

**PRESENT**

*Independent Chair: Andy Yacoub, Diversity Manager, Suffolk County Council*

*Councillors: Adey, Downham, Slatter, Ward*

*Staff Members: Graham Watts, Nacer Dali*

*Public Members: Graham Lewis, Nicky Wrigley*

*Presenting papers: Sigrid Fisher, Strategy Officer (Equalities) (SOE) & Louise Harrington, Head of Human Resources (HoHR), Jon Feasy (JF), Sue Simms (SS) (Housing Officers)*

*In attendance: Antoinette Jackson, Head of Strategy & Partnerships (HoSP), HR Diversity Adviser*

**1 WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER**

The Chair introduced himself and then invited members to introduce themselves to Nicky Wrigley and Nacer Dali, the new members of the Panel.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Gerri Bird, Bridget Keady, Ila Chandavarkar and Norah Al-Ani.

**3 MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes for the meeting held on 16 May 2005 were approved.

Re: Item 7 Exit Interviews: The HoHR stated that no comments had been made at an exit interview regarding discrimination, although these would more likely come to her attention well before that stage.

Holocaust Memorial Day – Norah Al-Ani to report back to the Panel on plans to involving children in the events to mark this Day.

NA-A

Re: 7 Travellers Group:

HoSP to provide Councillor Downham with the list of members on this Group.

HoSP

Re. 8 Disabled Staff Group: it met on 10 November for the first time.

Re. 9: Dedicated training session for Councillors, but only 3 attended.

Re. 10(2): This was held.

**4 DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT**

The HoHR ran through the achievements as set out in the report.

- The Diversity Officer Post had been filled. The results of the **workforce profile** were imminent and the results would be passed on to Panel members. Cllr Slatter asked how the questions had been

phrased. HoHR advised that the Equalities Officer, unions and Stonewall had been consulted. The outcomes would be reviewed and changes made if thought necessary. 65% had been returned. The Chair said that it would be useful to create baseline data for future use. HoHR

- Re 3.1 should read 'mid 2006'

## 5 HOUSING ISSUES – PRESENTATION BY HOUSING NEEDS MANAGER/PRINCIPAL HOUSING NEEDS MANAGER

The Panel had requested a presentation on housing issues, the monitoring of allocation and equalities issues in general.

The Panel noted that the way in which housing was allocated was to change to a system called 'Choice Based Lettings' (CBL). This will allow the Council to look at for example, its current procedures and the current application form for council housing. The work on CBL was currently being developed (due to come in April 2006) and a report back to the Panel could be undertaken next year. **Action** - *The Chair said that it would be helpful if the Panel were made aware of any proposed briefing on CBL near to the time of its launch.*

Jon  
Feasy

Monitoring information of those on the Housing Needs Register from 1995/6 onwards was circulated. The information was taken from the application forms although only 60% completed the relevant section of the form.

**Action** - *The Chair suggested that the data should discount the unknowns, so that it reflected actual returns only. The officers undertook to look at changing this.*

Jon  
Feasy

The Panel noted that in January a questionnaire was being sent to all Council tenants in order to update information held regarding ethnicity, language preferences and vulnerabilities. Contact for information : Catherine Buckle in Community Services tel 01223 457837.

In terms of access to both council information and officers the Panel noted that:

- The interpretation services are used when needed (correspondence and interviews), this would be the case even if one of the applicants in a couple or family had English as their first language, to ensure all had equal access to information
- An officer is employed to work with the Asian community
- Outreach work takes place at Addenbrookes, Cyrennians and Jimmy's Nightshelter
- Home visits were undertaken for those unable to visit a council premises

## 6 EQUALITIES PANEL – TRAINING FEEDBACK AND ACTIONS

Re 3.1 an email feedback form, an email address had been created [equality@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equality@cambridge.gov.uk), work was now being done on how to publicise it, access it.

In reply to a request from Cllr Ward, HoSP to set up a meeting with Leader of the Council and Cllr Ward to discuss the relationship between Equalities Panel and the Council's committees especially Strategy Scrutiny HoSP

Cllrs Adey and Ward discussed whether Area Committees should have an Equalities themed meeting.

Councillors from the Panel who had attended had not found the diversity training to be of use, but accepted that there were different training needs of the Panel and of training generally.

Re 4.1 **Mission Statement** Cllr Slatter suggested some changes which would be emailed to NA-A. The Panel would be emailed the changed wording for comment/approval. NA-A

The Chair reminded the Panel that many of the actions to consider would be re-visited at the next training session in February 2006.

## **12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be agreed by email. Account needs to be taken of when the Annual Council meeting is (25 May) and that the Councillor membership of the Panel may change on that day. SF

NB DATE OF NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006, 4-6pm.  
Venue tbc.