

## **EQUALITIES PANEL**

14 June 2010  
3.30 - 5.10 pm

Chair – Toni Ainley

Councillors - Gail Marchant-Daisley and Lucy Walker

Public Members – Graham Lewis, Nicky Wrigley, Bintou Niangane, Norah Al-Ani

Staff Members – Jackie Hanson (Community Development Operations Manager), Bridget Keady (Strategy Officer) and Christine Leonard (Policy and Projects Support Manger)

Officers – Vicki Davidson (Organisational Development Manager), James Goddard (Committee Manager), Anette Grindsted (HR Diversity Adviser), Alison Kemp (Performance Manager), Elaine Midgley (Arts Development Manager), Helen Reed (Housing Strategy Manager), Deborah Simpson (Head of Human Resources) and Trevor Woollams (Head of Strategy & Partnerships)

### **FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **1 Welcome and Introductions**

Introductions took place and the Chair welcomed all those present, particularly new members.

Sigrid Fisher, Miriam Lynn, Paula Rae and Julie Smith have left the Panel.

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Sarah Brown
- Public Member Norah Al-Ani
- Staff Member Nacer Dali (Housing Officer)

Councillors made no declarations of interest.

#### **2 Minutes of 23 November 2009 Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

The Equalities Newsletter has been produced, but circulation details are unclear.

**Action Point: Alison Kemp to clarify.**

The Equalities Action Plan has been updated and published on the City Council website.

The Disability Staff Group would like to report concerns through the Equalities Panel in future. Deborah Simpson attends the Group as a Champion and will raise concerns in future. Hidden disability was raised as an issue, Anette Grindsted is running two workshops concerning this in July 2010.

Lucy Walker requested periodic updates concerning the 60+ group mechanism.

**Action Point: Deborah Simpson to liaise with Anette Grindsted concerning hidden disability training.**

Trevor Woollams has discussed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) with contacts. Bridget Keady asked if statements could be added to the bottom of Council report templates to acknowledge that EqIAs have been undertaken. Trevor Woollams observed there is a generic EqIA reference paragraph on templates already.

**Action Point: Trevor Woollams to review EQIA sign off text on Council report templates.**

A response has been submitted concerning the MOD consultation paper ('The Nation's Commitment to the Armed Forces Community'). No feedback has been received, but Alison Kemp observed similar issues were mentioned in the Coalition document under 'defence issues'.

### **3 Equalities Panel Terms of Reference**

The Panel reviewed terms of reference to discuss, reaffirm and sign off.

**Action Point: Alison Kemp to revise Equalities Panel terms of reference and circulate for comment by Panel.**

The Panel asked for general equalities issues to be circulated to Panel members for comment and sign off in future.

#### **4 Equalities Impact Assessment Programme**

Elaine Midgley gave a verbal update on EqIAs she had undertaken as examples of how they could be undertaken. Example documents were circulated for reference. These covered Cambridge Corn Exchange and Guildhall Halls as venues, plus Arts and Entertainment Section Events.

A team of five undertook each EqIA. The template was adapted to ensure it was user friendly. EqIAs covered:

- Stakeholders
- Evidence/performance data.
- Analysis of performance data such as age, or disability to be considered by venue.
- Identifying solutions to issues identified through analysis of performance data.
- Sourcing/gathering of additional information to overcome issues identified above.
- Development of action plans (short term and post six months):
  - Issues identified.
  - Actions to overcome.
  - Lead officer.
  - Completion date.

EqIAs will be raised to discuss and monitor at quarterly team meetings to ensure they are continuously reviewed and updated. A debrief is held after events to review learning points such as disabled parking.

Vicki Davidson signposted Papworth Trust as a training provider for mental health training as part of disability training.

Trevor Woollams sourced Panel feedback on services to be EqIA reviewed.

**Action Point: Trevor Woollams to circulate potential list of services to be EqIA reviewed for comment by Panel.**

Alison Kemp said the EqIA template would be finalised in summer 2010 once Independent Living Services have undertaken an EqIA and commented on their experience. The final template will be published on the Council website.

## **5 Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers - The City's Approach**

Helen Reed gave a presentation to the Equalities Panel on housing Gypsies and Travellers in Cambridge.

Issues for Gypsies and Travellers:

- Lower life expectancy than the settled community.
- Higher child mortality.
- Higher levels of mental health problems – stress and anxiety.
- Lower educational achievement at all Key Stages.
- Discrimination and harassment.
- Importance of good quality settled accommodation.

Regional targets for Traveller site provision in the City, set through the East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) have now been abolished by the new Coalition Government.

A cross-party Traveller Steering Group is in place to steer the Council's work in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, and will need to agree how to move the work forward. One of the pieces of work being carried out is to help overcome prejudices and knowledge gaps within the community, and a 'myth-busting' leaflet for the Council's website is being developed.

The Conservative Party's Green Paper 'Open Source Planning' published prior to the election, indicated that local authorities should still be responsible for site provision in their areas. Also where appropriate provision has been made, a Conservative Government would strengthen powers for Councils to move on illegal or unauthorised sites/camps. To what extent this is taken forward by the Coalition Government remains to be seen.

Lucy Walker asked how the land search issue was being moved forward. Helen Reed said Council owned housing land had been reviewed but found unsuitable, an initial search of County Council owned land had also been carried out. Since then, officers have been working on some Site Assessment criteria to judge the suitability of pieces of land. Further land searches are

planned once the Site Assessment Guide has been drawn up, although how this moves forward will be an issue for the Traveller Steering Group.

Alison Kemp queried timescales for identifying sites. Helen Reed said this depended on a review of Central Government planning policy, and the results of a review of the Cambridge Sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment which is due to be reviewed in summer 2010. The Council will then need to ascertain where Traveller provision within the City sits within its list of priorities, and whether to seek sites for transit or permanent pitches. Progress will also depend on availability of capital funding; there is no further Central Government funding for Traveller sites during 2010 – 2011 and the funding position post 2011 is yet to be confirmed.

The City Council would aim to work jointly with South Cambs DC on site provision, and will be working with other authorities across the county to understand and meet the wider needs of Travellers.

## **6 Equalities Act Key Summary**

Alison Kemp introduced the report concerning Equalities Act Key Summary.

The Equality Act received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010. The main parts of the Act are due to come into force in October 2010, with full implementation by April 2012.

The Act brings together all the existing strands of equality and discrimination legislation, with the aim of clarifying existing law, extending it to cover some anomalies in existing discrimination law, and creating a stronger set of obligations on public bodies to promote equality.

Alison Kemp said the Conservative Party supported the Act, but information was unavailable on parts and timescales for implementation. The Coalition Government's priority is reducing the budget deficit.

Act key points:

- Enlarges the range of protected characteristics in the previous Act from six to nine.
- Move to focus on equality of opportunity (income, class and access to services) and away from gender, race etc.
- The Act tries to equalise various Equalities Acts through prohibited behaviour.

- There is a specific public sector duty provision, with particular reference on socio-economic duty.

Delegates noted a typographical error in the report circulated at the meeting listing 2010 instead of 2012 re: age protection in workplace, section 5, item 6 report.

Protected characteristics should be put in EqIAs to bring them in line with the Act.

Trevor Woollams observed the City Council has done all it can to facilitate work through the Single Equalities Statement.

The Equality Panel unanimously noted the provisions under the Act and in particular those that will impact on or require action by the City Council and its partner organisations.

## **7 Equality Measures in the Coalition Programme for Government**

Alison Kemp introduced the report concerning Coalition Programme for Equality Measures.

The Coalition Programme for Government was published on 20 May 2010. It sets out commitments across the equalities agenda and will form the basis of work that the Government Equalities Office will now take forward.

Trevor Woollams said that equality issues remain a priority for the Council.

Bintou Niangane queried “using relationships with other countries to push for unequivocal support for gay rights and for UK civil partnerships to be recognised internationally”. Graham Lewis said that other countries do not always treat civil partnerships on a par with marriage. The Act seeks to gain this recognition. Trevor Woollams added the Council will aim to facilitate the intentions of the Act through good practice.

The Equality Panel unanimously noted those aspects of the Coalition Programme that will have implications for the City Council and its partner organisations.

## **8 Human Resources Report / Monitoring Data**

Anette Grindsted updated the Panel concerning an annual update on diversity work and equality monitoring in employment as set out in the confidential report 'Equality in Employment – Annual Progress Report, April 09 – March 10'. This concerned:

- Workforce profile - employee numbers and targets.
- Recruitment and monitoring.
- Training.
- Disciplinary, capability, grievance and redundancy.
- Starters.
- Leavers.
- Pay profile.

Exit questionnaires are available to ascertain reasons for staff leaving, but not all leavers take up the opportunity. The format has been changed to get more specific information than the previous multi-choice format.

The meeting ended at 5.10 pm

**CHAIR**