

## Agenda item 6: Development of Cambridge City Council's equalities objectives for 2025/26

Cambridge City Council has a legal obligation to produce one or more equality objectives at least every 4 years (for more information see [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](#)). The council's current equalities objectives are presented in the [Single Equality Scheme](#) that covers the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025. (Note that in March last year, the Scheme was extended by one year as it was due to end on 31 March 2024.)

The council will be producing a set of one-year interim objectives from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. These will help shape the council's approach during 2025/26 as the group redesigns that are part of the [Our Cambridge transformation programme](#) take effect, which will be implemented from late February 2025. The objectives will help identify the council's aims around how it plans to strengthen its work on equalities and cohesion longer-term within new structures. The 2025/26 objectives will go to the Environment & Communities (E&C) Scrutiny Committee for approval on 20 March 2025.

The proposed objectives for 2025/26 are as follows:

1. Prioritising needs of diverse communities in our ever-growing city.
2. Providing accessible and inclusive council services.
3. Helping ensure that people are able to participate and engage fully in their community in a safe, welcoming and inclusive city.
4. Establishing an inclusive and equitable culture within our workforce where our people feel a sense of belonging and purpose.

In the paper to the E&C Scrutiny Committee, under the 2025/26 objectives, key strategic commitments will be identified. Measures of success directly related to those commitments that the council is aiming towards shall also be captured in the committee report. This is different from the current approach in the Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2025 where there are broad objectives and then actions and activities under those that Cambridge City Council has been reporting back on annually. The committee paper containing the 2025/26 objectives will also report back on progress over the last 4 years on the most significant and/or most impactful actions and activities under the previous Single Equality Scheme's objectives.

As the new structures settle in from the group redesigns, the council's ambition is to move from a focus on equality to a focus on equity. Equality is about providing people with equal rights and treatment, whereas equity recognises that each person has different circumstances. It is about each person getting what they need to survive or succeed—access to opportunity, networks, resources, and support — based on where they are and where they want to go.

At the Equalities Panel meeting, there will be a presentation on:

- the previous objectives and key areas of work and achievements over the Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2025 to date.
- key statistics on demographics of people living in Cambridge from the Census 2021.
- the proposed new equalities objectives for 2025/26 and potential examples of key areas of work under each of them. As part of this, the Panel will be introduced to the concept of community power, which is relevant to the proposed first and third objectives set out above. Community power refers to the belief that people should have a greater say over the places in which they live and the services they use. Where possible, the council is hoping to change its relationship with communities by working alongside them in meeting their needs and priorities. Community power recognises communities have a wealth of knowledge and assets within themselves, which if understood and nurtured by practitioners and policymakers, has the potential to strengthen resilience and enable prevention-focused public services (for more information see: [The Community Paradigm for Public Services - New Local](#)).

Panel members will be asked to provide feedback on:

- Their thoughts on the objectives and the difference Cambridge City Council can make. This will be asked about in relation to the Panel's awareness of key issues experienced by different equality groups in the city.
- Views on the council's longer-term ambition to move from a strategy focused on equalities to one focused on equity, and what this might mean in practice.
- Their thoughts on barriers that different equality groups might experience to community power and ideas on how the council might address those.