

**EQUALITIES PANEL**

10 January 2023

4.00 - 6.00 pm

**Chair:** Robert Pollock, Chief Executive**Councillor members:** Cllr Flaubert; Cllr Healy; Cllr Smart; Cllr Porrer; Cllr Payne**Public members:** Orsola Spivack**Officer members:** Ariadne Henry; Lesley-Anne George**Other officers in attendance:** Binnie Pickard; Deborah Simpson, Kate Yerbury; Keryn Jalli

Catherine Meads also attended from The Encompass Network

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****23/1/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received Cllr Thittala and Cllr Smart, public member Raheela Rehman, and staff members Naomi Armstrong and Alistair Wilson.

**23/2/EP Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared.

**23/3/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting of the 5 July 2022 were noted and there were no amendments made.

**23/4/EP Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**23/5/EP Recruitment update on vacant Equalities Panel positions**

Ariadne Henry informed the Panel that a new public member had been approached and hopes to join the Panel's next meeting. Officers had run a short recruitment campaign, contacting local equalities groups with recruitment packs and information to attract new members. This was not successful in getting a new public Panel member. The new Panel member was recommended by Graham Lewis who has previously been a public member for a number of years.

**23/6/EP LGBTQ+ Needs Assessment**

Catherine Meads, Trustee at Encompass Network, provided an overview of findings of a needs assessment undertaken across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough of LGBTQ+ people that Encompass Network undertook. Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council contributed funding for the needs assessment to be undertaken. Catherine shared that the Needs Assessment was started in 2021 and ran for three months, receiving 249 responses. The full report is available on the Encompass Website. <http://encompassnetwork.org.uk/needs-assessment-2022/> The needs assessment covered a wide range of topics including demographics, health and wellbeing, safety and being out, domestic violence and hate crime, issues within the community and use of council and LGBTQ+ services.

The Equalities Panel members were invited to ask questions on the needs assessment. It was noted that it would be helpful to present the needs assessment to the Community Safety Partnership. In response to questions, Catherine shared:

- It is likely that older generations of the LGBTQ+ Community were reluctant to disclose sexuality and gender identity, because they had experienced the criminalisation of homosexuality and the impact of Section 28.
- There were trends between age and mental wellbeing. Younger generations reported higher levels of stress in the needs assessment. At the same time, national statistics indicate that older generations of LGBTQ+ people have higher levels of mental health problems.

The Equalities Panel members felt that there could be a need to explore the link between anxiety and feelings of being uncomfortable in accessing council services. It was thought that this would identify any discrimination or exclusionary practices of local government.

Catherine Meads, Trustee at Encompass Network, to present needs assessment findings to Cambridge Community Safety Forum (Keryn Jalli); and City Council to consider opportunities to share the findings to raise public awareness (Comms Team).

**23/7/EP Cost of Living Council response**

Binnie Pickard, Community Development Officer at Cambridge City Council, presented information on the council's response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Cambridge City Council received funding from central government to provide support. It was thought that some communities of people from protected characteristic groups are more likely to be impacted by the cost of living crisis than others but there is no local data to support this understanding. Support the council is offering includes:

- Warm and welcoming spaces, best success where places are doing this already and with funding can now expand
- Cost of living support pop-ups – the council is focusing, wherever possible, on ensuring these are offered in areas of deprivation. They are running from 3 February onwards. In identifying venues, the council has taken into account that people might not feel comfortable visiting churches if they are not religious or have a religion different to Christianity.
- Access to free clothes for children
- Free hot water bottles
- Information through a cost of living webpage and leaflet
- Access to health food – the council has supported activities of Cambridge Sustainable Food with match funding

The team will continue to look at opportunities to provide resources and support to those in need during the cost of living crisis.

### **23/8/EP Refugee support in Cambridge**

Keryn Jalli, Community Safety Manager, provided a brief overview of the different schemes Cambridge City Council offers to support refugees and asylum seekers. As of 2022 the council provided 5 different schemes. Keryn said that:

- It will become increasingly important that the team of family support workers speak a range of languages and understand cultural differences. Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum are funded by the city council to deliver an information and advice service to refugees and asylum seekers in the city.
- The council provides a multi-departmental response to enhance access to grants, support across organisations and groups supporting refugees and asylum seekers, and the voluntary sector.
- Ongoing actions include creating an asylum seeking and refugee team that sits across Community Safety and Housing Advice within the council.

- The council ensures that it considers equality impacts when delivering refugee/asylum schemes:
  - o Relating to age, there are a large number of children that the schemes support. They support children to access schools, to go on trips, and attend parties relevant to their culture.
  - o Around disability and mental health considerations they are supporting people find accessible housing and offer a wellbeing session.
  - o Relating to marriage, they are often supporting people in couples who have been separated in the process of seeking asylum to navigate trans-national relationships.
  - o For pregnant women and people with small children it is important to support them to be connected into health services
  - o Refugees and asylum seekers need support to learn English as part of re-settlement and interpretation and translation support is important as people are provided with support.
  - o Relating to faith, the team helps connect people with different places of worship. Faith groups have supported people with food provision and have helped the council and partners to host events
  - o For LGBTQ+ people it has been of key importance to connect them with local organisations that specialise in supporting LGBTQ+ people for support

In response to the presentation, an action to was noted to encourage volunteer involvement as part of the Cambridge Resettlement Campaign, including student volunteers. Orla Spivack and Keryn Jalli were going to discuss how to explore the feasibility of this.

### **23/9/EP Community Development updates**

- Holocaust Memorial Day has been postponed till June to take place during Refugee Week. However, candle lighting was planned for 26 January at The Guildhall.
- There will be an event at the Corn Exchange on 9 March, celebrating women of note in Cambridge. A week later, Cambridge Rape Crisis and Cambridge Women's Resources Centre will host a talk on whether women's equality and rights have progressed since the 1960s.
- A Cambridge Health Equalities Partnership (HEP) is being set up. It is still in transition mode as the Vaccine Access project draws to a close but hopes to take forward the partnership working developed from this project. The HEP will be developed by partners, who are being invited to join an event and share ideas and information about the needs within

communities. The partnership will feed into the work of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

**23/10/EP Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**23/11/EP Date of Next Meeting**

4 July 2023.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

**CHAIR**