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Equalities Panel

EP/1

Monday, 7 December 2015

EQUALITIES PANEL

7 December 2015

4.30 - 6.30 pm

Chair: Antoinette Jackson

Public Members: Graham Lewis, Judith Margolis and Orsola Rath Spivack

Elected Members: Abbott, Holt, O'Connell

Staff Members: Jackie Hanson, Ari Henry, Karen Lee, Joe Obe and Jenna Varga

Officers:

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

Others present:

Public Health Manager (Cambridgeshire County Council): Holly Hodge

Mental Health Promotion Facilitator (Cambridgeshire County Council): Claire Harris

Tenancy Sustainment Co-Ordinator: Vicky Schueller

Independent Living Supervisor: Clara Gomez Serrano

Equality and Diversity consultant for Cambridge University: Kevin Coutinho

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/12/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Bird, Councillor Ratcliffe and Nicky Wrigley.

The Panel noted the resignation of Jackie Hanson and expressed their gratitude for her contributions to the Equalities Panel.

15/13/EP Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

15/14/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 22nd June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

15/15/EP Mental Health

The Panel received a presentation from Holly Hodge (Public Health Manager) and Claire Harris (Mental Health Promotion Facilitator) on the recently developed Cambridgeshire Public Mental Health Strategy. They discussed the main aims and themes of the Mental Health Strategy in relation to Cambridgeshire County Council and its associated Action Plan.

Vicky Schueller (Tenancy Sustainment Co-Ordinator) delivered a presentation on the Cambridge City Council Tenancy Sustainment Service which included the aims of the service, what the role of the service was in relation to public well-being and a case study of the role played in supporting a particular individual who suffered from mental health issues.

Clara Gomez Serrano from the Council's Independent Living Service talked about her role supporting older people in Cambridge with mental health issues.

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

- i. The key message was that early intervention into mental health awareness and prevention was key and should be focussed on. Questioned whether further responsibility should be put onto teachers given that they were not qualified professionals on mental health issues.
- ii. Requested that a leaflet which contained information for teachers on what to look for to identify mental health issues and signposts to organisations was produced and made available by the County Council.
- iii. Some Mental Health Services in Cambridgeshire had closed their lists to certain services; it was therefore questioned whether there was a link between children and adolescents and closed lists.
- iv. Questioned what work had been done with schools and bullying. Commented that some schools ignored that they had bullying issues, others would only deal with overt bullying and did not deal with more undisclosed types of bullying.
- v. Questioned the self-harm figures presented and whether the figures were due to a high recording rate or whether there were more individuals that self-harmed in Cambridge.
- vi. Asked for clarification on the County Council's remit for mental health issues.

In response to questions from the Panel Holly Hodge (Public Health Manager) and Claire Harris (Mental Health Promotion Facilitator) confirmed the following:

- i. The Mental Health Trust provided a service that was tailored to working with young people and free access was provided to schools. A prospectus of services offered by the Trust could be circulated round the Equalities Panel members.
- ii. The waiting lists for children were closed as they were 6 to 12 months long, however the Hub provided signposts to lots of voluntary organisations which could assist.
- iii. The Education Well-being Team worked with schools in relation to bullying.
- iv. Recorded self-harm figures were only the 'tip of the iceberg', as they represented the number of people presenting at hospital with self-harm injuries. Many people who self-harm do not attend hospital. Analysis of the figures showed that the electoral wards around the hospitals had a higher self-harm record rate. This may have been due to the fact that these individuals had better access to facilities, or greater awareness of the support available.
- v. The County Council's role in well-being was to try and prevent poor mental health issues arising.

15/16/EP Cambridge University

The Panel received a presentation from Kevin Coutinho, an Equality and Diversity consultant for Cambridge University on the measures that the University had put in place to promote equality and diversity within the University.

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

- i. Reference was made to the City Council's Chief Executive reading the Equality Pledge and the event at Queens College Cambridge.
- ii. Asked whether the University had disability champions.
- iii. Asked whether the implementation of equality practices were getting easier.
- iv. Asked if the new Prevent Policy had had any impact.

In response to questions from the Panel Kevin Coutinho, an Equality and Diversity consultant for Cambridge University made the following comments:

- i. Asked whether the Chief Executive's reading of the equality pledge had been tweeted.
- ii. Confirmed that the University had disability champions.

- iii. Commented that most organisations were comfortable with the headlines of equalities but some had difficulties in embedding equalities within working practices. The University's practices had improved although further work was needed.
- iv. Students with disabilities were likely to be affected by budget cuts.
- v. Employees were reluctant to disclose if they had a disability as they felt that they may be dis-advantaged.
- vi. Referred to a 'make no assumptions' Cambridge University campaign in relation to gender identity issues.
- vii. Commented that in terms of the higher education sector women made up 50% of the workforce, but less than 20% were professors. The introduction of a compulsory retirement age by Cambridge University which has led to increased turnover of staff has seemed to help with increasing the number of females amongst senior academic staff.
- viii. The University was mindful to support both faith and non-faith communities.

15/17/EP Climate Change Strategy

The Panel received a report from David Kidston, The Strategy and Partnership Officer on the draft Climate Change Strategy.

The Panel were asked for their input on the particular impacts and risks on equalities groups which might arise from predicted changes to the climate in Cambridge.

The Panel made the following comments:

- i. In relation to impacts on disability, comments were made that lots of people with a disability had a mobility car as public transport was not as accessible as it should be. Mobility cars tended to be diesel which was now understood to be more polluting than petrol. Some villages only had one bus an hour. All public transport was meant to be accessible by 2016 however there was no definition of what accessible meant.
- ii. In relation to impacts on gender, comments were made that women tended to be the main carer for children, if there were school closures following an environmental incident (for example flooding) women could be disproportionately affected.
- iii. In relation to impacts on pregnancy, maternity, civil partnerships and marriage it was highlighted that if the weather was severely hot then this would affect pregnant women.
- iv. In relation to race and ethnicity the key factor identified was language barriers and the production of advisory material.

- v. In relation to religion and belief, it was raised whether multi-faith buildings could be developed to make more efficient use of buildings and development land. The issue of food supply was also raised and whether climate change could impact on the ability to be able to produce certain foods in order to meet various faiths' requirements. It was also questioned whether there could be better use of agricultural land to try and meet the needs of different faiths so there was less reliance on importing products and less impact on the environment. The availability of land for burials and also the different requirements for different faiths was also discussed.

The verbal feedback provided by Panel members was constrained by the limited time available for this item. However, additional written comments were also provided from the breakout group discussions at the meeting, and officers said they would incorporate these comments into the consultation feedback on the strategy.

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

CHAIR

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