

EQUALITIES PANEL

18 November 2013

4.05 - 6.05 pm

Present:**Chair:** Antoinette Jackson

Public Members: Graham Lewis

Elected Members: Councillor Brown, Bick and Johnson.

Staff Members: Ari Henry, Karen Lee and Joe Obe

Officers:

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson,

Community Cohesion & Racial Harassment Officer: Tulat Raja,

Head of City Homes: Robert Hollingsworth,

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff,

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

Guest Speakers:

Tony Lindsey (CHESS)

Kevin Vanterpool (Police)

Derek Burnett (CPS)

Alison Smith (Families Together - Cambridgeshire County Council)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**Change to Agenda Order**

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used her discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the agenda.

13/34/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the panel members, speakers and members of the public to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Bird, Norah Al-Ani, Nicky Wrigley and Jackie Hanson.

13/35/EP Declarations of Interest

Graham Lewis declared an interest in agenda item 5 as he is employed by Victim Support.

13/36/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 17h June 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

13/37/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

13/38/EP Hate Crime

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager provided the Panel with an overview of the discussions that had taken place at the Diversity Forum earlier in the day. The Forum had identified four key areas that they wanted the panel to consider.

1. An awareness that the most pressing issue was underreporting of hate crime; progress in this area would ultimately result in an increase in reported crimes
2. Reporting of hate crimes could be increased by reassuring victims that action will be taken in response and through promoting successful outcomes.
3. The need for a partnership approach, at a strategic level, to coordinate action on hate crime.
4. The need for an appropriate and sensitive response when hate crimes are reported and recognition of the need for support after the event. An inappropriate response could make the situation worse for victims, who may live close to the perpetrators.

Derek Burnett stated that he works for the Crown Prosecution Service across four counties in the Eastern Region; Cambridgeshire was the only county without a strategic partnership arrangement in place to address hate crimes. Tony Lindsey stated that the Cambridgeshire Human Rights and Equality Support Service would welcome a partnership approach. However, if this was established, it would need to generate actions and feedback progress to community groups.

The Panel made the following comments.

- i. It was suggested that the ethnic mix in local community was changing and this could lead to tensions. It could be a good time to consider a new partnership.
- ii. Prosecutions for hate crimes both locally and nationally, achieved high success rates. However, reporting levels remained low.
- iii. If partnerships are in place and are working in other areas, this should be investigated locally, drawing on lessons learnt elsewhere.
- iv. In order to establish a regional partnership, the region must first be defined.
- v. The panel agreed that main aim should be to create a city where hate crime does not happen.
- vi. In order to encourage reporting, those responding to reports need to be sensitive and supportive of victim's needs.
- vii. Legislation was in place to address hate crime but public attitudes and awareness were lagging behind.

The Community Cohesion and Racial Harassment Officer gave an overview of how key officers within the council work together, and with external agencies, to share knowledge and information regarding hate crimes. He explained that new database called, Empowering Communities Inclusion and Neighbourhood Management System (E-CINS), was used to share information.

The Chair summed up the key points to be taken forward, to identify gaps in current practice in particular, as follows:

- i. To investigate the need for a new strategic partnership beginning with and a review of what is already in place and to agree at what level this partnership would be most effective.
- ii. To identify specific groups where under reporting was thought to be an issue and to direct partnership work towards those groups.
- iii. To investigate how victims are treated and to share good practice.
- iv. To learn from existing best practice and to recognise the benefits of shared resources.

13/39/EP High Demand Families

The Panel received a presentation from Alison Smith of Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the work of the 'Together for Families' project.

In response to Panel Members questions Alison Smith confirmed the following:

- i. The community budget approach was welcomed as previous approaches had seen the cost of supporting a family fall on one agency while the benefits were shared.
- ii. Families were supported for an average of 12 to 18 months, with follow up arrangements to ensure long term stability.
- iii. The family as a unit is not defined and the team were able to work with absent fathers and extended families as well as those living in the family home.
- iv. The initial selection criteria was agreed to be quite narrow and it was hoped that this could be widened out in future, perhaps to include families with pre-school age children.
- v. The service seeks to empower families and not simply to prop them up.
- vi. The project uses a co-ordinated approach with rewards and sanctions to encourage engagement. It represents a culture change and was on a payment by results basis.
- vii. As a response to funding cuts, a decision had been taken to engage in more rather than less partnership work.
- viii. Data sharing and confidentiality issues across agencies could be challenging but those challenges were not insurmountable.

The Panel suggested that lessons from the project could be explored further. The Cambridge Local Health Partnership had considered a similar approach recently for homeless individuals.

13/40/EP Refining the Equalities Panel approach

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager lead a discussion on way that the Panel currently operates and whether there were any opportunities to enhance the approach.

Panel Members made the following comments:

- i. Recruitment of panel members had historically relied on existing community networks.
- ii. Recent attempts to recruit an independent member using the 'Jobsincams' website and advertisements in local newspapers had been unsuccessful.
- iii. Headhunting someone with the right skills was suggested.
- iv. Creating more links to the Diversity Forum was welcomed and a request for action and feedback on what had been achieved was suggested.

- v. The relationship of the Forum to the Panel was agreed to be helpful.
- vi. Retaining the two events on the same day was agreed to make the best use of external speakers.
- vii. Encouraging the staff equalities groups to feed into the Panel was suggested.

The Chair summed up the key points to be taken forward as follows:

- i. Recruitment of the right people to add value to the Panel.
- ii. Retain six monthly meetings with both the Diversity Forum and The Equalities Panel being held on the same day.
- iii. External presentations were welcomed but ways of engaging grass roots groups should also be explored.

13/41/EP Future work Programme of the Equalities Panel

The following items were suggested as areas the Panel would like to consider at future meetings:

- i. Young Peoples Issues:
 - a. The restructure of the Children and Young Peoples Participation Services.
 - b. Romsey Mill
 - c. Centre 33
 - d. Voluntary Sector Youth Work
- ii. Students
 - a. The work of the Student Union
 - b. Student Equality Issues
 - c. Council engagement with both Universities
- iii. Low income groups
 - a. Credit Unions
 - b. Food Banks
 - c. Voluntary Sector Advice Agencies
- iv. Welfare Reform
- v. Traveller Communities
- vi. Learning Disability Groups

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm

CHAIR