



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Equality Scheme 2020 – 2024

Version	Approval	Date
1.0	Cabinet	07/12/20

Introduction and Context

Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010, bringing together all previous equality legislation into a single Act, strengthening laws to prevent inequality, and extending equality law to include some forms of discrimination previously unrecognised within legislation.

Under the Equality Act, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

These are called protected characteristics.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Included within the Equality Act is the public sector equality duty, which came into force in April 2011. This duty applies to a range of public authorities, including local authorities, and is made up of the general equality duty and specific duties that are intended to help performance of the general equality duty.

The General Equality Duty

The general equality duty requires public authorities 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 do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. To comply with the duty a public authority needs to have due regard to all three of these aims.

The Act explains that having 'due regard' for advancing equality (the second aim) involves:

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- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people (including taking steps to take account of disabled people’s disabilities)
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In relation to the third aim, the Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The Specific Duties

Local Authorities are also required to complete the following specific duties:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how the General Duty is being met. This is achieved through two methods:
 - The annual publication of equality in employment information.
 - The publication of information to show steps that have been taken to have due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the General Duty every four years.

Equality Scheme Purpose

The purpose of our Equality Scheme is to:

- Set out our equality objectives for the period 2020-24 and provide details to show how these will contribute towards the aims of the General Duty.
- Present the Council’s approach to embedding equality within Council services.
- Provide details of the equality responsibilities of the Council, its employees, and elected representatives.
- Set arrangements for monitoring and checking progress against our equality objectives.

Equality Objectives

The equality objectives on the following page show how South Cambridgeshire District Council will meet the three aims of the General Equality Duty during the period 2020-24. These objectives have been set to reflect the context detailed within the facts and figures included at Appendix A (Facts and Figures).

Objective 1: Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Action	Ownership (and Timescale)	What success will look like
Review SCDC policies, projects, and services to ensure equality considerations are embedded within service design and delivery	Policy, Performance and Projects (Q2 2021-22)	Increase the number of policies, strategies, projects, and other proposals with accompanying EqlAs, identifying actions to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community Actions identified within EqlAs undertaken are undertaken and completed within the timescales set out
Review access to Housing, Homelessness, and welfare support by those with protected characteristics, identifying actions on how the Council can adopt remove barriers to inclusion	Task and Finish Group (Q1 2021-22)	Creation of a report setting out findings. Implementation of recommendations from Task and Finish group.
Establish an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum to understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and best practice to help identify improvements to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community	Policy, Performance and Projects; HR (Q4 2020-21)	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum established, trained, and actively updated on changes to make up of the district and identifying improvements to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community.
Improve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information about the makeup of our residents and customers, to inform decisions that might impact on different protected characteristic groups	Policy, Performance and Projects	A single format for gathering and presenting equality data, accessible across Council services

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	(Q4 2021-22)	Data available in relation to protected characteristic groups, including forecasts of future makeup of the district
Encourage and promote the benefits of a diverse workforce to South Cambridgeshire businesses	Business Support Team (Q4 2021-22)	Promotion of materials, training, and relevant local groups and networks
Review and re-launch the Council's translation provision for different language users and accessible formats, including through the use of technology	Policy, Performance and Projects (Q4 2021-22)	Review of languages provision and publicise to staff and residents through various channels.
Establish an Equality and Diversity training programme for all existing staff, and all new staff as part of the Council's induction process	Policy, Performance and Projects; HR (Q4 2020-21)	All existing staff having received Equality and Diversity training. Regular training sessions are included as part of the induction process for new staff.
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training will be rolled out for Members	HR and Democratic Service (Q2 2021-22)	A programme of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training has been delivered to SCDC elected members.

Objective 2: South Cambridgeshire District Council is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings

Action	Ownership (and Timescale)	What success will look like
Review and examine SCDC structure and processes to ensure people with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged, including through remote working arrangements	Task and Finish Group (Q4 2021-22)	Creation of a report setting out findings and making recommendations. Implementation of recommendations from Task and Finish group. Increase the number of job applications from people from the protected characteristic groups from current levels.
Celebrate and promote diversity by marking key dates within the calendar including but not limited to Black History month and LGBTQ+ month and investigate other possible events	Policy, Performance and Projects (Q4 2020-21)	Programme of engagement with online resources and events.
Achieve Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation and undertake a disability friendly assessment of our office buildings and buildings that we are designing and delivering	HR, Facilities Management (Q4 2021-22)	Disability Confident Level 2 achieved Assessment completed and assurance received from Disability Cambridgeshire
Collect data about the South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and analyse representation of people from different protected characteristics	HR (Q4 2021-22)	SCDC produces BAME pay-gap reporting on an annual basis and uses this to inform future actions to encourage BAME representation at all levels.

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		<p>Introduce BAME and disability pay-gap reporting to align with existing gender pay-gap reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Complete and analyse annual staff satisfaction surveys around equality, diversity, and inclusion, and publish 'you said, we listened' examples internally following analysis of the survey results.</p> <p>Progress towards workforce diversity that represents the local equality profile.</p>
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Objective 3: Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district

Action	Ownership (and Timescale)	What success will look like
<p>Develop the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, with consideration given to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion opportunities, particularly within the consultation stages</p>	<p>Greater Cambridge Planning Service; Housing Strategy</p> <p>(Q2 2023-24)</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessments are completed identifying actions to include and represent the voices of people from protected characteristic groups within plan consultation and development.</p> <p>Actions identified within EqlAs undertaken are undertaken and completed within the timescales set out</p> <p>Undertake evidence gathering exercises to understand needs of people with protected</p>

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		<p>characteristics. This will include an accommodation needs assessment of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>Completed sustainability appraisal including sections covering social and health impact</p>
Review the Council's arrangements for consulting on key decisions with its residents	<p>Communications</p> <p>(Q2 2022-23)</p>	Revised approach to consultation identified and implemented
Engage as a member of the Community Safety Partnership to influence an increase in the recruitment and development of more BAME Police Officers for Cambridgeshire; to ensure that BAME people are not disproportionately subject to the stop and search powers in Cambridgeshire; and to ensure that arrest and custody measures are proportionate in Cambridgeshire.	<p>Sustainable Communities</p> <p>(Q4 2021-22)</p>	Regular reports to be received by Community Safety Partnership detailing initiatives and progress, enabling SCDC to exert its influence as a member.
Work with the Local Resilience Forum and the NHS to review the impact of the coronavirus on protected characteristic groups, particularly the BAME community, and identify opportunities to lessen the impact	<p>Task and Finish Group</p> <p>(Q4 2021-22)</p>	Completion of a review on the impact of the coronavirus on BAME communities, with a breakdown to district level.
Take action to foster good relations in areas experiencing high levels of growth, including between people with protected characteristics and those from the wider community	<p>Sustainable Communities</p> <p>(Q4 2020-21)</p>	Create and continue to run community liaison meetings and forums where significant growth is planned, to help new and existing residents (including those from protected characteristic groups) settle in.

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<p>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion considerations will be promoted through our Neighbourhood Planning processes and guidance</p>	<p>Planning Policy (Q4 2020-21)</p>	<p>EqIAs are completed and published relating to each Neighbourhood Plan that the Council adopts</p>
<p>Conduct an audit of street names and any public monuments the Council is responsible for that name individuals or organisations that may give rise to sensitivity</p>	<p>Task and Finish Group (Q4 2020-21)</p>	<p>Produce a set of recommendations on any actions that should be taken. Implement any actions as recommended</p>

Embedding Equality within Council Services

South Cambridgeshire District Council provides a wealth of services to its residents and businesses. The following approaches are used to ensure that equality is embedded within our service delivery.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are completed during the development of policies, procedures, projects, functions, strategies, and services. EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts across the nine protected characteristics, allowing us to plan mitigating action and to seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our services. Once completed, EqIAs are published on the Council's website.

Staff and Member Training

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to ensuring that it is operating fairly and equitably in both service delivery and employment. To ensure that equality and diversity standards are upheld during the delivery of services, essential training will be provided to all staff and members.

Additional equality and diversity training can be provided to staff according to their specific service requirements.

The Council ensures that all staff have completed safeguarding training, this training also includes an e-learning module on Modern Slavery.

Policies

Officers' Code of Conduct - All employees of South Cambridgeshire District Council are expected to work to our code of conduct, including fair and equitable treatment of all staff, customers, and residents.

Dignity at Work Policy - SCDC positively encourages and promotes a working environment where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The Council is committed to creating a fair and safe working environment where employees can work free from abusive, threatening, or unwelcome behaviour. Complaints of harassment and/or bullying or victimisation will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, sensitively, and confidentially.

Pay Policy - The Council is committed to ensuring that its pay strategy is fair and equitable, affordable, transparent, and easily understood. This enables the organisation to attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce. Our staff salaries are evaluated using the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme which is based on the principle of joint ownership, openness, transparency, and equality.

Recruitment Process – SCDC's Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures are designed to recruit staff in a fair and consistent way that supports equality of

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opportunity. Our recruitment processes are open and robust with procedures for checking that interview attendees are eligible to work in the UK and for requesting and following up applicant references. We also aim to ensure that interview panel members have received interview training, covering equality and diversity, to ensure a consistent and fair process.

Safeguarding Policy - SCDC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm and their families. The council works under Cambridgeshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures. We take our responsibilities seriously and expect all staff, partners, and contractors to share this commitment. We ensure our procurement and contracting policies and procedures adequately reflect our safeguarding responsibilities. All incidents of poor practice, allegations and suspicions are taken seriously, reported, and are always responded to. Additionally, all staff are expected to attend regular safeguarding training.

Whistleblowing Policy - The Council encourages staff, contractors and elected Members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's activities, to come forward and voice those concerns. Our Whistleblowing Policy has been prepared in consultation with staff and with the help of the independent charity, Public Concern at Work. It commits the council to ensuring that whistle-blowers will suffer no recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern about malpractice.

Service Review

The Council reviews the equality impacts of its services and employment practices by gathering information in following ways:

- Equality employment statistics and report (annual)
- Staff surveys
- Customer feedback
- External stakeholder engagement and consultation
- An annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Actions report

Our Equality Pledge

South Cambridgeshire District Council has made the following equality pledge, recognising the benefits that different communities contribute to South Cambridgeshire and the surrounding region:

"We believe in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for South Cambridgeshire and the wider region to be safe, welcoming, and inclusive"

More information about the equality pledge, including details of how to sign up as either an organisation or individual, are included on our [Equality and Diversity webpage](#).

Race Equality Motion

At the Council meeting of the 14th July 2020, a motion was passed setting out the Council's beliefs that:

- Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often unseen problem in the UK. This is as true in Cambridgeshire, where the ethnic minority population is 18.6%, as it is in areas with greater diversity.
- Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete.
- This Council, representing people in South Cambridgeshire, has a duty as a public leader to actively lead that work.

This motion also brought forward a number of commitments in relation to the Council's work to promote race equality, which have been incorporate within the equality objectives section of this scheme.

Following the motion, the Leader of the Council has sent formal correspondence requesting the following actions:

- That the Secretary of State for Education reviews the national curriculum to ensure the inclusion of BAME history and culture in lessons, including providing further historical context for events normally only seen through the lens of white British history.
- That the Police & Crime Commissioner reports on measures to reduce the disproportionality of BAME people affected by the use of stop and search powers; to increase the recruitment and development of more BAME officers for Cambridgeshire; and to ensure that arrest and custody measures are proportionate.
- District MPs ask that while conducting another race inequality review, the Government also accelerate the implementation of recommendations from previous reviews - for example, the Lammy and Windrush recommendations.

Appendix A – Facts and Figures

A Growing District

The South Cambridgeshire population is forecast to increase by **7%** by 2031 from 2018 levels (from 158,500 in 2018 to 169,300 in 2031, an increase of 10,800 residents) (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2020)

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

Growth is underpinned by high levels of employment, education, skills and training, affluent area, relatively low levels of crime and good living environment, as demonstrated by, South Cambridgeshire's scores against Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Where number 1 is the most deprived and number 317 is the least deprived, South Cambs places:

307th for Education, Skills and Training

304th for Employment

302nd for Income

258th for Living Environment

248th for Crime

98th for Barriers to Housing and Services (rurality and high cost of housing)

However, this will not be the experience for everyone, and the potential for isolation within the district, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, is highlighted by the significantly lower score in the terms of the 'Barriers to Housing and Services' category, due to the rurality of the district and high cost of housing.

South Cambridgeshire Equality Profile Headlines

- At the time of the 2011 census **93.3%** of South Cambridgeshire residents identified as White (including **0.3%** Gypsy or Irish Traveller), **3.7%** Asian/Asian British, **1.8%** Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups, **0.8%** Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and **0.5%** Other ethnic group (Census, 2011)
- **95.3%** of South Cambridgeshire residents speak English as their main language. **6,802** residents do not speak English as their main language.

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Following English the next highest main language groups are Other European (1.9%), South Asian (0.7%) and East Asian (0.7%) (Census, 2011)

- As of 2018 **10.8%** of South Cambridgeshire residents were non-UK nationals (ONS, 2019)
- South Cambridgeshire residents aged 65+ are forecast to increase to **22.2%** in 2031 from 16.6% in 2011 (ONS, 2019)
- Pockets of high fertility (between 2011 and 2015) exist in places such as Waterbeach & Landbeach (**84.9** births per 1000 females aged 15-44, compared with **64.4** per 1000 for South Cambs and 63.2 per 1000 for England) (Public Health England, 2020)
- **11.2%** of residents have a long-term disability limiting day-to-day activities. **8.5%** have a long-term disability affecting the kind or amount of work they might do (ONS, 2020)
- Male residents in FT work earn **£4.03ph** more than female residents in FT work (compared with £1.22ph difference nationally) (NOMIS, 2020)
- In 2018/19 **10 per 1,000** Black people were subject to stop and search action, 4 per 1,000 Mixed ethnicity people, 3 per 1,000 Asian people and 1 per 1,000 White people in Cambridgeshire (Gov.uk, 2020)

Some National Context

- Almost **1 in 5** LGBT staff have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT (Stonewall, 2018)
- **1 in 8** trans people have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans (Stonewall, 2018)
- The ethnic minority employment rate is **62.8%** compared with 75.6% for White workers (McGregor-Smith Review, 2018)
- In 2018/19 **38 per 1,000** Black people were subject to stop and search action, 11 per 1,000 Mixed Ethnicity people, 11 per 1,000 Asian people, 7 per 'Other inc. Chinese' people and 4 per every 1,000 White people (Gov.uk, 2020)
- In 2015/16, **47.6%** of disabled adults were in employment, compared with almost 80% of the non-disabled adult population (EHRC, 2017)
- In 2012-14 **45.3%** of disabled people reported difficulty accessing health, benefits, tax, culture, sport, and leisure compared with 31.7% for non-disabled people. (EHRC, 2017)

Appendix B: Equality and Diversity Responsibilities

Category	Responsibilities
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value difference and recognise the strength that diversity brings to the organisation. • Behave in a professional and appropriate manner, treating colleagues, partners and customers with respect and dignity. • Challenge bias within selves and amongst others, remaining open to challenge, and aware of opportunities to minimise or eliminate bias from processes, behaviours, and decisions. • Adopt an open and inclusive approach and report behaviour believed to be inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory. • Consider the impacts of work on people with protected characteristics and seek ways that positive impacts may be maximised, and negative impacts minimised.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen carefully to, take seriously, and offer support in relation to any concerns that are raised about potential discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation. • Respond professionally to complaints that may arise in line with relevant policy guidelines. • Explain and take responsibility for decisions and actions, and effects on employees and South Cambridgeshire service users. • Demonstrate clear leadership and act as a role model in the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Set a clear and consistent behaviour code that values difference and promotes a culture of inclusion. • Ensure new proposals or existing practices under review are assessed using the Equality Impact Assessment Process, prior to approval. Impacts on people with protected characteristics should be identified and actions explored for the advancement of equality of opportunity and the fostering of good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Elected members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure actions and conduct are beyond reproach when dealing with officers and members of the community in line with the Constitution Members Code of Conduct and Protocol on Member/Officer relations.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge bias within selves and amongst others, remaining open to challenge, and aware of opportunities to minimise or eliminate bias from processes, behaviours, and decisions.
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