

EQUALITIES PANEL

2 February 2015

4.00 - 5.45 pm

Present:**Chair:** Antoinette Jackson**Public Members:** Judith Margolis and Orsola Rath Spivack**Elected Members:** Councillors Abbott, Austin, M. Smart and Ratcliffe**Staff Members:** Jackie Hanson, Ari Henry, Karen Lee and Joe Obe.**Officers:**

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**15/1/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Graham Lewis, Norah Al-Ani, Nicky Wrigley and Councillor Bick.

15/2/EP Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15/3/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 17th November 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

15/4/EP Draft Single Equality Scheme

Cambridge City Council had developed a draft Single Equality Scheme that sets out how the organisation will challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunity in all aspects of its work over the next three years. It included five

strategic objectives that demonstrate how the organisation will meet the aims of the Equality Duty and the requirement to prepare and publish one or more equalities objectives. Public consultation on the scheme would take place from for 12 weeks from 2 February to 25 April 2015.

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager, David Kidston, introduced the draft Single Equality Scheme and invited the Equalities Panel to comment.

In particular, Members of the Panel were asked to advise on:

1. Are there any additional sources of evidence that could be included in the Scheme to strengthen our understanding of equalities groups in Cambridge?
2. Do the 5 objectives identified for the Single Equality Scheme and the associated actions set out in the action plan address the key issues currently facing equality groups in Cambridge?
3. Within the context of the reduced resources available to the City Council over the period of the SES, are there any other activities or areas of focus that should be included in the action plan?

Panel comments regarding question one:

- i. Questioned the evidence base.
- ii. Welcomed the trial of commissioned work with focus groups to consider LGBTQ concerns.
- iii. Questioned the reliability of statistic regarding the numbers of reported disabilities, what definitions were being used and if it include mental health.
- iv. Suggested that the report was concise and realistic about the desired outcomes.
- v. Welcomed the links to portfolio planning.
- vi. Suggested that lobbying of other organisations might be necessary to achieve results.

Officers present stated the following in response to Panel Members' questions:

- vii. Work was on-going with Cambridgeshire Alliance regarding the best ways to break down the data into useful information.
- viii. More information would be available on the web site in due course.
- ix. The scheme was in part a response to Single Equalities Act but was also an opportunity to adopt a strategic approach.
- x. Would prioritise a strategic set of priorities with deliverable actions.

- xi. Some areas were outside the control of the council and there was a need to be realistic about what could be achieved.
- xii. A partnership approach would be taken whenever possible.

The Panel suggested that road and pavement works caused disproportionate problems for those with disabilities. This was agreed to be an area outside the Single Equality Scheme but was something the Panel wanted to discuss further. The Strategy and Partnerships Manager undertook to invite a representative from the County Council's Highways department to a future Equalities Panel.

Panel comments regarding question two:

- xiii. Expressed the hope that there would be good communication protocols to avoid duplication of work.
- xiv. Welcomed the element of celebration of diversity highlighted in the scheme.
- xv. Questioned how equal people felt and suggested there may be areas of concern that did not fit the diversity strands.
- xvi. Suggested that more work was needed to assist the public in identifying which agency could help them.
- xvii. Objective three (To ensure all residents have equal access public activities and spaces in Cambridge and are able to participate fully in the community) was too broad in scope and might raise expectations beyond what the City Council could achieve through the Single Equality Scheme.

Officers present stated the following in response to Panel Members' questions:

- xviii. The picture was complex and joint working was promoted as the best way to achieve results. For example, the work undertaken with troubled families.
- xix. Confirmed that the various events celebrating diversity had evolved over time and were generally led by community groups. Some support was offered by the Council, both practical and financial.
- xx. Stated that complaints about a third party regarding treatment which individuals perceived as discriminatory were often received by the Council. However, unless there was a direct link to that body, such as them being a grant recipient, no action could be taken beyond providing advice or signposting the complainant to a regulatory body.
- xxi. The Strategy and Partnerships Manager undertook to qualify Objective 3 to make it clear that the City Council would *work towards* improving access to public activities and spaces and participation in the community.

Panel comments regarding question three:

- xxii. Improved publicity was suggested, including alternative ways of getting the message across such as film and social media.
- xxiii. Mainstream the Single Equality Scheme so that it becomes an automatic consideration.

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager and outlined the next steps in consultation process and thanked the Panel for their contributions. Jackie Hanson confirmed that relevant groups would be invited to participate in the consultation process.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

CHAIR