

Motion to Council

Courts have made it clear that the Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it is considering these motions, even if they are motions without legal effect. There is not a general requirement for an equality impact assessment but regard should be had to the equality duty when drafting and considering motions.

The equality duty requires Council to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The future of Essex Libraries

Moved by Councillor Mackrory and seconded by Councillor Young

'Council notes:

The overwhelming public and political opposition, including from MPs, to the closure or reduction in opening hours of any Essex Library

The total number of signatures on petitions, currently 57,000, which very comfortably exceeds the threshold for debate,

This Council therefore:

calls on the Cabinet to rule out any such closures, and to commit to maintaining all 74 libraries by encouraging their better use as community hubs and to maximise the use of the buildings and sites to generate income for the Library Service.'