



Annual Equality Report

2014

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Feedback

The Council welcomes your feedback. If you would like more information about the Equality Scheme or this document in an alternative format, please contact us using the information below:

Phone: 01954713465

Email: equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk

Website: www.scambs.gov.uk

Or write to us at: Paul Williams
Equality and Diversity Officer
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with the achievement of the Council's [Equality Scheme](#) objectives during 2014.

2. Background

The Equality Scheme shows how the Council will meet its statutory responsibilities, in particular how the Council takes account of:

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010; and
- Achievement against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

The Council's Equality Scheme was originally approved in March 2012 and it was agreed that the scheme would be reviewed on an annual basis. The latest revision was agreed by Councillor Mark Howell, Cabinet Lead for Equality and Diversity, in October 2014.

3. Equality Framework for Local Government

In October 2010, the Council was recognised as an 'Achieving' authority against the national EFLG.

During 2013 / 2014, the Council conducted a review of its position on the EFLG. The review concluded that the Council was in a strong position to actively pursue 'Excellence' in the future, should a number of areas for further improvement be addressed, relating to data sharing between services in order to better understand the needs of our diverse communities, and how we use the equality impact assessment process to ensure these needs are reflected in our policy framework.

4. Delivery of Equality Objectives in 2013 / 2014 and Progress with Equality Objectives in 2014 / 2015

The Council recognises that equality objectives should not sit in isolation and should be seen as an integral part of the corporate plan so that delivering the corporate plan delivers our equality objectives and vice-versa. The Council's Equality Objectives for 2013 / 2014 were:

- Improve service design, delivery and access by improving the way we engage with communities, use customers' feedback and develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities.

This supports Council Aim 1: We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and business to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions, which will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community.

This supports Council Aim 2: We will work with partners to create and sustain opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation.

- Foster good relations by promoting greater awareness and understanding between our communities.

This supports Council Aim 3: We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents.

The table below shows significant achievements against objectives during 2013 / 2014 and progress so far in 2014 / 2015. A full review of the Equality Objectives for 2013 / 2014 can be found in the Council's [Equality Scheme](#). We retained the same Corporate Plan Aims and Equality Objectives for 2014 / 2015 as part of the 2014 – 2019 Corporate Plan. Whilst many of the objectives reflect ongoing long term initiatives, we are nevertheless making good progress in a number of areas. (References to Council Objectives shown in brackets)

Delivery 2013 / 2014	Progress 2014 / 2015
Improve service design, delivery and access by improving the way we engage with communities, use customers' feedback and develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered a communication skills programme to all staff (A1) • Carried out a survey on the residents' magazine and increased social media presence (A5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ermine Street Housing has provided former Ministry of Defence homes for rental to families in local housing need in Waterbeach (1) • Digital by Default project underway to redirect routine enquiries to the website,

Delivery 2013 / 2014	Progress 2014 / 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place a revised Homelessness Strategy and redeveloped the Robson Court hostel, minimising the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and helping 147 households prevent homelessness (A6) • Implemented a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme which protects our most vulnerable residents from the impacts of welfare cuts, including older people, single parents with children under 5 and people with disabilities. (A9) • Introduced a new format for Neighbourhood Panels to improve the Council's participation and working with the Police. 	<p>thus freeing up staff capacity to handle enquiries that cannot be handled electronically (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realigning our structures in readiness for implementing a Locality patch-based approach to service delivery which enables us to respond more effectively to specific community needs (3)
<p>Identify, prioritise and deliver actions, which will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressed the Connecting Cambridgeshire rural broadband initiative to improve connectivity and combat rural isolation experienced by businesses and residents (B1) • Appointed apprenticeships and carried out a successful work experience programme, enhancing young peoples' employment prospects (B3) • Completed 158 new affordable homes (B8) • Built new Council homes at Chalklands, Linton (B9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing New Build Strategy schemes at Foxton, Swavesey, Bourn and Gamlingay (4) • The City Deal agreed with Government will accelerate the delivery of much-needed housing on rural exception sites and increase the number of apprenticeships providing employment and career development opportunities for young people (5) • The Supporting Housing Team has launched Community Lifeline and Lifeline+ services to support individuals in their own homes and promote independence (6)

Delivery 2013 / 2014	Progress 2014 / 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have reviewed our Assisted Bin Collection arrangements as part of service transformation to ensure an inclusive service is retained for all residents (7)
<p>Foster good relations by promoting greater awareness and understanding between our communities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with the county council to put in place demand-responsive community transport to improve accessibility for residents in isolated rural parts of the districts (C1) Supported the appointment of 34 community navigators across the district to signpost residents to access local services and support (C2) Undertook work with the South Cambridgeshire Local Health Partnership on projects looking at better support for our residents with mental health issues, exploring the links between housing and health (discharge planning with Addenbrooke's), procurement for the new Cambridgeshire Community Services contract, pulling together an ageing well programme to support older people to remain independent and stay in their homes (C3) Proposed provision for at least 85 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches to 2031, and at least four plots for Travelling Showpeople, as part of our draft Local Plan (C4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched further community transport initiatives to reduce rural isolation and congestion e.g. Bikebus service, three community car schemes, demand-responsive transport covering villages in south-west of district (8) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme continues to maintain support levels for our most vulnerable residents (9) Ongoing consultation and community engagement at all major growth sites (10) Purchased empty homes for use as temporary accommodation and reduced average expenditure on Bed & Breakfast accommodation from £2,075 to £575 for the first six months of 2014 / 2015 (11)

Delivery 2013 / 2014	Progress 2014 / 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the acquisition and refurbishment of the county-owned Traveller sites at New Farm, Whaddon, and Blackwell, Milton (C4) • Helped our Youth Council carry out a full programme of activities, including participation in the BBC's 'Free Speech' current affairs programme for young people (C6) • Promoted community cohesion through the best-kept garden competition for tenants and Community Pride and Village Hero Awards to celebrate outstanding voluntary work (C7) • Introduced new data-sharing and joint working arrangements to help us identify, and meet the needs of, families with the most complex needs (C10). 	

5. Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)

The Council uses EQIAs to help comply with the PSED, that is, to consciously think about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of decision-making process. The Council needs to understand the potential effects of its decisions on different people and keep a record of how such decisions were reached. Using a two-stage process involving an initial screening followed, dependent on the issues identified, on full assessment, EQIAs enable the Council to do this.

The Council requires EQIAs to be completed whenever a new policy, strategy or function is being developed or if any fundamental changes are proposed to an existing policy, strategy, service or function. Below is a list of EQIAs completed during 2014 and their outcomes; further details of which are given in Appendix 1:

- Aids and Adaptations Policy: Screen out – no further EQIA required
- Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019: Screen out – no further EQIA required

- Finance Culture VFM: Screen out – no further EQIA required
- Systems Contract Terminus Review: Low priority – EQIA within 3 years
- Consultations – Development Control Improvement Plan: Medium priority – EQIA within 1 year
- Single Customer Record: Low priority – EQIA within 3 years
- Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy: High priority – EQIA within 6 months (review on hold pending staff workshop)
- Waste and Recycling Review: Screen out – no further EQIA required at this stage, however the EQIA will be reviewed as implementation proceeds
- Framework for Strategic and Service Planning and Managing Performance: Screen out – no further EQIA required
- Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report: High priority – EQIA within 6 months. The full EQIA has been completed and no adverse impacts have been identified at the current time, however, the EQIA will be reviewed following the consultation period in February 2015

6. Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy

A review of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy took place in June 2014. The review focused on progress with the strategy's action plan to determine the actions, which were completed, partially completed or not started.

The strategy had a strong emphasis on partnership working with Gypsy and Traveller support organisations from the Voluntary and Community Sector. However, due to funding cuts, many of these local organisations ceased to exist, or curtailed their activities locally, preventing specific actions relying on their participation from being undertaken.

A number of key actions, which focused on raising awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture, such as training events and workshops as well as supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and a regional festival at Milton Country Park were all successfully completed. Additionally, consultation and engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community has also improved since the strategy was developed and there are Good examples of using consultants to engage with the Gypsy and Traveller community during consultations on the Council Actions 2011 / 2012 and the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD).

Promoting community cohesion and improving partnership working were two areas of action, which were not successfully completed due to the reasons detailed above. As an example, the Council was committed to supporting the work of MENTER (Minority Ethnic Network for the Eastern Region) to develop roles for, and the capacity of, Gypsies and Travelers as peer advocates / assessors / consultants in their communities in order to provide real and substantial evidence for service providers and policy makers.

Unfortunately, only a few meetings of the MENTOR advocacy project took place before MENTER closed as an organisation due to a lack of funding. However, on a positive note, the Council was successful in obtaining Housing Revenue Account funding in 2010 and 2011 to upgrade the council-run sites at Blackwell and Whaddon.

A full progress report on the Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy Action Plan is available on request

7. Equalities Consultancy and Support

The Council's Equality and Diversity Officer has been providing consultancy and support services to Uttlesford District Council since May 2011 and Cambridge City Council since August 2011. Both Councils are invoiced on a monthly basis for hours worked and travelling expenses incurred.

The service provided to both local authorities reflects their specific circumstances. Cambridge City Council is role-specific relating to Human Resource aspects of the Council in terms of workforce monitoring, reviewing HR policies, ensuring that HR specific actions in the Council's Single Equality Scheme are completed and tracking implications of changes in legislation and emerging best practice in the public sector. Uttlesford District Council on the other hand has aspirations to be an **Achieving** authority on the Equality Framework for Local Government, so the support focuses on monitoring and measuring progress against the framework, coordinating a local implementation plan and working with Officers to develop and improve procedures and policies.

These consultancy and support arrangements will continue during 2015, although these are kept under regular review to ensure sufficient in-house capacity to deliver South Cambridgeshire District Council's equality objectives.

Appendix 1: EQIAs completed during 2014

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Findings: The Council recognises that the profile of our tenants means that there is a growing demand for aids and adaptations to allow tenants to live independently in their homes. The majority of the demand will come from older disabled people, but this is not always the case; therefore, all applications are assessed independently by an Occupational Therapist. The report the Council receives is based on the need for the work and not any other factor.

Outcome: Screen out – no further EQIA required.

Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019

Findings: Specific policy proposals arising from the implementation of the plan to be subject to new or updated Equality Impact Assessment as part of the policy development, consultation and engagement processes. At the time of screening, the following specific objectives were identified, which would help the Council to meet its statutory duty:

- Meeting local housing needs: Gypsy and Traveller provision, affordable social and private rented houses and homelessness minimisation;
- Managing the impacts of Welfare Reform smoothly and effectively
- Establishing successful and sustainable new communities at Northstowe and the major growth sites.
- Improving the health of communities and reducing social exclusion.
- Sustaining successful, vibrant villages through initiatives such as Action on Energy

Outcome: Screen out – no further EQIA required.

Finance Culture VFM

Findings: The impact will depend on financial projects that will need to be assessed and these will be screened individually. Specific policy proposals will be subject to new or updated EqlAs as part of the project process. It is anticipated that once the project is complete, the Council will be able to evidence that it is meeting one or more of its public sector equality duties.

Outcome: Screen out – no further EQIA required.

Systems Contract Terminus Review

Findings: Until the results of the information gathering exercise are known, no recommendations can be made; therefore, no changes can be forthcoming which will have an effect. Potential effects will vary depending on the IT systems where changes are identified. Specific policy proposals arising from the information gathering exercise will be subject to new or updated EqlAs as part of the development process.

Outcome: Low priority – EQIA within 3 years.

Consultations – Development Control Improvement Plan

Findings: A review of procedures and seeking new ways to engage with members of the public on planning matters. In legal terms, planning representations have to be submitted in the written form. This could well have a potential adverse impact on people with learning disabilities, some members of the Gypsy and Traveller community with low literacy levels and people whose first language is not English. These issues will be explored further when the full EQIA is completed.

Outcome: Medium priority – EQIA within 1 year.

Single Customer Record

Findings: At the time of the EQIA screening, it was not possible to determine the likely impact of the project on people with the protected characteristics, so a full EQIA will be conducted prior to any decision being made.

Outcome: Low priority – EQIA within 3 years.

Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy

Findings: The complaints *process* is designed to be easily used by all residents. There is no requirement for feedback to be submitted in writing, and standard response templates are designed to be as clear and accessible as reasonably possible for all recipients. Managers are required to consider whether any circumstances relating to the complainant's mental health, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability have been taken into account before applying the policy for handling unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants. There may be specific **learning** from complaints which results in specific service changes to meet the needs of a particular group e.g. modification of signage to assist customers with literacy and / or visual disabilities. Such adjustments would be explored as part of the full EQIA of the specific policy or procedure that was subject of the complaint. The policy aims to foster a culture in which feedback is seen as an opportunity to review and improve our services. The inclusive process ensures that all sections of the community have the opportunity to provide appropriate feedback in person or in writing.

Outcome: High priority – EQIA within 6 months (review on hold pending staff workshop)

Waste and Recycling Review

Findings: This project will deliver outline business cases for a range of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Optimum Service Design options which will deliver a potential £10 per household reduction in waste collection costs. The Council can demonstrate a range of initiatives such as assisted collection schemes and the use of in-cab device technology to provide a positive impact on different groups of people, such as older people and those people with a disability.

Outcome: Screen out – no further EQIA required at this stage, however the EQIA will be reviewed as implementation proceeds.

Framework for Strategic and Service Planning and Managing Performance to deliver the Corporate Plan

Findings: The impacts on service delivery are indirect, but the adoption of this framework will enable the Council to deliver its objectives more effectively to deliver positive outcomes.

Outcome: Screen out – no further EQIA required.

Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report

Findings: The Issues and Options report is the first stage of producing the Action Action Plan (AAP), which will be published for public consultation. The results of the consultation will inform the development of the AAP. It is also linked with all three of the Council's Aims. It is too early in the process to determine the impact of the new policy on protected characteristic groups of people.

Outcome: High priority – EQIA within 6 months. The full EQIA has been completed and no adverse impacts have been identified at the current time, however, the EQIA will be reviewed following the consultation period in February 2015.