



City of Ely Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Council's vision is to build a community in which all can take part and all can take pride. This vision can only be realised through a true commitment by the Council and Ely residents to promote diversity and ensure we recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality.

This Council passed an Inclusion motion in 2019, committing the Council to go beyond the concept of equality and diversion to ensure that the Council seeks to include all people of the Parish in its activities and policies.

In recent years, the Council has installed a lift to ensure that the Sessions House is accessible, worked with the local Muslim community to identify burial plots to meet their requirements and worked with Pride Ely to support the annual Pride event. The Council also supports a number of varying Charities through its grant programme.

At a time of continued population growth and increasing diversity, the Parish faces greater financial challenges. In this climate of change it is all the more important to continue to focus on the commitment to equality and inclusion through the design, commissioning and delivery of services, engagement with stakeholders and in its role as an employer. This will help to ensure that service is appropriate and accessible to all sectors of our community.

City of Ely Council aims to create, maintain and promote a community and working environment where everyone has the opportunity to receive quality services regardless of any differences that they may have.

City of Ely Council welcomes and celebrates diversity and the strengths this brings to our communities and workforce. The council aims to provide excellent and efficient local services enabling everyone to achieve their full potential. To do this we must give everyone equal access to services and job opportunities.

Treating everyone the same does not necessarily give people equality of opportunity. Sometimes we need to treat different people in a different way to give them equal access to a service or job.

As the council evolves to become an enabler, facilitating work with others including our communities and stakeholders, it must ensure that the principles of equality, inclusion and community cohesion are embedded throughout the process

Our responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 strengthens the discrimination law and introduces the concept of protected characteristics under legislation regardless of:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage or civil partnership,
- pregnancy or maternity,
- race,
- religion or beliefs,
- sex and
- sexual orientation.

This Strategy is an inclusive one and covers other groups like carers and people who are disadvantaged due to socio economic inequality.

Under the General Duty a public authority must in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the duty as part of the decision-making process. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the public bodies, such as in how they act as employers, in how policies are developed, evaluated and reviewed, how services are designed, delivered and evaluated and how services are commissioned and procured from others.

To advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristics, meet the needs of these people and encourage people to participate in public life where participation is low from people within the protected characteristics.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others. We will treat people fairly wherever they live and make sure they get the services they need.

There are other factors which affect people's lives. Examples of these are income, education and occupation. We will work to deliver the best possible outcomes for all our communities and citizens.

Meeting our responsibilities

As part of meeting our equality responsibilities we make the following commitments.

- We will ensure that everyone understands and implements our legal duty and best practice on equality, inclusivity, diversity and cohesion.

- We will ensure that the ownership and implementation of equality is embedded at all levels from members of the Council and senior management to every employee.
- We will take proactive steps to reduce social, economic and geographical disadvantage or exclusion.
- We will provide appropriate training to all employees and councillors to help us meet our equality duties.
- We will use information and talk to people to identify where inequality exists so that we can plan to tackle it.
- When it will help us to improve our services and to understand how we are meeting our equality duties, we will ask questions about people’s protected characteristics, including age, race, gender, gender identity and disability. We will always make it clear that people do not have to answer these questions and that they will still receive the services they need. We will keep personal data confidential.
- We will consider equality issues when we deliver our services. Our service plans will include any major equality actions that we plan to undertake.
- When we think about changing our services, we will make sure that those making the decision know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. We will collect information about how people might be affected before making a decision. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can’t then we should think carefully about whether we need to make the change to achieve a legitimate aim.
- We have a duty to make reasonable changes to the way we do things so that disabled people can use our services and work for us. We recognise that everyone is different and we will treat people as individuals.
- We will ensure that anyone who provides a service for us treats people fairly. We will make sure this is part of our procurement process and by monitoring their work.
- We will actively engage with the residents of Ely to ensure that the Council reflects the diverse nature of the Parish.
- We will recruit, select, train and promote staff fairly. We will try to ensure that the make-up of our staff matches that of our community. We will have clear systems for staff to complain if they are treated unfairly.
- We will make it easy for customers to complain if something goes wrong and we will respond quickly and efficiently.
- If we find that anyone has broken our equality policy we will investigate and take disciplinary action if appropriate.
- We will monitor our equality actions through our usual reporting systems, on a yearly basis.
- We will publish information each year to show how we are meeting our equality duties.

Approved and adopted

Signed

Chairman of the Council