

EQUALITIES PANEL

23 June 2014
4.00 - 5.50 pm

Present:

Chair: Antoinette Jackson

Public Members: Graham Lewis, Nicky Wrigley and Orsola Rath Spivack

Elected Members: Councillors Abbott, Austin, Bick, M. Smart and Ratcliffe

Staff Members: Jackie Hanson, Ari Henry and Joe Obe

Officers:

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Community Cohesion & Racial Harassment Officer: Tulat Raja

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff

Committee Manager: Glenn Burgess

Guest Speakers:

Anjelica Finnegan: The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

14/1/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

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

For the benefit of new Panel Members the Chair gave a brief overview of the role of the Panel and how it functioned.

Apologies were received from Norah Al-Ani and Karen Lee.

14/2/EP Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

14/3/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In follow up to the discussion at the last meeting regarding hate crime the Community Cohesion and Racial Harassment Officer confirmed the following:

- i. A Steering Group including police and City Council representatives had been set up to look at how hate crime is investigated and where improvements could be made to the process.
- ii. The 'True Vision' model of third hand reporting was being reinstated. It was proposed that the City Council become a reporting centre for hate crime.

In response to Panel Member questions the Community Cohesion and Racial Harassment Officer and the Strategy Officer confirmed the following:

- i. New research on LBG&T needs in the City would be released in July 2014. This will include some information on hate crime.
- ii. National surveys and data confirm that hate crime is underreported.
- iii. The 'True Vision' model would ensure a more accurate record of hate crime incidents in the City.

Graham Lewis confirmed that the British Crime Survey collected data on the 'experience' of hate crime, and that the figures were higher than the number of instances reported to the police, suggesting that hate crime is under-reported nationally

14/4/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

14/5/EP Impact Of Welfare Reforms On The Voluntary Sector

The Panel received a presentation from Anjelica Finnegan of The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) regarding the impact of welfare reforms on the Voluntary Sector.

In response to Panel Member's questions Anjelica Finnegan confirmed the following:

- i. The call for evidence will remain open until September.

- ii. Interviews and round table discussions would be complete by the end of July.
- iii. Structured interviews would be held with three charities in Cambridgeshire providing front-line services.
- iv. The issue of the 'digital divide' has been raised repeatedly throughout the project. With much of the benefit process moving on-line and libraries closing down, it was becoming increasingly difficult for vulnerable groups.
- v. At the conclusion of the project, events would be held around the country to discuss the findings and formulate policy recommendations for improvements.
- vi. A large number of changes had happened to the benefits system in a very short space of time. This had added to people's anxieties and confusion.
- vii. Recommended the 'Tipping the balance' report to Panel Members:
http://www.community-links.org/uploads/documents/TIPPING_THE_BALANCE.pdf
- viii. The Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) has conducted research on patterns in resilience, funding, and growth of voluntary organisations

14/6/EP Equalities Panel Representation And Recruitment

The Chair explained that the Equalities Panel was established on the principle of equal representation from elected Councillors, staff members and members of the public, with an initial representation of four members from each group.

Due to the range of interest in the Panel, Councillors had this year nominated five members. The Panel were therefore asked their views on recruiting a further staff member and a further member of the public to retain equal representation.

The Panel agreed that one of the founding principles of the Panel was equal representation and therefore asked officers to start the recruitment process for one further public member and one staff member for the Equalities Panel.

The Chair then asked the Panel's views on the requirement in the current Terms of Reference that any applicant must live in the City.

The Panel noted that not all staff members and Councillors lived within the City. It was agreed that a connection to the City and a clear understanding of the issues in the City were therefore more important criteria.

The Chair agreed that the Terms of Reference would be amended to state a requirement to 'work, live, study or volunteer in the City'.

14/7/EP Equality In Employment Report

The Panel received a report from the Head of Human Resources regarding equality in the workforce.

In response to Panel Member's questions the Head of Human Resources confirmed the following:

- i. The aim of the targets were to:
 - measure the workforce against the profile of the City
 - monitor employment trends and identify patterns
 - understand if barriers existed for certain groups
- ii. The report was now published annually, making it easier to identify trends and any changes in the data.
- iii. The majority of recruitment was now done via the web as this was accessible to the widest audience. Paper copies of application forms were however still available.
- iv. Some senior and technical posts were advertised nationally in order to access as wider pool of applicants as possible.
- v. On occasion targeted recruitment was undertaken but generally posts are advertised to as wide an audience as possible.
- vi. Graphs on report pages 27 and 28 illustrated the ethnicity and disability profile of staff by pay band for 2013/14.
- vii. Each job advert includes an equalities strapline and further information on the Council's equal opportunities policy was included with the application pack.

14/8/EP The Single Equalities Scheme Report Update

The Panel received a report from the Strategy and Partnerships Manager regarding the Single Equalities Scheme.

The Panel made the following comments:

- i. Highlighted the range of good work being done across the Council and more widely across the City and emphasised the need for it to be shared and kept 'live'.
- ii. Suggested that the report also include reference to organisations that are grant funded by the Council. In response Jackie Hanson confirmed that grant funding was mapped across the City and a number of committee and annual reports were published. It was suggested that, due to the wealth of data available on grant funding, it would be better to provide 'links' to this information in future Single Equalities Scheme reports.

In response to Panel Member's questions the Strategy and Partnerships Manager and the Chief Executive confirmed the following:

- i. As part of the Bloomberg Foundation's "Big Idea" competition local people were asked to suggest innovative public service ideas. The project selected as the Cambridge entry focused on creating opportunities for disabled and non-disabled residents to take part in integrated sporting activities.
- ii. Each year targeted work was undertaken by the Council to address any gaps identified in the report.
- iii. The report was taken annually to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. As a result of committee feedback in previous years the report had been shortened and the objectives broadened.
- iv. The Council will be developing new Single Equality Scheme for April 2015 onwards. After a 12 week consultation period, the draft Scheme will be taken to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for approval in March 2015. The Equalities Panel will discuss an early draft of the Scheme November 2014 meeting.
- v. A Councillor briefing on mental health issues was held in April 2014 and could be repeated if there was enough interest. A wider equalities briefing for Councillors was being planned for September 2014.
- vi. General equalities training could feature more heavily as part of the new Councillor induction programme.
- vii. The aim was to mainstream equalities issues into everything the City Council did.

14/9/EP Future Work Programme Of The Equalities Panel

The Panel discussed potential areas of interest for future meetings and suggested that the following be added:

- Learning disability issues.

- Vulnerable older people issues.

The following topic was agreed for the November meeting:

Young Peoples issues

- Understanding of the services available.
- Identification of overlaps and gaps.
- Invite service providers and voluntary organisations to contribute - possibly Romsey Mill and Centre 33.

The Panel decided not to call in any of the Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for discussion or review. Panel Members to let the Strategy Officer know if they wish to see copies of particular EqIAs.

14/10/EP Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Equalities Panel would take place on 17 November 2014.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm

CHAIR