



**Preparing For Our
Equality Scheme 2019-2023:**

Stakeholder Consultation

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Working Together	4
About the Council	5
Our Statutory Powers and Duties	6
Equality Scheme	7
The Role of an Equality Scheme	7
The Council’s 2019/2023 Equality Scheme	7
Getting Involved	11
Contact Us.....	11

Introduction

Castle Point Borough Council aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people and protect human rights, ensuring that everyone has fair access to the services we provide.

We are in the process of preparing our 2019/2023 equality scheme and want to work closely with those who have an interest in what we do. This will help us to develop a scheme to ensure that our priorities and future work plans meet the needs of those we provide services to and those who provide services on behalf of the Council to our community. We intend to use an open consultation approach for the development of our four year equality scheme and hope that you will contribute to this process. The outcomes from the consultation will be used to inform our thinking and shape our future policies, so your views really do matter.

This discussion guide is designed to provoke and stimulate your thoughts and ideas, provide more information on our process for engaging and consulting, as well as to provide information on our key topics for debate. We would also like to follow up this exercise by inviting those of you who wish to contribute to attend a forum which will help us to pull together the information we receive. If you are interested in getting more involved you will find details on how to do so in this document. We look forward to hearing from you.

Working Together

The Council views equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work. We see this as an on-going process enabling individuals and organisations to influence and shape our work.

In developing our four-year equality scheme, we will proactively engage with stakeholders by undertaking a full consultation process. By consultation we mean ‘involve, seek out, and engage with, other’s views about a matter, with the conscious purpose of being influenced in some way by the nature of the views expressed’. We will support this by hosting an online consultation which you will be able to access through our website:

www.castlepoint.gov.uk

We will try to make this consultation and engagement process as transparent as possible. The responses to the consultation will be made fully available. We will not be collecting personal information, but if you do provide personal information we shall ensure we do not link any comments to an individual and all comments made, at events or online, will be reported without attribution.

Question:

Do you have any suggestions on how the Council can improve contact with its stakeholders and share information more effectively?

About the Council

Castle Point Borough Council comprises two urban areas of Canvey Island and the mainland towns of Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley. Each area has its own distinctively different landscape, built environment and social conditions which present a number of issues and opportunities.

The Borough faces a variety of challenges which reflect the diverse needs of the population. There is an ageing population which is expected to increase by a further 25% by 2013 and at the same time young people under 20 will continue to represent over 20% of the population.

The Borough has a diverse community. There are approximately 7,000 (19%) households where a person with a disability lives. There is a relatively small ethnic population and only 2.8% of the population were born outside the UK. However, these groups add to the diversity and culture and have distinct needs that should be addressed in order that positive relationships between communities can be enhanced.

Castle Point Borough Council needs to ensure that its services are fully accessible, tailored and targeted such that there is no social inequality and all residents are supported appropriately. When commissioning goods, works or services we ensure these contracting opportunities are accessible to all types of business.

Our Statutory Powers and Duties

The Council's statutory duties are to:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Encourage good practice in relation to human rights
- Promote awareness, understanding and protection of human rights

Equality Scheme

As a public body, the Council is subject to legal requirements to advance disability, gender and race equality. We also have to comply with legal duties to tackle discrimination and harassment and to advance equality and good relations in everything we do.

The Role of an Equality Scheme

An equality scheme describes how an organisation will fulfil its moral, social and legal obligations to put equality at the heart of everything it does. An equality scheme puts into place practical steps to:

- Advance equality and human rights in the workplace
- Develop leading employment practices
- Build equality into how services are bought or provided
- Ensure that engagement with all stakeholders is done in a way where equality is a given.

The Council's 2019/2023 Equality Scheme

Our equality scheme is being developed by involving stakeholders and incorporating their recommendations, as well as listening to the views of our colleagues within the organisation.

We have grouped below our priorities for action for the 2019/2023 scheme under the headings of accessibility,

employment, service, and representation, to reflect the areas in which the Council focuses its work:

Accessibility

- Ensuring that our buildings and working practices are accessible to all.
- Ensuring that our website is fully accessible.
- Checking that our services address all equality issues.

Service

- Monitoring the effectiveness of our frontline services.
- Addressing gaps in our knowledge base across all equality groups.
- Training elected members and staff on equality impact assessments and the general equality duties (race, gender and disability).
- Ensuring that contractors providing goods, facilities and services to us, meet our procurement criteria for all equality areas.
- Ensuring that contract opportunities are easily accessible to SMEs including those owned by women, ethnic minority groups as well as those with disabilities
- Establishing monitoring and analysis systems for our staff across all equality aspects.

Representation

- Consulting and involving representative networks covering all equality areas to help inform our future activities.
- We will undertake the process of preparing the Equality Scheme by involving our stakeholders in:
 - Learning the lessons from the completion of equality impact assessments
 - A review of current priorities and any new and emerging areas to be considered.

The four-year equality scheme will be available on the website and will replace the earlier individual equality schemes for disability, gender and race together with issues relating to age, transgender, sexual orientation, religion or belief and human rights.

Specifically, we are seeking views on the following questions:

Questions:

Do you have any comments on the general approach to the four-year equality scheme?

Are there any new and/or emerging priorities within the areas of employment, service delivery, accessibility of contracts and representation that we should include in our equality scheme?

Are there any improvements that the Council can make to ensure equality is embraced within all the services it provides?

Getting Involved

To submit your thoughts and opinions on the matters above, please respond by post or email to:

Castle Point Borough Council
Kiln Road
Benfleet
Essex SS7 1TF

Telephone: 01268 882200

Email:

Website: www.castlepoint.gov.uk

Contact Us

You can find out more or get in touch with us via our website at: **www.castlepoint.gov.uk** or by contacting us on 01268 882200.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language please contact us to discuss your needs. All publications are also available to download and order in a variety of formats from our website.