

EQUALITIES PANEL

17 November 2014

4.00 - 6.10 pm

Present:**Chair:** Liz Bisset**Public Members:** Graham Lewis, Judith Margolis and Orsola Rath Spivack**Elected Members:** Councillors Abbott, Austin, Bick, M. Smart and Ratcliffe**Staff Members:** Jackie Hanson, Ari Henry Karen Lee and Jenna Varga**Officers:**

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

Guest Speakers:

Juliet Snell - Director - Centre 33

Neil Perry - Chief Executive Officer – Romsey Mill

Sandie Smith - Chief Executive Officer – Healthwatch Cambridgeshire

Paula Bishop - Children & Young People's Services Manager – Cambridge City Council

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**14/11/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Antoinette Jackson and with the agreement of the Panel, Liz Bisset took the Chair.

Apologies were also received from Norah Al-Ani, Nicky Wrigley and Joe Obe.

The Chair welcomed the new Members of the Panel (Jenna Varga and Judith Margolis).

14/12/EP Declarations of Interest

In the interest of transparency, Graham Lewis and Councillor Martin Smart stated that they both worked for the charity of which new Panel Member Judith Margolis, was a Trustee.

14/13/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 23rd June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Two new Panel Members had been recruited: Public Member Judith Margolis and Staff Member Jenna Varga.

The Single Equality Scheme 2015 – 18 was under development and a draft version would be considered by the January Strategy and Resources Committee. Work on this had been delayed by the higher priority given to the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

14/14/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions. The Chair invited members of staff, who were in attendance, but not Panel Members to join the table and participate in the debate.

14/15/EP Children and Young People's Issues in Cambridge

The Panel received presentations from guest speakers as detailed below.

Juliet Snell - Director - Centre 33

Juliet gave an overview of the service and client group. She highlighted the following points:

- i. Drop in services offered support with a range of issues.
- ii. Key services provided support with included, Housing, Mental Health, School, Counselling and Young Carers.
- iii. Mental Health is the number one issue for young people in the area compounded by inequality, lack of suitable housing and gaps between adult and young people service provision.

- iv. Hopes for the future included: better connections between services, early interventions, work to address the impact of inequalities and embracing a diverse community.

Neil Perry - Chief Executive Officer – Romsey Mill

Neil gave an overview of the service and client group. He highlighted the following points:

- i. Services established in 1980.
- ii. Works with 9 to 25 year olds.
- iii. Open to all but services are targeted.
- iv. Has suffered a reduction in funding impacting on open access services.
- v. Key local issues, inequality intensifying mental health issues, lack of employment opportunities for low skilled workers and zero hours contracts.
- vi. Hope for the future included: increased diversity, improved opportunities and the development of partnerships.
- vii. Fears for the future included: civil unrest due to inequality and growth of virtual connections, at the expense of face to face contact, resulting in an increase in social isolation.

Sandie Smith - Chief Executive Officer – Healthwatch Cambridgeshire

Sandie gave an overview of the service and client group. She highlighted the following points:

- i. Healthwatch is 18 months old.
- ii. Part of a national framework.
- iii. Gathering the views of Health Service Users as consumers.
- iv. Works in partnership with other organisation and never duplicates.
- v. Key functions: to Listen and Influence and to Inform and Enable.
- vi. Has a youth engagement worker and a number of young people's projects.
- vii. Encourages young people to volunteer.
- viii. Hopes for the future: moving beyond 'passive recipient of care' model to informed decision making and change of medical language to enable service users to feel equal partners in medical decision.
- ix. Fears for the future: complex issues, slow progress and transitions from child to adult services lack continuity.

Paula Bishop - Children & Young People's Services Manager – Cambridge City Council

Paula gave an overview of the service and client group. She highlighted the following points:

- i. Based at Brown Field's Community Centre.
- ii. Cambridge City Council is committed to play.
- iii. Works with 8 to 13 year olds.
- iv. Open every day and open to all.
- v. Works with families.
- vi. Offers training to other organisations.
- vii. Has a trading arm called ChYpPs Adventures that offers services to Schools, Groups and Private Sector Organisations.
- viii. Looking to achieve more with less.
- ix. Funding cuts have resulted in less preventative work and increased crisis management.
- x. Young people concerns for the future include: safety, school, drug use, immigration, unnecessary rules and lack of something to do (or a safe place to do nothing).

The Panel made the following comments in response to the presentations:

- i. Increased partnership would avoid wasteful commissioning exercises.
- ii. Improved links between health and social care are needed to tackle complex issues.
- iii. Better out of hours provision was needed as young people can be subjected to on-line harassment and bullying 24 hours a day.
- iv. The Panel felt that Young Carers should not exist: it was not the role of children to provide care.
- v. Self-harm is rising and it is common amongst high achievers due to pressures to do well at school.
- vi. More work was needed to encourage LGBT young people to feel confident about accessing services.

The Panel expressed the view that there were good services available for young people and their supporters. However, finding your way to those services was not easy for those facing a new situation or a crisis point.

14/16/EP Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Panel received a report from the Strategy and Partnership Manager regarding the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Panel raised the following points in response to the report

- i. Cambridge City Council gives grant funding to organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, who provide benefits advice and encouraged better take up of entitlement.
- ii. Work is on-going with Credit Unions.
- iii. Fuel and water poverty were key elements of the anti-poverty strategy.
- iv. The impact to Universal Credit was, as yet, unknown. However, under some circumstances, housing benefit could still be paid direct to the landlord.
- v. Voluntary groups were increasing re-focusing their services to demonstrate better value for money to those providing grants.
- vi. Previously, voluntary groups needed to demonstrate how they addressed equality strands and in future they would also need to also address financial inequalities.
- vii. Addressing poverty by levying a local tax on businesses was suggested but thought to be unworkable.
- viii. The Panel acknowledged that local businesses sponsored events such as the Big Weekend and the November Fireworks.
- ix. Using local businesses to raise aspirations and to promote volunteering as a route into work were discussed.
- x. The Community Development team will be organising a Community Fair.
- xi. The Acting Chief Executive outlined the City Council's commitment to Apprenticeships, the City Deal and the Living Wage.
- xii. The Strategy and Partnership Manager confirmed that the Anti-Poverty Strategy was a City Council Initiative and would be challenging to deliver.

14/17/EP Date of Next Meeting

2014 Panel meeting dates have been yet been set. The Chair asked the Panel if they would like an additional meeting in the New Year to consider the draft Single Equality Scheme after it has been considered by the January Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The Panel agreed this would be a good idea.

Discussion items for later Panel meeting were discussed and the following were suggested: Disabilities, Older People and Learning Disabilities.

Committee Manager Post Meeting Note

An additional Equalities panel meeting has been arranged for the 2nd February 2015 at 4.00pm in the Meadows Community Centre.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm

CHAIR