RoL) project. Funding for Region of Learning by the European Social Fund (ESF) ended on 31 December 2023. Under ESF funding the programme reached a total of 867 participants aged between 15 to 18 years old supporting them with targeted and specific guidance and advice on learning and skills.
- Supporting over 500 of its sheltered housing tenants, over 200 of whom the Council provides regular support to. In 2023, the Council also provided support to 91 people over 65 living in the wider community to help them remain independent in their home, or to seek alternative accommodation.
- Providing enhanced housing related support to 36 individuals within the Council's extra care scheme at Ditchburn Place.
- Securing funding to employ a one-year fixed term Activities Coordinator from October 2023 to run activities across all Cambridge City Council's supported housing schemes. There were 1,350 attendances at the activities.

- Part-funding a Development Officer at Turtle Dove CIC to identify how the young women who engage in their training and employment placements can better access local work and career opportunities.
- Developing and expanding physical activity programs for targeted groups including families, young people, older people, people with long-term health conditions, people with poor mental health, and Ukrainian refugees.
- Improving the availability of taxis accessible to wheelchair users by removing the age limit on wheelchair vehicles. Information from Panther is that this has had a positive impact for availability of wheelchair vehicles in the city.
- Hosting five community picnics across the city supporting children, young people, and families to positively engage in their local communities. Between 4 to 8 partners were involved in supporting each. The total attendance across all five picnics was 930.
- Running the Disability Consultative Panel meetings to review a mix of applications and pre-application submissions for disability access. In March 2024, the disability access remit of the Disability Consultative Panel was incorporated into the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel (or GCDRP) that was itself set up in January 2022.

Objective 4: To tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation and ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together.

4.5 Key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2023/24 included:

- Continuing to provide the Racial Harassment Service to advise and support anyone living in or visiting Cambridge suffering racial harassment.
- Working with partners in the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership to improve public safety: especially relating to safeguarding young people against violence and exploitation, listening to community needs and responding together to reduce harm, and reducing violence in the city centre.

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and increasing perceptions of safety at night by working with partners involved in the Purple Flag initiative. Activities included:
 - Implementing the Businesses Against Abuse accreditation scheme to train door staff to identify perpetrators of abuse.
 - Increasing the number of taxi marshals and introducing open space guardians to Jesus Green and Parker's Piece after reports of violence against women and girls in these areas at night.
 - Introducing "CCTV refuge points" at either end of the market square.

- Achieving re-accreditation by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), which demonstrates the high quality of service the Council provides to those experiencing domestic abuse who are seeking housing advice, are tenants, residents or council staff.

- Marking Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (during February 2024) to raise awareness amongst staff and share information on support services available to staff.

- Providing funding to the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services and Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum to run training sessions for local community groups and volunteers on unconscious bias, what it means to be an active bystander, and building multicultural practices.

Objective 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.

- 4.6 In relation to working towards a more representative workforce, the percentage of staff from an ethnic minority background has increased to 10.3% at March 2024 from 9.09% the previous year. However, the percentage of disabled staff has dropped by four individuals from 7.37% in March 2023 to 6.63% in March 2024.
- 4.7 Steps the Council has taken to improve recruitment and retention of staff from diverse backgrounds include:
- Supporting formal flexible working requests across the organisation.

- Partnering with Diversity Jobs Group for advertising roles and opportunities.
- Renewing the Council's Disability Confident Employer status for a further three years.
- Undertaking further reviews of Job Descriptions and Person Specifications to demonstrate that the Council values and seeks transferable skills.
- Actively promoting flexible and agile working within advertisements for jobs.
- Removing core working hours from our Flexi Time Scheme.
- Introducing an Annual Leave Purchase Scheme.

4.7 The Council also undertook the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion's Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation, which measures an organisation's initiatives and strategies for how they foster diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Cambridge City Council achieved a bronze award in the assessment.

4.8 Other key activities which helped deliver this strategic objective during 2023/24 included:

- Providing a prayer room/ quiet reflection space for staff at Mandela House.
- Running the following training sessions:
 - Equality, Diversity and Disability Awareness courses for new members of staff
 - Understanding Menopause sessions.
 - Managing Mental Health for line managers to support mental wellbeing of staff.

5. Larger projects or new activity for delivery in 2024/25

5.1 This section of the report identifies new activity for delivery around the five objectives for 2024/25. It also identifies how larger existing projects related to the objectives will be progressed in 2024/25.

Objective 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.

5.2 Key activities to help deliver this strategic objective during 2024/25 will include:

- Reviewing the Equalities Panel. The review will help identify how and if the Panel or another formalised partnership can help develop a whole systems approach to tackling inequality and discrimination. This was an action for 2023/24 that is being carried forward to 2024/25 because the political governance review, Chief Executive's Office and Corporate Group service review, and Communities Group service review will have an impact on options relating to it.
- Refer the Disabled People's Manifesto to the Equalities Panel for scrutiny and debate and report back to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on the discussions.
- Progressing work on the Youth Strategy, by partnering with Cambridgeshire County Council to help support the delivery of their youth survey. The results from the survey will further inform the Youth Strategy action plan. Additionally, the Council has commissioned Citizens UK to set up a Youth Assembly to further support young people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and to shape their city.
- Continuing to develop and coordinate a programme of work funded by the Integrated Care System about preventing ill health. This includes:
 - Updating Equality Impact Assessment guidance to reflect experiences of ill-health for protected characteristic groups to help inform the Council's decision-making.
 - Signing up to the JOY referral system that is used by social prescribers in the city to identify services, activities and events that may benefit people they are working with who have health issues.
- Continuing to work in partnership with other public sector organisations on Changing Futures. In 2024/25 this will involve taking part in an evaluation of the impact of the programme for homeless people with multiple disadvantages.
- A first draft of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs assessment for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire has been produced, and officers have provided feedback on this. Once a second draft has been produced there will be greater clarity on the publication date. When the assessment is published, in 2024/25 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will work together to start to implement recommendations.

Objective 2: To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services from all residents and communities.

- 5.3 To help achieve this objective, in 2024/25 the Council will build on support for asylum seeking people and refugees by:
- Further embedding the Asylum Seeking and Refugee Team across Community Safety and Housing Advice.
 - Continuing to deliver on its refugee resettlement pledge and build on this by delivering additional homes for refugees via the Local Authority Housing Fund.
- 5.4 The Council will also continue to support Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people in the city to access services, reduce social isolation and improve health outcomes. Examples of activities relating to this will include:
- Attending Midsummer Fair to facilitate health checks for the travelling community undertaken by the NHS.
 - Undertaking the 'Summer of Safety' weekly programme at the Abbey swimming pool with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families.

Objective 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.

- 5.5 Key activities to help deliver this strategic objective during 2024/25 will include:
- Working with Cambridge United Community Trust to create a Men's Health Development post, to support men's access to health services, which they are less likely to proactively seek support from than women. The post will also identify opportunities to bring men together for peer support to improve mental health.
 - Implementing and delivering on the next stage of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning project under new funding arrangements. The programme is now targeted to people of all ages. Up to November 2024, Region of Learning will aim to reach a representational proportion of the population that make up the city of Cambridge. After this initial period of engagement the Council will review its reach and approach within an equality impact assessment to identify how it can address any inequalities that have potentially arisen.

- Completing works to provide a Changing Places facility at Cherry Hinton Hall and at Drummer Street.
- Supporting the sheltered housing schemes to run their own social clubs, activities, and events which are also accessible to the wider community and exploring new ways to make these sustainable.
- Relaunching the My Cambridge local cultural education partnership which provides cultural opportunities for young people. The Council will also identify further opportunities to work with schools and colleges with high numbers of students eligible for Pupil Premium to ensure cultural opportunities are accessible.
- Undertaking the following actions to support young people's engagement in arts and cultural activities:
 - Working with the Social Mobility Business Partnership to deliver a 'Work Insight & Skills Week' for young people from low-economic backgrounds, introducing them to local creative industries and useful contacts for future employment opportunities.
 - Providing 15 to 20 young people in Year 10 with work experience placements at the Corn Exchange.
 - Delivering a free-to-access week-long dance school in partnership with Clay Farm Community Centre for 15 young people aged 11 to 18. The Council will commission Vanhulle Dance Theatre for this as part of the 'Out of the Ordinary' festival at which the young people will perform.
 - Commissioning Cambridgeshire Music to produce a free initiative with 30 young people aged 14 to develop a performance to be performed at Cambridge Folk Festival.
 - Developing a schools' event and community initiatives for young people in partnership with eight CB4 primary and secondary schools, Cambridge Literary Festival, Capturing Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, and Watersprite Film Festival as part of the Cambridge Corn Exchange's 150th Anniversary National Lottery Heritage bid.
- In incorporating disability access as a consideration within the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel, a new group of disabled people will be recruited to advise on wider disability issues on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Objective 4: To tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation and ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together.

- 5.6 Cambridge City Council will work on the following accreditation schemes relating to this fourth objective:
- The Council will plan for the enhanced Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation in 2026 by continuing to identify improvements to its approach.
 - The Council will apply for re-accreditation for the Purple Flag and start to implement recommendations from the assessors.
- 5.7 The Council will be undertaking a new action around objective 4: to apply Cambridgeshire County Council's Violence Against Women and Girls policy (developed by the Safeguarding Partnership Board) to Cambridge City Council's large events, like Strawberry Fair.

Objective 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.

- 5.8 The Council's People & Culture Strategy will be presented to Strategy and Resources Committee on 1st July 2024 for approval. It will outline Cambridge City Council's aspirations as a workplace related to five interlinked themes and each theme will have a specific focus on equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. The five themes being proposed are:
- being an inclusive and welcoming place
 - attracting and retaining our people
 - living our values
 - rewarding, recognising and celebrating us
 - developing excellent people, managers and leaders
- 5.9 The strategy will be supported by a 'People Plan' that will be developed working with staff members, which outlines the detail on how we will, and how we have, achieved the aspirations within it. The People Plan will be produced by the end of 2024.

6. Implications

a) Financial Implications

Equalities has been mainstreamed across all council services. This means that activities and actions identified in the action plan will primarily be delivered through existing service budgets, but services sometimes fund specific initiatives. The council works 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 action plan will primarily be delivered as part of the core responsibilities of staff within the relevant services.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

No Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the SES itself or this annual report. This is because the SES forms the framework for the council's work to challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of its work.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The actions that have been identified to help meet the Scheme's objectives are not anticipated to have any environmental impact.

e) Procurement Implications

The City Council has taken steps to ensure that equalities considerations are embedded in its procurement processes through implementing The Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012). This means that a key part of our assessment process in procuring contracts is to consider economic and social benefits that suppliers can bring to Cambridge. Additionally, when procuring services, commissioners are required to abide by our Equality Value Statement.

f) Community Safety Implications

Objective 4 of the Single Equality Scheme is "to tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation and ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together". All of the actions under this objective in the SES have positive community safety implications.

7. Consultation and communication considerations

- 7.1 Consultation took place on this Single Equality Scheme. Cambridge City Council undertook an Inclusion and Engagement Questionnaire open to all members of the public about people's experiences of living in, working in, studying in, or visiting the city. The council also consulted its staff, 21 voluntary and community sector partners supporting different equality groups, and the Equalities Panel.
- 7.2 Since the Scheme was published:
1. The Encompass Network was commissioned by Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to undertake community needs assessments questionnaires aimed at LGBTQ+ people living in, working in, or studying in Cambridgeshire.
 2. The Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum was commissioned by Cambridge City Council to undertake community needs assessment questionnaires for ethnic minority people living in, working in, studying in, or visiting Cambridge.
- 7.3 The content of this annual Single Equality Scheme report will be communicated to residents through the media using a news release, and on the council website and Twitter.

8. Background papers

Background paper used in the preparation of this report: [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441222/PSD-Guidance-2017.pdf)

9. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer Tel: 01223 457046
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