



**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

# **Single Equality Scheme 2012 - 2015**



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## Foreword

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to equality of opportunity in our approach to service delivery, employment and being a community leader. We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment. Equality is an important element of our first Strategic Aim – *We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money* – and our Value of *Mutual Respect*.

In October 2010, South Cambridgeshire District Council attained *Achieving* status on the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The Council uses the EFLG as the improvement framework against which to measure its performance and development. Since adopting the earlier Equality Standards for Local Government (ESLF) in 2006, the Council has been successful in making significant progress on its equality and diversity journey. Progress will be further enhanced by the development and implementation of this Single Equality Scheme in response to the Equality Act 2010.

This Single Equality Scheme will help improve our services and policies and make sure that the different needs of people are better understood. It will also help to ensure that our services are better targeted and will lead to improved customer satisfaction and better staff recruitment and retention.



Councillor Ray Manning  
Leader of the Council



Jean Hunter  
Chief Executive

## 2. Feedback

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

Phone: 03450 450 500

Email: [equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk)

Website: [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Or write to us at:

Equality and Diversity Officer  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

## 3. Introduction and Context

### 3.1 The Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010 and brings together, harmonises and extends current equality law. The existing anti-discrimination laws have been consolidated into a single Act, which has been introduced to strengthen the laws preventing discrimination and the inequalities that still exist in society today.

The Equality Act has also created changes to earlier legislation and includes discrimination previously unrecognised in legislation. In essence, it creates a new 'Single Equality Duty' on public bodies to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations.

The term *protected characteristics* has replaced *equality strands* for describing the protected traits held by groups or individuals under anti-discrimination and equality legislation. The earlier separate duties for disability, gender and race have been replaced with a single, more effective framework and the new 'Single Equality Duty' covers:

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

On 05 April 2011, further parts of the Equality Act were implemented under the General Duty, which requires local authorities 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.

The specific duties support and aid compliance with the General Duty and require local authorities to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how we meet the General Duty starting no later than 31 January 2012.
  - ✓ The Council has published a document entitled "[Equality Information and the Public Sector Equality Duty.](#)" which can be downloaded from our website by clicking on the link or is available on request using the contact details in chapter 2.
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the General Duty at least every four years starting no later than 06 April 2012.
  - ✓ The Council's objectives that it will be focussing on during this three-year scheme are detailed in chapter 6.

South Cambridgeshire District Council believes that having a Single Equality Scheme will help to ensure that we comply with the aims of general and specific duties as detailed above.

### **3.2 The Purpose of a Single Equality Scheme**

This Scheme has been prepared in response to the Equality Act 2010, which has two main purposes – to harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. It combines and supersedes our existing Disability, Gender and Race Equality Schemes; and brings together our objectives across the nine protected characteristics and the characteristic specific to South Cambridgeshire – ‘Rurality.’

The purpose of our Single Equality Scheme is to:

- Show how we have involved people in decisions we have made.
- Find out what barriers are faced by people and take steps to remove them.
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- Tell people what our responsibilities are. This includes telling: elected members (or councillors), managers, employees, unions, our partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors, as well as residents.
- Explain how we make things fairer for people in planning our services and what we do.
- Show how the Scheme links to other equalities objectives and priorities.
- Provide information about our involvement, assessments and training arrangements.
- Work in partnership with other organisations and partners to prevent ignorance and prejudice in the wider community.
- Show what has changed as a result of involvement and set this out in our action plan on how we will put the Scheme into practice.
- Monitor and check what we are doing and report each year.

We recognise that the Council and the environment in which it operates are not static and believe that the Scheme and resultant action plans should be living documents which are flexible and which meet the needs of the communities we serve. So, for this reason we will update the Scheme on a regular basis.

## 4. The South Cambridgeshire Context

### 4.1 Our Vision, Values and Aims

In February 2012, the Council announced its vision for the future:

***South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live and work in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.***

***The Council will be recognised as consistently innovative and a high performer with a track record of delivering value for money by focusing on the priorities, needs and aspirations of our residents, parishes and businesses.***

Underpinning the vision are three Council aims. These aims are:

1. We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.
2. We will work with partners to create and sustain opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation.
3. We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents.

Each Council aim is supported by a number of approaches and actions. 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. As such, the Council's equality objectives, which are detailed in chapter 7, are based on the three Council aims.

In support of its vision, the Council has committed to four organisational values each identified as a key factor in the successful realisation of the vision. These values are:

1. Trust
2. Mutual respect
3. Customer service
4. Commitment to improve services

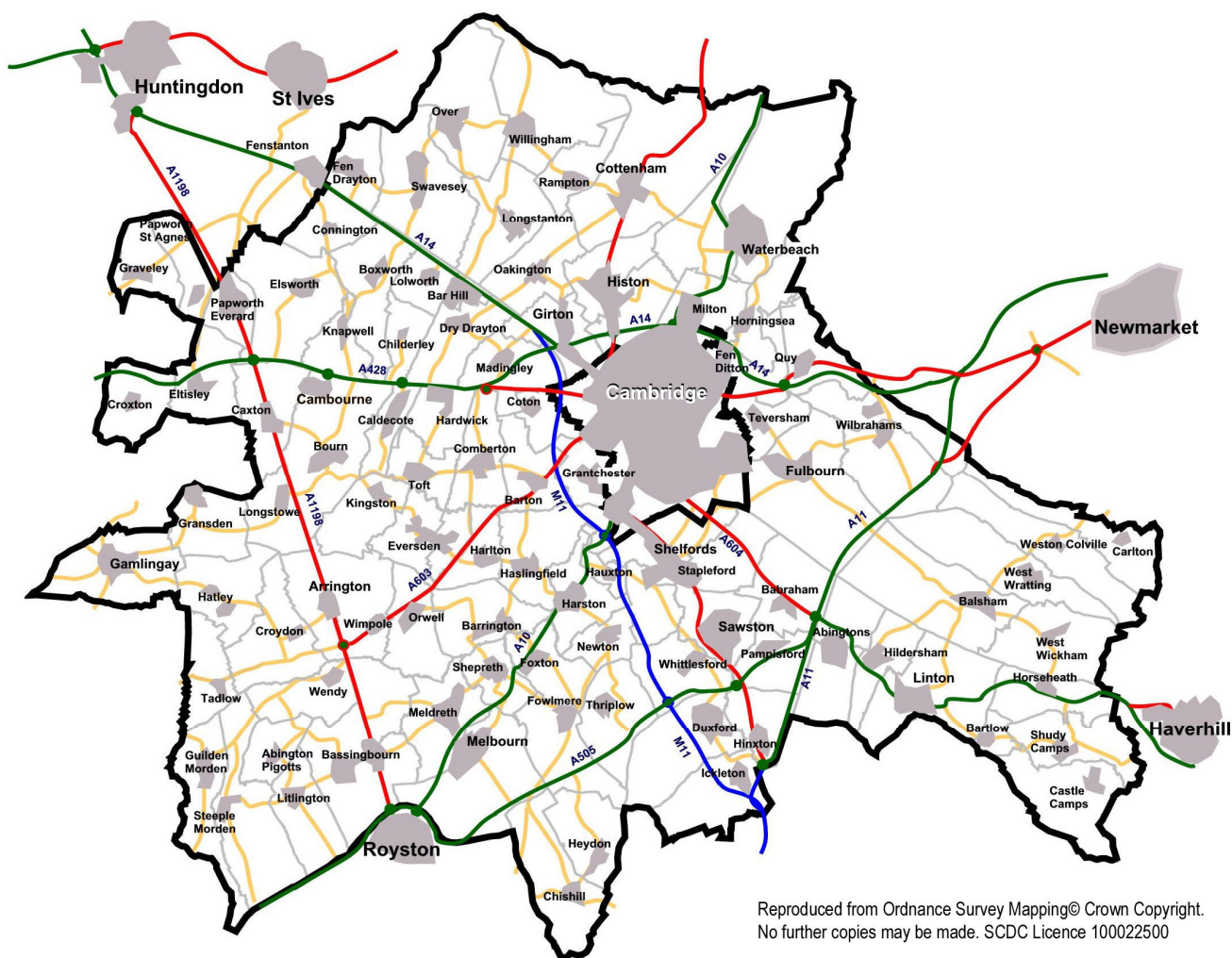
### 4.2 A Profile of South Cambridgeshire

South Cambridgeshire is the second largest district in Cambridgeshire covering approximately 350 square miles of countryside. It is also the second most populated district after Huntingdonshire and the district completely surrounds Cambridge City. It shares its boundaries with Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire to the north. In the south the district has boundaries with North Hertfordshire, Central Bedfordshire, Uttlesford and St. Edmundsbury. It is relatively rural with most of the population living in villages or rural areas – there are no towns in South Cambridgeshire. Sawston is currently the largest village with approximately 7,200 people.<sup>1</sup> However, future development will be focussed around the fringes of Cambridge and in a new town (Northstowe).

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<sup>1</sup> Annual demographic and socio-economic information report (February 2010) produced by Research Group, Cambridgeshire County Council

South Cambridgeshire is a vibrant district at the heart of the rapidly growing East of England region. We are a diverse community, with some of the oldest villages in England now neighbouring some of the newest and most exciting modern communities in the country.



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South Cambridgeshire is a rural district with a population of over 146,406 residents and this population is expected to increase faster than the national average over the next ten years.<sup>2</sup>

South Cambridgeshire is a prosperous area with high levels of economic activity and low levels of unemployment; but with increasing house prices and a shortage of affordable homes. It is a healthy area, with high life expectancy compared with national rates and an area with the lowest crime rate in Cambridgeshire. South Cambridgeshire was also voted the Best place to live in rural Britain by the Halifax Survey (April 2011).

### 4.3 The People of South Cambridgeshire

The information in this section is a summary of the document entitled "[Equality Information and the Public Sector Equality Duty.](#)" which can be downloaded from our website by clicking on the link or is available on request using the contact details in chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> ONS mid-year population estimates 2010



## **Age Structure**

South Cambridgeshire has an ageing population and includes major increases in the population aged over 65.<sup>3</sup> In 2001 around 51% of the population was younger than 40, in 2021 that proportion is expected to drop to 44.3%. The age group 60 to 74 is expected to increase by over 15,500, growing from 16,400 to 31,900 or by around 95% in just twenty years. In percentage terms there is an even bigger increase in the numbers of residents aged 75 and over. This age group is expected to increase from 9,200 in 2001 to over 19,100 by 2021, a rise of around 9,900 or 108%; with a 98% increase in those aged 85+. In contrast, the remaining age groups are expected to increase by between 11%-17%.<sup>4</sup>

A growing elderly population, greater mobility, immigration and other social trends are making changes to the population we serve. These changes will accelerate as a result of the population growth facing the district in the next ten years or so, leading to a far more diverse society than previously. At the same time issues of equality, diversity and community cohesion are now high on the national agenda.

## **Children and Young People**

There are nearly 141,000 children and young people aged 0-19 who live in Cambridgeshire. The population in South Cambridgeshire is estimated to be 34,000,<sup>5</sup> which equates to 24% of the overall population of the district. The district's population aged 0-19 is forecast to rise by 15% between 2008 and 2021, which equates to an additional 5,140 children and young people.

## **People with a Disability**

No single figure exists to record the actual number of disabled people living in the district. In the 2008 Place Survey, 28% of respondents in South Cambridgeshire reported having some long-standing illness, disability or infirmity. This was lower than the Cambridgeshire average of 33%. It was also lower in Huntingdonshire (31%) and Cambridge City (30%), whilst Fenland (40%) and East Cambridgeshire (34%) have a rate higher than the county average.

For our own Council stock, this percentage is much higher, with 41% of households stating that they have a disability following the tenancy survey carried out in December 2009.

According to the Private Sector House Condition Survey (2011/12) 14.3% of households contain at least one member affected by a long-term illness or disability. The most common illness/disabilities relate to mobility impairments, heart and circulatory problems and respiratory illness.

Not all households affected by illness/disability will have special support or adaptation needs and will be able to function normally within their dwelling. Of the 14.3% of households in South Cambridgeshire containing at least one individual with an illness/disability 55% of households stated that they had no difficulties in living within their current dwelling. The remaining 45% suffered mobility problems, and may require support.

## **The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Community**

The 2001 Census data shows that in South Cambridgeshire 93.2% of the population were White British, and a further 3.7% were White Irish and White Other, with 3,800 people

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<sup>3</sup> JSNA – Older People 2010

<sup>4</sup> Strategic Housing Market Assessment

<sup>5</sup> ONS mid-year population estimates 2010

identified as from minority ethnic groups. The largest identified minority ethnic groups were Indian, Chinese, and Other Ethnic group which overall do not represent more than 1% of the population.

## **Gypsies and Travellers**

Gypsies and Travellers were not identified separately in the 2001 Census although they are an ethnic group. The Cambridge Sub-Region Travellers' Needs Assessment 2005 estimated that South Cambridgeshire's Gypsy and Traveller population was 1,330 in 2005, which equates to 1% of the 2005 district population and makes them the largest ethnic minority group. There appears to be a difference in demographics across the county with a higher number of Irish Travellers in South Cambridgeshire and Eastern European Roma in Fenland.

The Cambridge Sub-Region Travellers' Needs Assessment (CSTNA) highlights that Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education.

The Council's Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy 2010 – 2013 has been developed to:

- Provide a consistent, co-ordinated approach across the Council, and through its partnerships, to its work with Gypsies and Travellers.
- Improve access to services and the responsiveness of mainstream services and ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated into existing policies and mainstream services.
- Foster good community relationships, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and positively promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance between Gypsies and Travellers and other members of our rural communities.
- Work with partners, including health, police, voluntary agencies, and other local authorities to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Ensure that the accommodation and other needs of Gypsies and Travellers are met whilst taking account of cultural issues or specific requirements.
- Seek to manage unauthorised encampments in an efficient and effective way, having regard to the welfare requirements, rights and responsibilities of Gypsies and Travellers, the environment and the potential level of nuisance for local residents.
- Provide a clear policy and practice framework for the guidance of agencies, staff, elected Councillors, Gypsies and Travellers, landowners and the wider public.

Good progress has been made on a number of these objectives, including initiatives to introduce recycling opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers, targeted consultation in the development of Council Actions in 2011 and publicity to celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. Progress on partnership and community cohesion issues has been slower due to cuts in voluntary sector funding, including the closure of the local branch of the Ormiston Trust. Moving forward, the Council has agreed a corporate action for 2012-13 to develop a sustainable process to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, whilst the community strategy will be reviewed to complement this work

The Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Travellers JSNA 2010, aims to identify the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the Traveller population in Cambridgeshire. It identifies that lack of secure accommodation is the biggest issue facing Gypsy and Traveller communities in the East of England and many are homeless. A Gypsy & Travellers Needs Assessment is in its final stages of completion, which will assess future accommodation

needs; this is likely to be published in summer 2012. Planning for new sites will be progressed as part of the Local Plan Review.

### Gender & Households

The gender split in the district is broadly similar to the national average with 50.8% of the total population being female and 49.2% being male.

All people	146,400
Males	72,600
Females	73,800
Total Household	59,800

Table 1 Population & Households. Source: Population – ONS Mid-year Population Estimates 2010.

### Life Expectancy

South Cambridgeshire has a higher than average life expectancy for both men and women compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire and the UK. The average life expectancy for a man in Cambridgeshire is 79 years and for a woman it is 82.9 years. The national average for a man is 78.3 years and for a woman is 82.3 years.

	South Cambs	England & Wales
Life expectancy at birth (years)		
Males	81.6	78.3
Females	84.5	82.3

Table 2 Life Expectancy. Source: ONS, Life Expectancy at birth in the UK 2007-2009, October 2010

### Religion or Belief

Christianity is the largest stated religion in South Cambridgeshire, practiced by 72% of residents. This is just above the national average of 71.7%, as well as the county average of 71.3%. The biggest non-Christian religion minority in the district are Muslims, who comprise 0.5% of the population.

RELIGION	Number	% of total SCDC	% of total county
Christian	94,881	72.9%	71.3%
Buddhist	369	0.3%	0.4%
Hindu	417	0.3%	0.4%
Jewish	298	0.2%	0.3%
Muslim	612	0.5%	0.8%
Sikh	125	0.1%	0.1%

Table 3 Religion or Belief. Source: ONS, 2001 Census

Also of interest, is the fact that 18% of all residents claim to have 'no religion' (a further 8% did not state any religion or faith), making the number of people claiming to be Christian or any other faith just over seventy-four percent of the South Cambridgeshire community as a whole. It is anticipated that the figures above have changed significantly since the last census in 2001, but no other reliable sources of information exist until the results of the census in 2011 are published.

## **Sexual Orientation**

There is no data on sexual orientation within the local community. This position is unlikely to change as sexual orientation was not included in the 2011 UK Census. The Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual charity, Stonewall, estimate that between 5 to 7% of the population is gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Another indicator that could be used is the 2009 survey of residents in Council housing with respondents stating that 0.5% were gay, 0.2% were lesbian and 0.5% were bi-sexual. However, this is only a sample of Council tenants and is not representative of the South Cambridgeshire population.

The Council is a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme, Britain's good practice forum in which employers can work with Stonewall, and each other, to promote lesbian, gay and bisexual equality in the workplace. As a major employer, the Council is committed to tackling discrimination within the workplace and this has been recognised by the nationwide Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, which ranked South Cambridgeshire District Council as 185<sup>th</sup> out of 363 organisations for 2012.

## **Transgender and Transsexual Community**

No local data is available on the transgender and transsexual community in South Cambridgeshire. The Gender Trust highlights that the prevalence of transsexualism vary widely between 1 in 4,000 and 1 in 10,000 people. This is mainly due to the social stigma attached to being transsexual, arising from a widespread lack of awareness of the true nature of the condition. It is something that is often kept hidden.

## **National and International Migration**

The internal migration portion of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2009 population estimate for South Cambridgeshire suggests that more people came to South Cambridgeshire from other parts of the UK than left South Cambridgeshire for other parts of the UK. Net in-migration was approximately 1,400 people, the joint highest in the County alongside Fenland.

International migration is extremely difficult to measure. However, data sources appear to indicate that international migration into South Cambridgeshire is slowing. The Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) is one data source that can be used for recording incoming international migration. The WRS data for South Cambridgeshire shows that in 2009, just less than 250 WRS registration were issued in the district, which was 14% fewer than in 2008. Another data source is National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations. In 2009, approximately 800 people registered for NINos in South Cambridgeshire, which is 20% fewer than in 2008.

## **4.4 The Council as a Service Provider**

South Cambridgeshire District Council provides a wealth of services to its residents including:

### **Environmental services**

- Collecting waste and recycling from 59,800 households
- Cleaning streets, dealing with abandoned cars and clearing and investigating fly tipping
- Making sure food premises are clean and safe
- Advising on and enforcing health and safety at work
- Dealing with pollution and offering pest control services

- Licensing taxis, public entertainment and the sale of alcohol
- Promoting community safety

#### **Housing services**

- Improving the supply of affordable homes
- Managing 5,539 Council homes
- Providing housing advice and support for homeless people and victims of domestic violence.

#### **Planning services**

- Considering planning applications, dealing with development without planning permission and building control
- Conserving our environment and buildings
- Developing planning policy to shape the future of the district

#### **New communities**

- Developing the local economy
- Planning for major developments
- Supporting local tourism
- Supporting arts and sports development
- Working towards a sustainable South Cambridgeshire
- Supporting, strengthening and engaging with our communities
- Providing community and voluntary sector grants

#### **Corporate services**

- Increasing customer access and developing smarter ways of working through technology and partnerships
- Providing support for those who need help with Housing and Council Tax Benefits
- Collecting Council Tax and Business rates
- Providing support services such as accountancy and legal
- Making sure all our customers can access services equally, in the best way for them
- Administering local democracy including elections

## **4.5 The Council as an Employer**

The latest workforce figures highlights that South Cambridgeshire District Council employs 479 people across a wide range of service areas. This figure excludes any casual employees. Below is a breakdown of the workforce in terms of age and sex for November 2011:

Nov-11				
Age Groups	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
16 - 24	2	4	6	1.25%
25 - 29	9	25	34	7.10%
30 - 34	24	31	55	11.48%
35 - 39	43	24	67	13.99%
40 - 44	34	32	66	13.78%
45 - 49	35	27	62	12.94%
50 - 54	30	29	59	12.32%
55 - 59	30	42	72	15.03%
60 - 64	16	33	49	10.23%
65 +	6	3	9	1.88%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Gender Split:</b>	<b>47.81%</b>	<b>52.19%</b>		
<b>Average Age:</b>	<b>45.46</b>			

In February 2012, the Council commenced a data validation exercise for all staff across the range of protected characteristics for equality to improve the monitoring data that it currently holds on Council staff.

### **Flexible Working Policy and Work life Balance**

There are predominantly more female part time employees than male, although there has been an increase in the numbers of male part time workers.

The most recent staff survey conducted in 2009 highlighted that:

- more female than male employees felt that they had achieved the right balance between work and home life; and
- more female than male employees felt that the Council provided fair access to flexible working procedures.

### **Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace**

The 2009 staff survey highlighted that 11% of staff said that they had experienced discrimination whilst working for the Council, 79% said that they had not experienced discrimination and 8% preferred not to say. More female than male employees preferred not to say in respect of this question.

Employee networks are a good mechanism for people to obtain advice, information and support on a range of work-related matters. The Council launched a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) employee network with county partners in February 2011.

## **4.6 The Elected Councillors**

Currently, there are 57 Councillors of the District Council representing 105 settlements and parishes.

The National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010 highlighted the following key points about South Cambridgeshire's Councillors:

- 68 per cent of Councillors were male and 31 per cent were female, which is reflective of the national make-up across England and Wales. The proportion of female Councillors had increased from 28 per cent in 1997, although this proportion is still considerably lower than the adult population (51.2 per cent).
- 98.3 per cent of Councillors were white and 1.7 per cent came from a minority ethnic background in 2010. A higher proportion of the adult population was from an ethnic minority background (11.1 per cent).
- The average Councillor age was 55.7, which was lower than the average age of 60.3 observed over the East of England.
- 25.3 per cent of Councillors were retired, compared to 48.4 per cent of Councillors from the East of England.

## **5. Development of the Single Equality Scheme**

### **5.1 Gathering Data and Using Information**

#### **5.1.1 Collection of Data**

One of the duties that must be carried out by any public sector authority is the gathering of information on the effects of its current policies and practices in employment, those that use its services and also its general performance.

The Council has gathered and will continue to gather this information in the following ways:

- Staff and Councillor surveys
- Customer Satisfaction surveys
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Staff and Councillor Workshops
- External Stakeholder workshops
- Complaints and Compliments forms
- Equality and Diversity Steering Group
- Staff Statistics and Recruitment Monitoring Forms

#### **5.1.2 Staff Surveys**

A staff survey is generally carried out periodically and asks a range of equality and diversity questions as well as employees' general opinions and experiences about their jobs and feelings towards the Council as an employer.

The latest staff survey was carried out in September/October 2009 and an extract from the draft report states:

"The picture at SCDC as an equal opportunities employer is another strong positive. Seven in ten (70%) employees feel that they are treated with fairness and respect and around three quarters (73%) think that the Council is an equal opportunities employer. The Ipsos MORI Local Authority norms are 59% and 68% respectively on these measures".

#### **5.1.3 Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

Most services within the Council carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys. However, not all services are analysing the data they collect any results are actioned upon accordingly.

### **5.2 Consultation and Engagement**

The Council recognises the importance of consultation in the development and implementation of its Single Equality Scheme. Involvement and consultation helps to give everyone, including minority groups, an opportunity to provide input about the provision of services.

The Single Equality Scheme has been subject to widespread consultation with Council staff, Councillors, local residents, community groups, partner organisations, parish councils and other associations between 1 April 2011 and 24 June 2011. This helped us gather a wide range of views on whether the draft Scheme represented an effective approach to delivering Equality over the next 2 – 3 years. Comments received were used to finalise the Scheme for the Council to adopt.



Consultation on the Council's long term vision, aims, approaches and actions that will form the equalities objectives in the next chapter took place between 06 December 2011 and 20 January 2012.

## **5.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)**

### **5.3.1 Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

As part of any effective policy development process, it is important to consider any potential risks to those who will be affected by the policy's aims or by its implementation. As part of the Council's commitment to Equality and Diversity we are carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) on all our new and existing policies and procedures. This helps us to consider any potential risk on different groups.

Carrying out an EQIA at the start of the policy development process allows the policy holders to identify, at every step, what the consequences may be to different groups, and whether a policy should adopt a certain direction/approach/criterion or eligibility requirement or whether there are any opportunities to promote equality.

### **5.3.2 What we Assess**

The Single Equality Duty requires public authorities to check how their policies affect people from different groups and communities in respect of the protected characteristics held by groups or individuals under anti-discrimination and equality legislation. The Council has extended this assessment to include all equality areas and due to the rural nature of the district, now includes 'rurality' as a consideration during the EQIA process. This relates to both existing and proposed policies.

### **5.3.3 Training for Staff**

Through our internal training programme we provide mandatory equalities training for all staff to ensure they understand their role and objectives under the equality duties and wider equality legislation. In addition, line managers also receive a session on Equality Impact Assessments, which covers:

- What they are and why the Council has to do them;
- The benefits of impact assessments;
- The law on equalities and how this relates to impact assessments; and
- The process for carrying out impact assessments.

### **5.3.4 Quality Assurance**

Directors are responsible for reviewing and signing off completed impact assessments relevant to their service areas.

The Council has established an Equality Impact Assessment Quality Assurance Panel. The role of the panel is to:

1. Review and challenge completed impact assessments.
2. Ensure that all Council Officers, when developing/revising policies and practices, give appropriate consideration to how people access the services they provide and the implications of the policies they develop for all groups in the local community.
3. Challenge whether the Council is meeting all the requirements of the Single Equality Duty.

4. Challenge whether the policy/practice is seeking to improve the quality, responsiveness and accessibility of local public services.
5. Help to improve consultation, especially with hard-to-reach groups.
6. Ensure that completed impact assessments are suitable for publication on the Council's website for public inspection.

### **5.3.5 Equality Monitoring**

In line with legislation, guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall, ACAS and Employers Organisations, South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to ensuring that it is operating fairly and equitably in both Service Delivery and Employment.

The Council's Corporate Equality Commitment and Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009 - 2012, by themselves, will not bring about equality – the Council must have a system for checking whether their policies are being carried out and whether they are working.

The Council monitors the diversity of its workforce and a data validation exercise for all staff has commenced recently to improve the monitoring data that we currently hold on Council staff. Work is continuing to improve systems across the Council for monitoring the diversity of its customers and service users.

### **5.3.6 Why Gather Information on Equality?**

In policy development equality monitoring can help us to understand:

- whether the policy is likely to have the intended effect;
- how proposed policies might affect particular groups; and
- how we can amend policies to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

In service delivery, equality monitoring can help us to understand:

- the needs of service users;
- which groups are using our services;
- which groups are not using our services;
- how to reach under-represented groups;
- how satisfied different groups are with our services;
- differences in service outcomes; and
- how to use our resources better.

### **5.3.7 Publication of our Equality Impact Assessments**

The Council is committed to publishing the results of our Equality Impact Assessments. These are available on the Council's website at or can also be made available on request:

<http://www.scams.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/Equality/equalityimpactassessments.htm>.

## **5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **5.4.1 Complaints and Compliments**

Complaints are monitored to make sure that there are no complaints based on disability discrimination. If inequality issues are picked up through the monitoring of complaints forms these issues will inform the Scheme and subsequent action planning, with a view to reducing and eliminating the need for complaints on the grounds of inequality.

Monitoring Compliments forms may provide valuable feedback on progress and actions taken to eliminate disability inequality or disability discrimination. These findings will inform the Scheme's review process.

#### **5.4.2 Equality Framework for Local Government**

In June 2009, the Council achieved level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The standard has subsequently been replaced by the Equality Framework for Local Government, which has three tiers of accreditation: Developing, Achieving & Excellent. South Cambridgeshire District Council migrated to the Developing tier of accreditation in September 2009.

In October 2010, the Council was subject to a diversity peer challenge by Local Government Improvement and Development. The Council successfully demonstrated that it has met the criteria for the Achieving level of the framework.

The Equality Framework assesses five performance areas:

- Knowing your community and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The peer report stated that "South Cambridgeshire District Council has demonstrated excellent engagement with residents and customers and shown that it can and will respond to needs. It has a good combination of leadership, effective policies and processes and robust engagement with some parts of the voluntary sector. This has resulted in many good examples of responsive services to meet the needs of its diverse communities."

"The council has shown a strong ethos of collaborative working with various partners and is making place shaping a reality. Equality and diversity is well-embedded however further work needs to be done to make stronger links with strategic and service planning."

The Council's Executive Management Team will be determining future priorities, including whether to actively pursue 'Excellence' on the Equalities Framework for Local Government during 2013.

#### **5.5 Enforcement of the Single Equality Duty**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) will actively enforce the duty and the extent to which the Council has complied with the duty is likely to be assessed on the following criteria:

**Information:** Do we have the information, which allows us to understand the impact of our work on people with protected characteristics?

**Consultation:** Have relevant people inside and outside of the Council been involved in appropriate ways, in providing information and identifying equality priorities?

**Transparency:** Has information about the Single Equality Scheme been widely available through appropriate channels and in a variety of formats?

**Proportionality:** Has the Council put its effort and resources where they will have most impact on equality?

**Effectiveness:** Has action been taken and has it delivered the required outcomes, leading to less discrimination and greater equality?

## 6. Our Priorities

### 6.1 Equality Objectives for 2012 – 2015

South Cambridgeshire District Council has set three equality objectives that it will be focussing on during this three-year scheme.

**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.*

### 6.2 What actions do we need to take forward to meet our Equality Objectives?

*Please note that corresponding Council Actions from the Corporate Plan are shown in brackets, e.g. (A2).*

#### 6.2.1 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.

- Invest in employees and Members by carrying out actions in the Organisational and Member Development Strategies (A2).
- Implement a streamlined, integrated and accessible grants process to support localism (A5).
- Develop and promote self-service through the implementation of the new interactive website and customer contact arrangements (A7).
- Ensure residents are better informed about the Council and its services (A8).

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

- Work with partners to improve digital infrastructure (B1).
- Develop a strategy to reduce barriers to employment, thus reducing the impacts of benefits reform (B3).
- Work to deliver a range of homes that are affordable to all and where people want to live that will support economic growth and economic activity (B8).

### **6.2.3 Foster good relations by promoting greater awareness and understanding between our communities.**

- Promote the benefits of black-bin waste minimisation and maximising the use of enhanced recycling facilities by households and businesses to reduce the environmental impact of our waste (C2).
- Develop solutions to deliver co-ordinated community transport (C3).
- Work with older people to improve their independence and quality of life (C4).
- Work together with our Local Health Partnerships, GPs and communities to protect and improve public health needs and reduce and prevent future health problems (C5).
- Develop a sustainable process to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (C6).
- Ensure benefits reform is implemented as smoothly and as effectively as possible (C7).
- Work to ensure the provision of a sustainable housing service for the Council's sheltered housing residents (C9).
- Ensure the effective delivery of the Children and Young People's plan and the development of the Youth Council (C10).
- Work with Parish Councils and Police to implement new local policing arrangements, which improve community safety (C13).

## **6.3 Our Commitments in support of the Equalities Objectives**

### **6.3.1 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.**

- Continue to conduct targeted research with Council tenants, staff and service users to ensure that the Council delivers the right actions and improved outcomes for people who represent the protected characteristics.
- Continue to improve the corporate Equalities Monitoring system to ensure that equalities is included (where appropriate) in customer service questionnaires and service user surveys for monitoring and analysis purposes.
- Continue to deliver staff equalities training and Members briefings on equalities.

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

- Continue to engage in relevant partnerships to share good practice in addressing equality related issues across the district, county and region.

### **6.2.3 Foster good relations by promoting greater awareness and understanding between our communities.**

- Continue to ensure that all Council publications challenge stereotypes and portray a diverse population that takes into account all of the protected characteristics.
- Continue to support and organise events that promote and celebrate equalities, such as LGBT History Month, International Women's Day, International Day for Older People, Black History Month, Disability History Month etc.

## **7. Responsibility and Accountability**

The Council's Chief Executive has overall responsibility for making sure that we carry out the actions in the Single Equality Scheme. Actions will be allocated to relevant Managers and Officers who are responsible for carrying these out and reporting on progress.

This Single Equality Scheme will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to help ensure compliance with Government guidance and legislation and incorporate emerging good practice.

### **7.1 Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Equality and Diversity**

There will be quarterly reports to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for equality and diversity on progress against the delivery of the scheme and its equality objectives. An annual review of the strategy will also be considered by the Portfolio Holder to ensure that the objectives are still relevant and are being met.

### **7.2 The Executive Management Team (EMT)**

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Executive Management Team supports the development and implementation of policies and practices to enable us to meet our statutory obligations and achieve its commitment to equality and diversity given in the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy.

The Executive Management Team will consider quarterly reports on progress with work plans, identifying areas for action and improvement.