

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service
Future format of Cambridge Folk Festival 2026

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
Not available yet

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
<p>To reduce the financial risk and potential underwriting required by Cambridge City Council to deliver Cambridge Folk Festival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of Cambridge Folk Festival to align with Council strategies i.e. Cultural strategy and Community Wealth Building strategy. The recommended model supports the Council's Cultural Strategy and Corporate Plan by promoting community engagement, access to the arts, and cultural innovation <p>The multi-venue city-wide model that is recommended helps meet the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lower-cost, scalable model that supports financial resilience• Greater accessibility and engagement with local communities• Flexibility to adapt and grow audience reach over time

- Development of Cambridge Folk Festival to align with Council strategies i.e. Cultural strategy and Community Wealth Building strategy. The recommended model supports the Council's Cultural Strategy and Corporate Plan by promoting community engagement, access to the arts, and cultural innovation

The multi-venue city-wide model that is recommended helps meet the following objectives:

- A lower-cost, scalable model that supports financial resilience
- Greater accessibility and engagement with local communities
- Flexibility to adapt and grow audience reach over time

- Better alignment with public sector values, inclusion goals, and environmental impact reduction

4. Responsible Team and Group

Cultural Services, Communities Group

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- ☒ Residents
- ☒ Visitors
- ☒ Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

Tourists/Festival Attendees

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- ☐ New
- ☒ Major change
- ☐ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

If 'Yes' please provide details below:

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

It will go to Cabinet on the 15th July 25

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

As part of the review process, we gathered feedback from a wide range of sources. This included working closely with Counterculture, the external consultants we appointed to provide the review.

We created surveys that were initially targeted at our core audience, bookers who had attended the festival from 2014 through to 2024, reaching them via email. To ensure we also captured feedback from attendees not on our mailing list, we promoted the survey across social media channels. Across the three surveys we ran, we received over 1,600 responses.

In addition to this, we consulted a pool of industry professionals outside of the formal consultancy process. These included:

- Claire Horton, freelance national press officer for Cambridge Folk Festival
- Richard Wootton, radio media specialist
- Eddie Barcan, former Folk Festival Manager, Glastonbury Avalon Stage, and Underneath the Stars Festival, Kate Rusby agent,
- John Fell, programmer and organiser of Moseley Folk and Jazz Festivals
- Donald Shaw, programmer of Celtic Connections, a venue-based festival in Glasgow
- David Agnew, Director of Sound Routes and Manchester Folk Festival
- John Giddings, former Director of the Isle of Wight Festival and current promoter with Live Nation

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

Shorter event may reduce fatigue and be more manageable for young children and older adults.

Indoor elements can provide quieter/safer spaces for children and older people

Risk assessments must ensure **children and adults at risk** are still protected in both indoor/outdoor settings (e.g., supervision, emergency exits, designated safe spaces).

Venues can be chosen where people of different age profiles can be targeted so that we are bringing the festival more directly to them.

Some venues will be pubs. This will be mitigated by a wider choice of family friendly venues and trained stewards.

(b) Disability

Smaller scale may reduce crowding, making it more manageable for people with physical or sensory impairments.

Indoor venues may be easier to adapt for accessibility (e.g., hearing loops, ramps, accessible toilets).

Fewer venues/days may limit options for disabled attendees, particularly if accessible events are reduced.

Outdoor elements may still pose mobility barriers i.e. mud, uneven surfaces etc. but reasonable adjustments must be found and mitigated by employing trained stewards and personnel.

Any changes must be clearly communicated using accessible formats (Large Print, Easy Read, Braille, Audio). Including paper-based methods where disabled people may be more likely to experience digital exclusion.

(c) Gender reassignment

Smaller, more localised events may encourage a more inclusive community feel, potentially reducing possible exposure to harassment. Also, programmers might liaise with The Kite Trust to identify venues that have a reputation already as being very welcoming, inclusive and accessible to trans people. For instance, those where LGBTQ+ people especially are likely to go to social groups.

Facilities we work with would still need to provide gender-neutral toilets and ensure event staff are trained in trans inclusion.

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

No direct programming may be affected, but social participation (e.g., attending with a spouse/partner) should still be accommodated.

Care should be taken to ensure no assumptions about relationship types are made in marketing or ticketing.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Shorter event may be more comfortable for pregnant individuals.

Travelling between venues may be more tiring and less accommodating for pregnant individuals' needs.

Indoor space can offer rest areas, baby changing facilities, and breastfeeding-friendly zones.

If facilities are reduced or changed, it may impact comfort, privacy, and care (e.g., fewer toilets or seating).

Outdoor elements must be assessed for safety for pregnant people and those with infants. For example, breastfeeding-friendly spaces to be available at the outdoor events and 'quiet zones' away from large groups of people.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Programming would still offer a range of international or diverse cultural acts, affecting representation. Venues to be sourced that attract different groups of residents from different ethnic or national origins. Staff to be trained to support people experiencing hate crime.

Inclusive cultural practices (e.g., halal food, prayer room) must still be included.

(g) Religion or belief

Indoor spaces could offer rooms for prayer, reflection, or religious observance, depending on scheduling.

(h) Sex

Event changes are unlikely to impact men or women differently unless facilities (e.g., toilets, security) are reduced or unbalanced and this will be a consideration when choosing venues.

A smaller-scale festival must still ensure that women and girls, particularly at night or in isolated areas, are protected via adequate lighting, security, and safe transport options and that venue staff are trained in how to deal with harassment and abuse aimed at women and girls.

(i) Sexual orientation

Venue choices might be considered for their reputations as being inclusive to LGBTQ+ people.

Risk of reduced representation of LGBTQIA+ artists or themes in scaled-down programming.

Staff and volunteers must continue to be trained in inclusive language and conduct, with zero-tolerance policies on discrimination.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term “Care experience” is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_l59kt25q).**

Ticket Pricing is considerably reduced ensuring the Festival is more accessible to a wider range of audiences and lower income groups. This might also have a positive impact for people with care experience who may be more likely to experience poverty and low income (for instance, see: [Survival-Is-Not-Easy-Full-Report-NLCBF-December-2022-2.pdf](#)).

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11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

Some of our key outcomes will be on audience diversity and reach, and accessibility. We will aim to improve our demographic profile data. Once this data is collected, we will update the EqIA on a periodic basis to identify who the festival is reaching and identify means to increase diversity of unrepresented groups in the audience profile.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

Safeguarding measures (especially for children and vulnerable adults) must remain robust despite the smaller scale. With the festival remaining with a city council team, it ensures that professionally trained officers in safeguarding are available to monitor and oversee delivery.

Accessibility and inclusion cannot be deprioritized with reduced duration - services must be retained, adapted, or even strengthened.

Any change must be accompanied by clear, inclusive communication and engagement with audiences and stakeholders to avoid unintended exclusion.

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Frances Alderton (Cultural Services Lead)

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Hazel Beale (Events Operations Officer), Lewis Anderson (City Events Manager), Helen Crowther (Equity and Community Power Manager), Mary Ward (Programme Officer).

Date of EqlA sign off: 25/06/2025

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: November 2026

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: N/A

All EqlAs need to be sent to the Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk