



Equality Scheme

2015 – 2020

(2015 – 2017)

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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 – *Engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money* – and our Values of *Working Together and Integrity*.

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.

This 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 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

Website: www.scambs.gov.uk

Or write to us at:

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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.
 - ✓ 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.
 - ✓ The Council's objectives that it will be focussing on during this three-year scheme are detailed in chapter 6.
 - ✓ The Council has published a document entitled "[Annual Equality Report 2014,](#)" which details progress against the Council's objectives. This document

can be downloaded from our website or is available on request using the contact details in chapter 2.

South Cambridgeshire District Council believes that having an 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 an 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 Equality Scheme is to:

- Find out what barriers are faced by people and take steps to remove them.
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- 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.
- Work in partnership with other organisations and partners to prevent ignorance and prejudice in the wider community.
- Set our commitments that go beyond our statutory duties.
- 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 annually to ensure continued alignment with the Corporate Plan.

4. The South Cambridgeshire Context

4.1 Our Vision, Aims and Objectives

In February 2015, the Council reaffirmed 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.

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

1. **ENGAGEMENT:** Engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.
2. **PARTNERSHIPS:** Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation.
3. **WELLBEING:** Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents.

Each Council aim is supported by a number of objectives. 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:

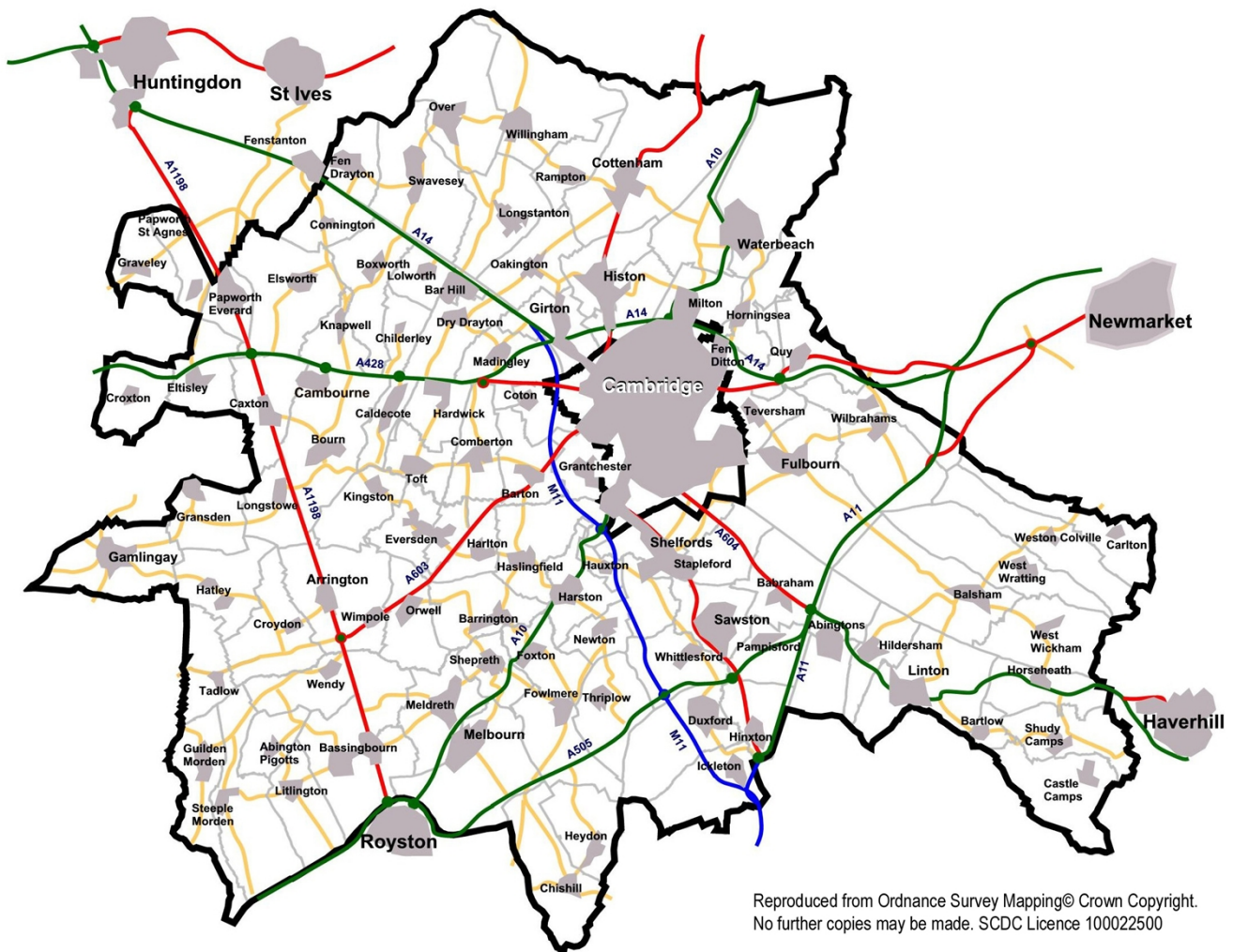
1. Working together
2. Integrity
3. Dynamism
4. Innovation

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. Cambourne is currently the largest village in the district with approximately 9,600 people, Sawston is the second largest village with approximately 7,180 people and Cottenham is the third largest village with approximately 6,070 people.¹ Cambourne, Sawston and Cottenham are currently ranked 12th, 15th and 18th respectively of the largest settlements in Cambridgeshire. However, future development will be focussed around the fringes of Cambridge and in a new town (Northstowe).

¹ ONS mid-year population estimates, 2013

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.



South Cambridgeshire is a rural district with a population of 151,400² residents. This population is expected to increase faster than the national average and by 2026, the population is expected to increase by 16.6% to 176,500 residents.³

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.

² ONS Mid-Year 2013

³ County Council estimates, November 2012

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.

Age Structure

South Cambridgeshire has an ageing population. In 2012 nearly 55% of the population was younger than 45; in 2031 that proportion is expected to drop to nearly 53%. The highest growth is expected to occur in the 65+ age group, from 17.48% in 2012 to 22.12% in 2031. The biggest decline is expected to occur in the 45-64 age group, from 27.13% in 2013 to 24.57% in 2031.⁴

South Cambridgeshire has the county's highest proportion of 1-15 year olds and the lowest proportion of 16-24 year olds. It is the second highest for people aged 40-64 and third highest for people aged 25-39 and people aged over 65.

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.

People with a Disability

According to the Census in 2011, 13.9% of the South Cambridgeshire population declared that they have a disability, whereby day-to-day activities are limited a little or a lot. The percentage of people with a disability has decreased from 14.7% in the 2001 Census.

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.

People with Dementia

The population of Cambridgeshire will age substantially by 2026: the number of people aged over 90 years is forecast to more than double, and the number of people in their 80s to rise by more than 50%. This will lead to steep rises in the number of older people with dementia.

The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, a physical disease in which protein 'plaques' and 'tangles' develop in the structure of the brain, leading to the death of brain cells.

The table below shows the number of older people in Cambridgeshire expected to have dementia. This assumes that current prevalence rates will not change in future years and applies the current rate to future population projections. The estimate for South Cambridgeshire for 2012 is 1,842, and this is expected to rise to 3,104 by 2026 – a rise of over 40%. An increase of this size over a short period is likely to put severe strain on existing services.

	2012	2016	2021	2026
Cambridgeshire				
Number	7,442	8,433	10,173	12,182
Variance 2012		+992	+2,731	+4,740

⁴ ONS Mid-Year 2013

Cambridge City				
Number	1,249	1,329	1,484	1,675
Variance 2012		+80	+235	+426
East Cambridgeshire				
Number	1,055	1,222	1,473	1,759
Variance 2012		+168	+418	+705
Fenland				
Number	1,401	1,591	1,890	2,242
Variance 2012		+190	+489	+841
Huntingdonshire				
Number	1,895	2,195	2,762	3,401
Variance 2012		+300	+867	+1,506
South Cambridgeshire				
Number	1,842	2,096	2,564	3,104
Variance 2012		+255	+722	+1,262

Source: CFAS II (2013) prevalence estimates applied to CCC Research & Performance Team population forecasts (2012 based)

Deprivation

South Cambridgeshire is a very affluent area and is in the least deprived 5% of local authorities based on the Indices of Deprivation (IND) annual scores; however the district exhibits a pattern of scattered deprivation in some of its rural wards. Sawston ward contains three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the district's most deprived 20% based on the IND, and Histon & Impington and Fulbourn wards have two each. The most deprived LSOA overall is in Histon & Impington ward, which is on the Cambridge fringe and close to areas of deprivation with the City.

Overall, South Cambridgeshire is relatively far less deprived than other districts in Cambridgeshire. The most deprived LSOA, in Histon & Impington ward, is ranked near the upper boundary of the second quintile nationally, but all other district LSOAs lie within the least deprived 50% nationally.

Together for Families

The multi-agency Together for Families (TFF) partnership is a national initiative to change how public services intervene and help families with multiple problems. The programme is delivered by local authorities on a payment-by-results basis. Families are eligible if they meet 3 out of 4 criteria based on:

- crime and anti-social behaviour;
- education and truancy;
- worklessness; and
- a fourth criterion at the discretion of the relevant local authority.

At the end of November 2014, over 1,000 TFF families had been identified across Cambridgeshire and of those 1,000 TFF families, 544 families have been turned around for the better. Nationally, there were 117,910 taking part in the scheme for the same period.

The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Community

The 2011 Census data shows that in South Cambridgeshire 87.3% of the population were White British and a further 6% declared themselves as White Irish, White Gypsy/Irish Traveller and White Other. In the ten years since the previous Census, the White British population has decreased by 5.9% (previously 93.2%).

6.8% of the population are from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community and the Asian or Asian British: Indian population are the largest BAME group in the district at 1.5% of the overall population. The BAME population has increased by 3.9% from 2.9% in 2001.

Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers were identified separately for the first time in the 2011 Census. There are some doubts that the percentage of 0.3% identified by the Census may not give a true reflection of the actual Gypsy and Traveller community in the district, which was previously estimated to be 1.0% by the Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment.

There are a number of key issues, which directly affect the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Mortality:

- Life expectancy: Gypsy and Traveller women live 12 years less than women in the general population and men live 10 years less.
- Nationally 17% of Gypsy and Traveller mothers have experienced the death of a child compared to less than 1% of the wider population.

Mental health:

- Gypsies and Travellers are nearly three times more likely to suffer from anxiety than average and just over twice as likely to be depressed. Women are twice as likely to experience mental health problems as men.

Older people:

- The CSTNA identified that a few elderly Gypsies and Travellers are extremely isolated as they do not have relatives on the same site and were dependent on other site residents for their needs.
- An Age Concern report exploring the issues for older Gypsies and Travellers identified the potential severe social exclusion and vulnerability that older Gypsies and Travellers may face including barriers in accessing health and social care services.

Communications:

- Poor levels of literacy in the Gypsy and Traveller population can make it difficult to navigate the health system and may also present problems with inappropriate usage of prescription drugs. People with poor literacy skills may also feel embarrassed about having to seek help with reading.
- The lack of a postal address may mean that appointment letters are never received leading to missing appointments and treatment.
- This may also present problems with reading communications such as hospital appointments/results or public health information.

Health:

- Men from the Gypsy and Traveller community do not discuss personal issues with the women in their family network and will not access health services until the problem is severe. They do not relate to female Health Professionals so the Traveller Health Team is at a disadvantage in that the Lead Nurse is a female and in her experience most of her contact has been with women about their own health issues.
- It is widely reported that women's health issues are never discussed in front of men, even if it is their husband.

Gender & Households

The gender split in the district is broadly similar to the national average with 50.3% of the total population being female and 49.7% being male.

All people	151,400
Males	74,700
Females	76,700
Total Household	59,960

Table 1 Population & Households. Source: Population – ONS Mid-year Population Estimates 2013.

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. Nationally, life expectancy for new-born baby boys is highest in South Cambridgeshire (83 years). The average life expectancy for a woman in South Cambridgeshire is 85.9 years. The national average for a man is 79.3 years and for a woman is 83.04 years.

	South Cambs	England & Wales
Life expectancy at birth (years)		
Males	83	79.4
Females	85.9	83.1
At age 65		
Males	20.6	18.7
Females	23.2	21.1

Table 2 Life Expectancy. Source: ONS, Life Expectancy at birth and at Age 65 in the UK, 2011-13

Religion or Belief

Christianity is the largest stated religion in South Cambridgeshire at 58.8%, although this is down by 13.2% from the last Census in 2001. The biggest non-Christian religion is Islam, which comprises 0.98% of the population.

RELIGION	Number	% of total SCDC
Christian	87,463	58.8%
Buddhist	700	0.47%
Hindu	1,123	0.75%
Jewish	362	0.24%
Muslim	1,464	0.98%
Sikh	186	0.13%
Other religion	568	0.38%
No religion	44,741	30.08%
No religion stated	12,148	7.46%

Table 3 Religion or Belief. Source: ONS, 2011 Census

Also of interest, is the fact that over 30% of all residents claim to have 'no religion' (a further 7.46% did not state any religion or faith).

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.

Transgender and Transsexual Community

According to the Terence Higgins Trust when people are described as transgender this suggests someone who feels that some aspect of the sex and gender they were born with does not fit who they feel they really are. When people are described as transsexual this is usually used to describe a person who feels that they were born the wrong sex and who identifies with and would like to be accepted as a member of the opposite sex. Many transsexuals want to change physically and do undergo sexual reassignment to change their bodies so that they are the sex they feel is right for them.

No local data is available on the transgender and transsexual community in South Cambridgeshire. The Gender Trust highlights that the prevalence of transsexualism varies 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.

4.4 The Council as a Service Provider

South Cambridgeshire District Council provides a wealth of services to its residents and thousands of businesses across more than 100 villages, including:

Environmental services:

- Collecting waste and recycling from 63,000 households
- Cleaning streets, dealing with abandoned cars and clearing and investigating fly tipping
- Making sure food premises are clean and safe and making this information available to you
- Advising on and enforcing health and safety at work
- Dealing with pollution
- Licensing taxis, public entertainment and the sale of alcohol

Housing services:

- Increasing the supply of affordable homes through our own building programme and by working with housing associations
- Managing more than 5000 homes
- Providing housing advice and support for homeless people

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 and supporting businesses
- Planning for major developments
- Promoting local tourism
- Supporting sports development and promoting healthy living
- Working towards a sustainable South Cambridgeshire

Working with communities, partners and customers:

- Promoting community safety
- Providing customer and voluntary sector grants
- Making sure all our customers can access services equally in the best way for them
- Administering local democracy including elections

Corporate services:

- Increasing customer access and developing smarter ways of working through technology and partnerships
- Providing support for those who need support with Housing and Council Tax
- Collecting Council Tax and Business rates
- Providing support services such as accountancy and legal

4.5 The Council as an Employer

The information in this section is a summary of the document entitled "[Equality in Employment – July 2013](#)" which can be downloaded from our website by clicking on the link or is available on request using the contact details in chapter 2.

Please note that due to a technical issue, it is not possible at the current time to publish up-to-date staffing information. It is hoped that during the course of 2015, the Council will be in a position to publish updated workforce profile information following a full staff validation exercise.

Headline figures taken from the report can be found below:

- 89.36% of staff declared themselves as White British, White Irish or White Other. 1.91% of all staff declared themselves to be Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME).
- 4.89% of all staff declared that they have a disability.
- 49.36% of the Council's staff are female and 50.64% are male.
- The highest percentage of Council staff was in the 45-54 age group, although there have been increases in the 18 and under and 19-24 age groups.
- The Council has an extensive suite of family friendly policies in place. In recent years, this has led to a marked increase in the number of male staff requesting to work part time or seeking changes to their working patterns such as home working, job-sharing, shift working, staggered hours, term-time working, annualised hours and compressed hours. 21.70% of the Council's workforce work part-time hours (3.62% male and 18.09% female).
- 48.87% of the workforce identify as Christian, followed by 1.49% other religion or belief and 0.85% Buddhist. 21.06% of staff declared that they have no religion or belief.
- Three-quarters (75.11%) of staff declare their sexual orientation as heterosexual and 1.49% declare themselves as Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual.

4.6 The Elected Councillors

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

There are currently 42 (73.7%) male and 15 (26.3%) female Councillors. The National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013 highlighted the following key points about Councillors in the Eastern Region:

- 70.3% of Councillors were male and 29.9% were female, which is reflective of the national make-up across England and Wales. These proportions have changed slightly from the 2010 Census (68% male and 31% female).
- 97.3% of Councillors were White and 2.7% were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) group. These proportions are slightly better than the 2010 Census (98.3% White and 1.71% BAME).
- The average Councillor age was 60.6, which was just slightly above the national average of 60.2. The average Councillor age has increased significantly from the 2010 Census, where the average was 55.7.
- 11.6% of Councillors had a long term illness, health problem or disability and was better than the national percentage of 13.21%.
- 29.9% of Councillors had at least one caring responsibility, which was the highest proportion of all the national regions. Nationally, a greater proportion of female Councillors had caring responsibilities (35.11%) compared with males (24.6%), and a greater proportion of Councillors from BAME backgrounds had caring responsibilities (38.6%) compared with those Councillors who were White (27.5%).

5. Development of the 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.

A programme of staff surveys is underway and will continue during 2015/16.

5.2 Consultation and Engagement

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

Extensive consultation will take place with Council staff, Councillors, local residents, community groups, partner organisations, parish councils and other associations during March and April 2015 on this new scheme as the Council further develops its approach to delivering Equality over the next 5 years.

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 equalities training for all staff to ensure they understand their role and objectives under the equality duties and wider equality legislation. In addition, there will be a series of sessions held during 2015/2016 on Equality Impact Assessments, which will cover:

- 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 with the support of the Equality and Diversity Officer.

5.3.5 Equality Monitoring

In line with legislation, guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall, Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (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 monitors the diversity of its workforce and a data validation exercise for all staff will take place during 2015 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 publishes the results of our Equality Impact Assessments. These are available on the Council's website (via the link below) or can also be made available on request:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/equality-impact-assessments>

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.4.1 Complaints and Compliments

Complaints are monitored for equality issues. If inequality issues are picked up through the monitoring of complaints forms these issues are investigated and outcomes are used to inform the Scheme and subsequent action planning, with a view to eliminating the need for complaints on similar grounds.

Monitoring Compliments forms may provide valuable feedback on progress and actions taken to eliminate inequality or 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 reached the Developing tier of accreditation in September 2009.

In October 2010, the Council was subject to a diversity peer challenge by the Local Government Association (LGA). The Council successfully demonstrated that it met the criteria for the Achieving level of the framework.

The Equality Framework assessed five performance areas:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed 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.”

During 2013/14, the Council conducted a review of its position on the Equality Framework for Local Government. 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. The Council has used and will continue to use the Equality Framework for Local Government as the benchmarking tool to assess our equalities performance.

6. Equality Objectives

6.1 Equality Objectives for 2015 – 2020

South Cambridgeshire District Council has set three equality objectives, which are aligned to the aims of the Corporate Plan.

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 ENGAGEMENT: Engage with residents, parishes and businesses 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 PARTNERSHIPS: Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation.

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

This supports Council Aim 3 WELLBEING: Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents.

6.2 Delivering Equality Objectives through the Corporate Plan

Please note that corresponding Council Objectives from the Corporate Plan are shown in brackets, e.g. (1).

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.

- Develop the property company pilot scheme into full business plans to deliver a mix of high quality housing and generate income (1)
- Improve efficiency and value for money within a viable financial strategy (2)
- Make the district an even more attractive place to do business (3)
- Work with tenants, Parish Councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages (4)

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

- Build new Council homes to provide affordable accommodation to meet the needs of local communities and provide and refurbish Gypsy and Traveller sites (5)
- Ensure best use of Council assets and benefit from opportunities to achieve efficiencies from partnership working (6)
- Move to a commercial approach to service delivery (7)
- Work with RECAP waste partners to reduce costs, carbon impact and waste sent to landfill (8)

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

- Work with GPs and partners to link Health Services and to improve the health of our communities (9)
- Ensure impacts of welfare reform are managed smoothly and effectively (10)
- Establish successful and sustainable New Communities with housing and employment at Northstowe and the major growth sites, served by an improved A14 and A428 (11)
- Increase the range and supply of temporary accommodation to help minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households (12)

6.3 Our Commitments for 2015 – 2017

6.3.1 People with Dementia

The population of Cambridgeshire will age substantially by 2026: the number of people aged over 90 years is forecast to more than double, and the number of people in their 80s to rise by more than 50%. This will lead to steep rises in the number of older people with dementia.

It is estimated that in South Cambridgeshire the number of people developing dementia is expected to rise to 3,104 in 2026 from 1,842 in 2012 – a rise of over 40%. An increase of this size over a short period is likely to put a severe strain on existing services.

Commitment: The Council will explore the issues affecting people with dementia and their carers in terms of access to services. In addition, the Council will aim to be a dementia-friendly organisation by supporting the Dementia Friends initiative and holding awareness sessions for staff and partners to learn more about dementia and the effects it has on sufferers and their carers.

6.3.2 Mental Health in our New Communities

Evidence of people developing mental health vulnerabilities experienced by moving to a new settlement, has been available since the 1930s. This is also known as ‘new town blues’ and the evidence suggests that there is a strong link between mental ill health and a lack of social ties and community infrastructure in a new environment.

For South Cambridgeshire, early signs of ‘new town blues’ was evident with the development of Cambourne and more recently Orchard Park. The Council is keen to ensure that the new town of Northstowe and other new developments do not replicate the issue of ‘new town blues.’

Commitment: The Council will work with partners to help address the issue of ‘new town blues’ in our new communities. In addition, the Council will train staff in Mental Health First Aid to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing or experiencing mental health difficulties.

6.3.3 The Gypsy and Traveller Community

There are a number of key issues, which directly affect the Gypsy and Traveller community, specifically:

- Lower life expectancy rates with Gypsy and Traveller women live 12 years less than women in the general population and men live 10 years less.
- Nearly three times more likely to suffer from anxiety than average and just over twice as likely to be depressed. Women are twice as likely to experience mental health problems as men.
- Elderly Gypsies and Travellers can feel extremely isolated with the potential for severe social exclusion.
- Poor levels of literacy in the Gypsy and Traveller population can make it difficult to navigate the health system.
- Men from the Gypsy and Traveller community do not discuss personal issues with the women in their family network and will not access health services until the problem is severe.

Commitment: The Council will improve access to services and the responsiveness of services and ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated into existing policies and services. In addition, the Council will recruit two new Officers to support the Gypsy and Traveller community in the district.

These commitments will be delivered within existing resources and in conjunction with existing initiatives and action plans wherever possible.
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7. Responsibility and Accountability

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

This 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 reports on progress with work plans, identifying areas for action and improvement.