



To: The Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategy and Climate Change: Councillor Sian Reid  
Report by: Head of Corporate Strategy: Andrew Limb  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee 19/3/2012  
Wards affected: All Wards

## **SINGE EQUALITIES SCHEME 2012-2015**

### **Not a Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 The City Council has consulted on a new Single Equality Scheme that sets out how the organisation will challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work over the next three years. An updated draft of the new scheme is attached at Appendix A. It includes six strategic objectives that demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Equality Duty and the requirement to prepare and publish one or more equalities objectives.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Executive Councillor for Strategy and Climate Change is recommended:

- a) To approve the new Single Equality Scheme 2012 – 2015.

#### **3. Background**

3.1 Cambridge City Council has a strong track record of challenging discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of its work. The passing of the Equality Act 2010 was a significant milestone in the equalities agenda. Coupled with the difficult financial situation, this has challenged the authority to remain focused on its equalities objectives and to consider the impact of all its decisions on the different communities of Cambridge.

- 3.2 On the 5th of April 2011 the public sector equality duty was implemented, which requires local authorities and other bodies exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.
  - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.
- 3.3 The Equality Act also requires specific public bodies, including Cambridge City Council, to:
- Publish information annually to demonstrate how it meets the equality duty, starting no later than 31st January 2012.
  - Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the equality duty at least every four years, starting no later than 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
- 3.4 The City Council's [Annual Equalities Review 2012](#) was published on the 30 January 2012, and can be found on our website here: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality). The report contains a significant amount of equalities information and signposts readers to other sources of information, in particular the City Council's [Equality in Employment Workforce Report November 2011](#), which provides detailed information about the makeup of our workforce.
- 3.5 Cambridge City Council has chosen to develop a new Single Equality Scheme, which incorporates its equalities objectives. Producing and publishing specific Equality Schemes no longer form part of our public duties under law, however, the City Council believes that having a Single Equality Scheme will help it to ensure that it complies with the equality duty, assist in promoting community cohesion and improve its knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity issues.
- 3.6 The new three-year scheme builds on the previous one and all the achievements the Council has made in recent years on the equalities and diversity agenda. It covers all the protected characteristics of Race, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3.7 The scheme and the strategic plan incorporated within it do not attempt to capture everything the City Council does to advance equalities and diversity, but it sets out the organisation's priority areas for action in the next three years. The scheme was developed building on the City Council's track record, an analysis of where the authority needs to focus further effort, feedback from communities and residents and input from the recent peer review.

#### **4. Consultation**

4.1 On 10 October 2011 the Executive Councillor for Strategy and Climate Change approved a draft Single Equality Scheme for consultation. The consultation ran for 13 weeks, starting on 17 October 2011 and finishing on 22 January 2012. The additional week was included to take into account that the consultation ran over Christmas.

4.2 The consultation was promoted on our website and in an article in the Winter 2011 edition of Cambridge Matters. Officers proactively wrote to a wide range of relevant voluntary and community groups to publicise the consultation. A meeting of the Diversity Forum was also held to discuss the document with relevant local organisations. Officers offered to attend meetings of voluntary and community groups to discuss the draft scheme, however no groups took up this offer. The City Council's partner organisations were also consulted.

4.3 The responses to the consultation are set out in Appendix B. The City Council has provided a reply to each consultation response, to explain if each suggestion can be incorporated in the scheme, or if the City Council already has a means or an alternative way of doing what is being suggested. Where a suggested cannot be taken forward, the City Council has explained why not. The draft Single Equality Scheme 2012-2015 has been updated to reflect the consultation responses, and is attached at Appendix A.

4.4 The key themes that people responding to the consultation raised were:

- a) The importance of having in place means to assess the City Council's performance on equality and diversity matters, including through clear governance, external scrutiny and SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, resourced and timely) performance measures.
- b) The value of working closely with local voluntary and community groups in order to disseminate information to, and to understand the views of, our different communities.

- c) The importance of using a variety of approaches to consultation and engagement to ensure that it is inclusive.
- d) The importance of Equality Impact Assessments as a tool for ensuring that the City Council considers the potential impact of service or policy changes on all our residents.

## **5. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

The Strategy and Partnerships Team has a small budget to support equalities projects and publications, and a further budget to finance interpreting and corporate translation services to support fair and equal access to and delivery of services. Other services support corporate and service based equalities initiatives through provision of staff resources and occasionally funds for specific projects. We also work extensively with partner organisations to maximise the impact of our resources.

### **(b) Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The Joint Equalities Group is made up of staff from across the City Council who are able to input time to supporting the mainstreaming of equalities. These are not specific posts within services but are roles that have been adopted by staff where departments have been able to absorb additional duties. To further equalities work within services and departments it is important that these staff are supported in their role by their Heads of Service and Director.

### **(c) Equal Opportunities Implications**

The Single Equality Scheme 2012-15 will form the framework for the City Council's work to challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

There are minimal environmental implications. To help reduce fuel poverty, as well as carbon emissions, the City Council continues to work to improve the energy efficiency of its own housing stock and to promote this within the private and leasehold sectors.

## (e) **Consultation**

The details of the Single Equality Scheme 2012-15 consultation are set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4. Additional detail is included in Appendix B.

## (f) **Community Safety**

There are a number of areas where equalities and community safety overlap such as domestic violence, hate crime and the safety of public spaces. The City Council works with the Police and other partners to address these issues.

## **6. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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- Annual Equalities Review 2012. This report can be accessed on the council's Equalities web pages at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality).

## **7. Appendices**

Appendix A: Single Equality Scheme 2012 - 2015.

Appendix B: Summary of consultation responses.

## **8. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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