



Cambridge City Council Equalities Panel

Date: Tuesday, 2 July 2024

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 2JL

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Agenda

- 1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (Pages 3 - 14)
- 4 Public Questions
- 5 Disabled People's Manifesto and Cambridge City Council's support for disabled people (Pages 15 - 20)
- 6 Equality in Employment report 2023/24 (Pages 21 - 22)
- 7 Any Other Business
- 8 Date of Next Meeting
7 January 2025

Chair: Sam Scharf and Robert Pollock

Elected Members: Councillors Bird, Flaubert, Porrer, Smart and Wade

Public Members: Raheela Rehman and Orsola Rath Spivack

Staff Members: Naomi Armstrong, Lesley-Ann George, Ariadne Henry and Alistair Wilson

Information for the public

There is no option of a hybrid meeting. The meeting will be in person only.

If you are not a member of the Panel but are interested in joining to observe the meeting, please contact Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer Helen.Crowther@cambridge.gov.uk

EQUALITIES PANEL

6 February 2024

4.00 - 6.00 pm

Present:

Chair: Sam Scharf, Director of Communities

Councillor members: Cllr Porrer; Cllr Thittala Varkey; Cllr Wade

Public members: Orsola Spivak; Raheela Rehman

Officer members: Alistair Wilson; Ariadne Henry; Lesley-Ann George; Naomi Armstrong

Other officers in attendance: Caroline Gill; David Kidston; Helen Crowther; Vicky Haywood

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

24/1/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Flaubert and Cllr Smart.

24/2/EP Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

24/3/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023 were noted subject to the following amendment requested by Councillor Thittala Varkey:

The deletion of the following text 'One member expressed that they were disappointed at the low response rate to the survey and questioned whether the findings of the survey were sufficiently representative to be used by the Council to inform future decisions. They felt that using council resources for research with a low response rate was unfair to ethnic minority communities.'

The addition of the following text 'One member, who himself is from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community, expressed that he was disappointed at the sampling method used in the survey, and questioned whether the findings of the survey were sufficiently representative to be used

by the Council to inform future decisions. He said that it lacks proper reflection of South Asian people included in the survey, especially people from the Pakistani community who seem not to have been included in the survey.'

24/4/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

24/5/EP Community Wealth Building Strategy

David Kidston, Strategy & Partnerships Manager, presented on the Council's draft Community Wealth Building (CWB) Strategy and asked for comments from Panel members on the strategy and approach relating to equality impacts: David said:

- The strategy aims to set out an approach to tackle poverty and build an inclusive and sustainable economy in the city. It is going to Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee for approval on 21 March 2024.
- The CWB Strategy is an evolution of the council's approach to tackle poverty (previously captured in Anti-Poverty Strategies covering the period from 2014 to 2024).
- The CWB sets out our approach to building community wealth around four themes:
 - Using the council's own resources, assets, and powers to address poverty and inequality.
 - Building an inclusive and sustainable economy.
 - Empowering communities and giving individuals more agency over their lives.
 - Taking a holistic, systems-based approach.
- There are a number of projects piloting the CWB approach and once the strategy is approved, we will be identifying a wider programme of activity that will help deliver the 4 themes of our CWB approach. The pilot projects have been referred to in the Equality Impact Assessment on the strategy. They include:
 - A Focus on Abbey – taking a whole systems approach to CWB focusing on building upon strengths and assets that already exist in the area.

- Greater Cambridge Impact Fund – This is an independent investment fund to address the causes of inequalities and offer a new type of finance.
- Region of Learning Programme – supporting disadvantaged young people to access better employment opportunities.

Panel members asked clarifying questions on the strategy:

- How is the council seeking money through the social impact investment fund since put seed funding in?
- Has the disparity in incomes between the richest and poorest has changed over the last five years?
- Is the council working with the Bennett Institute or just using its model of six capitals?
- What are the definitions of social capital and human capital?

David's answers were:

- The fund Greater Cambridge Impact Fund was developed with input from different stakeholders. The Council will be providing up to £1 million in seed funding and the Impact Fund is seeking up to £15 million public and private investment. The council's contribution is contingent on other organisations contributing funding.
- Statistics have suggested there are ongoing inequalities between those on the lowest and highest incomes in the city. Many Cambridge businesses are global so need to pay globally competitive salaries to attract employees to their highly skilled roles. The council hopes that the CWB strategy will help increase incomes of those on lowest pay in the city by providing them with greater opportunities to develop their skills in key areas of the Cambridge economy.
- The council met with the Bennett Institute at the University of Cambridge as part of the development of the strategy. We are using their Bennett Institute Wealth Economy model, which identifies six capitals (human, social, knowledge, physical, natural and institutional). The six capitals are being applied nationally to the government's Levelling Up approach and the council is looking into how they can be applied at a local level.
- Human capital consists of the skills and the physical and mental health of people in communities. Social capital relates to trust, connections and community cohesiveness.

Panel members provided the following feedback on the strategy:

- Members of the Panel emphasised the importance of developing holistic person-centred approaches to building community power that reflects intersectionality to capture the complexity of people's identities. Cllr Porrer shared that it is important to embed this approach with officers and executive councillors.
- Cllr Porrer also shared that mental health and low-income affect people with different protected characteristics as an example of intersectionality. She raised that it would be beneficial for the Council to move away from one year funding for the voluntary and community sector to fund some organisations longer-term to enhance their security.
- Cllr Porrer added that in our own employment practices and in aiming to influence others championing flexible working would be important, including job share of management opportunities. Cllr Wade shared that the civil service has a job share model that the council could itself use.
- Cllr Wade said that Executive Councillors champion the CWB approach.
- A public member of the Panel pointed out that in the equality impact assessment on the strategy, specific work relating to education and skills was mentioned impacting positively on young people. They recommended targeted activities towards people with other protected characteristics to raise skills and tackle barriers to learning opportunities. David Kidston shared that skills and employment is an area that needs a whole-systems approach to address as this is not one of the City Council's statutory responsibilities. He said the council currently makes a difference in having targets around disability and ethnicity for its own workforce, through projects such as the Region of Learning and through over £1 million provided in community grants funding annually, including to projects supporting young people.
- In response a staff member of the Panel pointed to other existing activities relating to community development. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community Development Officer has been supporting communities access heavy goods vehicle training. Community Development Officers are also looking into bringing skills development opportunities into community centres.
- Cllr Porrer mentioned that the council could work more closely with Anglia Ruskin University around shaping skills and learning opportunities

in the city. The university offers courses widely available around health and wellbeing, English as a second language, counselling and more.

- A staff member mentioned the physical disability and sensory impairment can be barriers to work and that poverty can exacerbate the ability of disabled people to leave their house. The council has a new Health Prevention Officer considering some of these issues.

24/6/EP Youth Strategy

Vicky Haywood, Community Development Manager, and Caroline Gill, Senior Community Development Officer, presented on the council's draft Youth Strategy. They asked the Panel for their views on whether the right approach is being proposed and for any other advice or suggestions on what it needs to include. Vicky and Caroline shared:

- 33.2% of the Cambridge population are school children or students. Key issues for children and young people are poverty (experienced by 11%), increased mental health diagnoses, exploitation, knife crime, youth violence and educational attainment (only 40% of children and young people on pupil premium score well for English and Maths GCSEs).
- It is important that Cambridge City Council's Youth Strategy recognise that these challenges faced by children and young people cannot be solved by the council alone. The council will need to work with partners on delivering the strategy who have a statutory duty to children and young people.
- Children and young people currently lack a universal offer of support in the city unless they are able to participate in local youth groups or can pay for activity aimed at them.
- The Youth Strategy will draw on the council's current vision of "One Cambridge – Fair for all" and more explicitly apply this to fairness for youth. The strategy aims to provide young people with a greater voice. The language used in the strategy will be checked with young people to ensure it fits their understanding and priorities.
- Commitments within the strategy, currently in draft form, are:
 - To provide real opportunities for children and young people to be heard and the ability to deliver on what they ask about. This would

- involve setting up a Youth Assembly run independently of the council but commissioned by it.
- Provide joined up and accessible activities for children and young people to engage in (including around play, culture, and sport).
- For the council to be more explicit on what it means by its commitment around safeguarding.
- Using the council's assets (what it manages and owns) to make the best offer to children and young people.
- Next steps for the strategy:
 - Ascertain the final draft of the commitments and ensure each commitment has an action plan.
 - Political sign off in March 2024.
 - Commission a Youth Assembly from April 2024.
 - Consider governance relating to commitments set out in strategy.

Sam Scharf, shared that the council is looking into how best to ensure all its strategies fit together and form a coherent whole.

The Panel members provided feedback on the Youth Strategy:

- Cllr Wade asked if housing affordability for young people aged up to 25 is being considered, including raising awareness of options like housing cooperatives and studio apartments for young people.
- On the theme of housing affordability, Cllr Porrer mentioned that primary schools in the city are losing students as house prices are rising meaning parents cannot afford to live in school catchment areas anymore.
- Cllr Thittala Varkey asked that in providing opportunities for young people and children to be heard, there is proper representation of children in poverty. He thanked Vicky and Caroline for a superb presentation.
- Cllr Porrer said that social capital is often held by well-off children and the Youth Strategy might be a good means to increase social capital of children on lower incomes. She also felt that involving them in designing spaces in the city was important.
- The council has passed a motion to treat care leavers in the same way as protected characteristics in the Equality Act as part of its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty. A panel member pointed out that this applies to decisions on the Youth Strategy too.

Vicky responded to the Panel's feedback:

- In relation to points made on housing affordability the team developing the Youth Strategy are liaising with housing around how to build this into the strategy.
- The Youth Assembly will work across a wide range of schools with pupils on different incomes and will consider how to hear from young people not in education, employment, and training, and special educational needs schools. It is important that the strategy is owned by young people and young people will be involved in developing and co-producing a video to communicate it. It is important that the Youth Assembly be as representative as far as it can of young people in the city.
- The Local Plan includes an aspiration for children and young people to provide feedback on new developments. In developing the Youth Strategy this has uncovered a need to develop more spaces for girls as well as boys.

The Chair said that boards and assemblies are very formal means to seek feedback and asked if there is another more agile way to hear feedback. Vicky said that other methods of hearing from children and young people will be reflected in the action plan for the strategy as well as the Youth Assembly. The Chair asked that the action plan be brought back to the Panel in July. Vicky said the Panel members could also be engaged with outside of the meeting to give them assurance that the Strategy reflects the priorities and asks of children and young people themselves.

24/7/EP Any Other Business

None.

24/8/EP Date of Next Meeting

2 July 2024.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

CHAIR

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Agenda item 3: Note on Matters Arising

Update to Equalities Panel on the Youth Strategy progress

On 26 February 2024 I visited to show our initial workings on developing a Youth Strategy for Cambridge. We discussed the rationale for the strategy and what the Council hoped to achieve by creating one. As a panel you challenged us to think more about seldom heard voices and how these were being captured and supported throughout this process. This paper provides an update on progress around the Youth Strategy.

The Youth Strategy and action plan drafts are now complete, with 5 core commitments that are:

- Supporting young people to be heard
- Access to play, leisure, sport and culture
- Helping young people to take part
- Helping young people feel safe and welcome in their city
- Using our assets to best effect

Following the election, we plan on doing some wider communications on the strategy.

Youth Assembly update

Citizens UK has been commissioned to run a 1-year project to pilot an approach to youth engagement that culminates in a Youth Assembly event. They are working alongside a local schools and youth organisations. The assembly model includes leadership and skills training for young people and those working for the institutions who are involved in engaging young people. Initially Citizens UK will work with 8 schools, colleges and institutions with each committing to capturing 100 conversations. Common themes from the conversations will then be identified that will become campaigns or calls for action, ready for the Assembly event taking place on 12 November 2024 at the Junction in Cambridge. Local politicians, organisational leaders and those with ability to effect change around the calls to action/campaigns will be invited to join us to hear from the young people directly. Following this, the local schools and institutions will create action-groups to build momentum for change and local leadership.

The Assembly is a pilot; one model of engagement will not necessarily work for all groups of young people, particularly those who need additional support to engage. Schools will endeavour to include a wide range of voices from variety of

backgrounds. Moreover, the Olive Academy is taking part in the Youth Assembly work, which supports young people excluded from mainstream school.

Engagement with young people taking place alongside the Youth Assembly

To work alongside the Assembly, the following has been arranged to engage seldom heard voices amongst young people:

- A funded programme of youth leadership will take place over the summer holidays, funded by the Integrated Care System.
- Dr Kelly Fagan Robinson a social anthropologist at University of Cambridge specialises in trauma-informed practice. She will train a cohort of local professionals and youth leaders in September. Offered to local youth organisations including those working with young carers, LGBT+ young people, care leavers or homeless young people, it will provide an innovative methodology that supports young people who have experienced trauma to share their experiences and voices, building skills and confidence for the youth leaders as well as participants. Outcomes will be shared with the Youth Strategic partnership board.
- An offer to engage with young people involved in criminal justice system is being followed up, as are further opportunities to engage other diverse equalities groups.
- Cambridgeshire County Council has launched their youth survey capturing data, feedback and experiences of services. Findings will be shared with the Assembly and Youth Strategic partnership board.

Next steps following the engagement activities and Youth Assembly

After the Assembly has taken place, we'll be able to pull together a rich picture of experiences and issues from a wide range of young people. This will inform services and influence decision making, as well as enabling young people to get more actively involved in the action- group activities.

To support the work of the Assembly and Youth Strategy, a Youth Strategic Partnership Board has been formed. This includes leaders from local statutory partners, community and voluntary sector and the business sector. This group provides a critical friend approach, as well as holding the levers to effect change where larger systematic challenges are uncovered impacting on young people.

A task group of council-officers has developed an action plan to explore how we can make the strategy real and deliver on the core 5 commitments.

It is my intension to report back to the Equalities Panel in January 2025, following the Youth Assembly having taken place. By this time, we'll have a rich data set and evidence provided by young people on their key issues they wish to see action taken on, the challenges they face every day, and a better understanding of how the council and other stakeholders plan to respond to these challenges.

Vicky Haywood

Community Development Manager

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Agenda item 5: Disabled People’s Manifesto and Cambridge City Council’s support for disabled people (Helen Crowther, Equality & Anti-Poverty Officer)

On 23 May 2024 the Council passed the Disability Rights UK 2024 motion (see the [Agenda and minutes webpage from the Full Council meeting](#) for more context). At the meeting, councillors resolved to “refer the Disabled People’s Manifesto to the Council’s Equalities Panel for scrutiny and debate involving staff, resident representatives and councillors, and reporting back to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on their discussions”.

For this item, Helen Crowther will present on key issues experienced by disabled people relating to the themes of the manifesto, and what the Council is currently doing to support disabled people relating to the themes. The Panel will then be asked to consider:

- what it would look like if the council was providing the best possible support to disabled people in relation to each of the four themes of the manifesto.
- what incremental steps the Council could take to move towards this.

Please note that the Deaf and disabled people’s organisations that developed the manifesto did so to influence the next government, so some of the recommendations would be for national government to implement, rather than local authorities. [Read the Disabled People’s Manifesto here.](#)

As the Equalities Panel meeting on 2 July takes place during the pre-election period for the general election, any requests of national government set out in the manifesto will not be discussed in the meeting.

In advance of the meeting, here is a short description of each theme in the manifesto and information on how Cambridge City Council supports disabled people relating to each theme:

Theme 1: Representation and Voice

This theme focuses on the removal of barriers for disabled people to participate in political and public life. The manifesto states “We want Disabled people to participate across all political and public roles, with the required adjustments put in place, so we can achieve real justice and equality. Disabled people’s led organisations (“Disabled People’s Organisations”) are accountable to our community and must be viewed as primary advocates for us and be funded accordingly. Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) must have a seat at national and local

decision-making tables and all Disabled people to fully participate in democratic processes.”

Work undertaken by Cambridge City Council in relation to this theme includes:

- Providing adjustments for people with different disabilities voting at polling stations, by post or by proxy: [Accessibility at elections - Cambridge City Council](#). The elections team take expert advice from our Access Officer on reasonable adjustments that can be made at polling stations.
- Providing Community Grants funding to organisations that advocate for the rights of disabled people. In 2024/25 larger community grants went to 8 organisations specifically set up to support disabled people:
 - Arts and Minds
 - Cambridge Community Arts
 - Cambridge Online
 - Cambridge Gateway Club
 - Level Water
 - Rowan Humberstone
 - Disability Huntingdonshire for a part-time benefits caseworker in Cambridge City
- Employing a Community Development Officer (CDO) to work with local voluntary and community sector organisations that support equality groups, including disabled people, to support them with capacity building.
- Engaging with local Disabled People’s Organisations as part of many of the Council’s consultations on changes to plans, policies, or procedures to help ensure the Council pays due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in its decision-making.

Theme 2: Rights

The manifesto states “We want to fully enjoy all rights guaranteed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Discrimination we face in all areas of life must stop. We want financial and legal support to enforce our rights and all public bodies to have a duty to advance and enforce our rights actively. We want greater accountability for when our rights have been breached.”

The manifesto mentions strengthening the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and ensuring the PSED and the Socio-Economic duties are fully embedded in all public bodies’ decision-making processes to protect disabled people’s rights. To demonstrate compliance with our legal obligation to pay due regard to the PSED,

Cambridge City Council undertakes equality impact assessments. These look at impacts of the Council's decisions to change policies, plans, procedures and around the development of strategy on protected characteristic groups, people with care experience and people experiencing poverty and/or low-income. (Note that councils are not legally required to undertake EqIAs to demonstrate compliance with the PSED or to consider impacts on people on low-income and/or in poverty.)

In addition, the Council works with partners in the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership to improve public safety, including to tackle hate crime that can be experienced by disabled people. One key priority of the partnership is to listen to community needs and responding together to reduce harm.

Theme 3: Independence

The manifesto states “We want the right to live independently with choice and control over the support we get. We want the right to live in our own fully accessible homes connected to our family, friends and community. We want major reform and investment across social security, social care, education, housing and employment, to provide Disabled people of all ages, genders, backgrounds or immigration status with a decent level of income and free at the point of use additional support that we need to fully enjoy our rights and to lead full and connected lives. We should not be forced to live in institutions or accept medical treatment we don't want.” The manifesto's “asks” relating to this theme consider three areas: finances (with asks relating to the benefits system), independent living, and housing. Work undertaken by Cambridge City Council in relation to these areas under the theme include the following:

Finances

- For 2024/25 the Council has provided funding to help set up an outreach advice service in Cambridge from Disability Huntingdonshire that provides specialist benefit advice, support, and advocacy for people of all ages with disabilities.
- The Council also provides Discretionary Housing Payments that can especially benefit disabled people due to extra living costs they face.

Independent living

- The Council provides a Visiting Support service that is available for all Cambridge residents aged over 65, irrespective of what property they live in. The aim is to connect older people with services that help them remain independent and socially active, while making sure people have access to the care and support they need.

- The Council runs activities as part of the Preventative Health Programme to meet its objective to prevent ill-health for older people relating to frailty, which has an impact on older people's ability to live independently. These include a Strength and Balance class in Romsey, a weekly 'bat n chat' session for older adults at the Meadows community centre, and intergenerational 'microwalks'.

Housing

- 5% of Cambridge City Council homes that are built are wheelchair accessible from the outset. The rest of the stock is possible to convert for wheelchair users. During 2023/24, the Council built 12 new homes that are fully wheelchair accessible and 236 new homes that can be adapted to become wheelchair accessible.
- Cambridge City Council is the lead authority for the Home Improvement Agency that covers Cambridge, South Cambs and Huntingdonshire. As part of its work, it provides Disabled Facilities Grants of up to £30,000 to carry out adaptation works that will help a disabled person remain living independently in their own home. It completed 284 grants in 2023/24 (41 in Cambridge city worth £432,448 in total).
- The Council has an annual budget of over £800,000 to implement adaptations for disabled people in Cambridge City Council's housing stock. The spend in 2023/24 was £828,000 and 138 major adaptations were completed. This included wetrooms (including refurbishments), over-the-bath showers, ramps and stairlifts.

Theme 4: Inclusion

This theme refers to plans for every aspect of life to address specific needs of disabled people from the outset. The manifesto states "We want plans for every aspect of life including energy policy, climate change, digital and technological development, health, housing, transport, street environment and emergency planning, to address specific needs of Disabled people from the outset. Segregated settings and programmes should not be a default. Choice, control, and inclusion are vital. Disabled people should have support to live, learn and work in the community." In particular, the manifesto includes "asks" for this theme relating to three areas: education, access, and work. Work undertaken by Cambridge City Council in relation to these areas under the theme include the following:

Education

Cambridge City Council runs the Region of Learning programme to help people acquire skills for future learning and career opportunities. The programme has new funding arrangements which started in 2024 and is aimed at all age groups, but

under the former European Social Fund (ESF) funding the programme was aimed at young people. There was a target to reach 169 young people with disabilities over the two years. This target was exceeded as 370 young people with disabilities were supported. This was as a result of partnership working that the programme has developed with schools supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Access

- The Council provides British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation to support people to access its services. For instance, the council uses SignLive services to support BSL users to get in touch with the Customer Service Contact Centre by phone.
- The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service employs an Access Officer to give advice on disability access at all stages of any planning application. The Access Officer also gives advice on the Equality Act 2010 rights of and duties to disabled people relating to access (and more broadly) to the council itself, local businesses, and residents/visitors.
- Disability access has been incorporated as a consideration within the Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel that is run by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. A new group of disabled people will be recruited to the Panel to advise on wider disability issues on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel (GCDRP) offers multi-disciplinary, independent advice to developers, planning officers, planning committees, parish councils and members of public.
- The Council provides the Shopmobility service at the Grand Arcade and Grafton East car parks to support disabled people to access the city. The service was used 3,707 times in 2023/24.
- The Council runs the Taxicard scheme that helps disabled people who live in Cambridge and have a low income to pay for taxi journeys.
- The Council is currently completing works to provide a Changing Places facility at Cherry Hinton Hall and at Drummer Street toilets.

Work

- Cambridge City Council is a Disability Confident Employer, which includes commitments around 'actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people'. The council encourages other organisations to become Disability Confident – for instance, this year we attended a 'Be Inclusive' event hosted by the DWP, for other employers to help promote it to make a difference in closing the disability employment gap locally.

- Cambridge City Council is working with partners, including Abbey People, to run on a project in Abbey to support people with long-term health conditions or disabilities into employment. This is centred around asking people what support they might need to be able to enter into employment and what kind of opportunities will suit them.

Agenda item 6: Equality in Employment report 2023/24 – Lynsey Fulcher (Head of People) and Vickie Jameson (Recruitment Manager)

The Council collates and monitors information on its workforce profile relating to characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. Vickie Jameson will provide a presentation of the key headlines and findings from this annual exercise, in advance of the publication of the Equality in Employment report 2023/24. Vickie and Lynsey Fulcher will take questions from Panel members. Lynsey Fulcher will also give some background on the People & Culture Strategy (which will be presented to the Council's Strategy & Resources Committee on 1st July) and how its themes relate to equalities.

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