

# Public Document Pack

Equalities Panel	EP/1	Monday, 13 June 2016
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## **EQUALITIES PANEL**

13 June 2016  
4.00 - 6.00 pm

**Chair:** Antoinette Jackson

**Elected Members:** Councillors Abbott, O'Connell, O'Connell, Sarris and Ratcliffe.

**Public Members:** Graham Lewis, Judith Margolis, Orsola Rath Spivack, Raheela Rehman, and Susan Wan.

**Staff Members:** Ari Henry and Joe Obe.

### **Officers:**

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff

Senior Business Support Officer: Melanie Jones

## **FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

### **16/1/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received by Cllr Adey, Karen Lee and Jane Wilson.

As some were new to the Equalities Panel, the Chief Executive provided a brief introduction as to the role of the Panel. This was followed by introductions by all around the table.

### **16/2/EP Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

### **16/3/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

- Mental Health i. (page 7) Orsola Spivack questioned whether the prospectus of services offered by the Mental Health Trust for young people had been circulated among Panel members.

**ACTION: Suzanne Goff agreed to circulate information from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding the Mental Health Trust.**

- ii. Waiting lists for children. GL confirmed these had been re-opened but assessments were not being made where there was the possibility of an autism diagnosis. This issue is being taken up by Health Watch in its statutory powers.

**16/4/EP      Single Equalities Scheme Annual Update**

The Panel had received a summary report from Strategy and Partnerships Manager David Kidston. The purpose of the scheme is to provide an opportunity to review the Council's progress in the delivery of its actions. Officers are therefore seeking comments from the Panel on the work so far achieved during 2015/16 and any feedback on the listed actions proposed for 2016/17.

(Panel members were invited to participate in a short exercise to aid discussion)

Joe Obe added that the Equality Awareness training courses provided also included courses on Mental Health Awareness and a three day course on Mental Health First Aid.

Translation services. Orsola Spivack stressed that although language should not act as a barrier to services, the provision is costly. Was there therefore a risk funding would be lost?

David Kidston confirmed written translation in particular was costly so officers were being encouraged to use telephone or face-to-face interpreting as these help issues to be understood more clearly. Demand for translation is increasing due to the number of refugees but the City Council has sufficient budget capacity.

Susan Wan asked whether briefing sessions were included in the staff induction package. David Kidston confirmed as part of the Equalities Training process, all new staff are required to attend a half-day session as part of their Induction. Briefings for Councillors are organised annually but there has been little take up in the past from Members. This year as an alternative, a document was circulated as part of the Member Induction pack.

Susan Wan praised the initiative with the Citizens' Advice Bureau but asked how its success was being measured.

Running for a year from a GP practice in East Barnwell, issues of ill-health that were debt-related could be fed back to a CAB advisor who could then identify any benefits the patient may be entitled to or ways their income could be supplemented. According to David Kidston, feedback from GPs has been positive with its benefit to patients supported.

Ari Henry added that the scheme had been successful as the CAB advice was being provided 'on prescription.'

Looking to the proposed actions for 2016/17 Raheela Rehman enquired as to the training courses and whether there was any form of certification or encouragement for staff to take their training further.

According to Deborah Simpson, certification was by way of attendance. To date, take-up of these courses had been good, particularly regarding issues such as mental health and LGBT awareness. Some training is compulsory at induction stage.

Jo Obe added that in his experience, many staff members had expressed a change of attitude and a greater level of understanding as a result of these training courses.

Cllr Ratcliffe requested some details regarding the proposed Pink Festival. Graham Lewis confirmed Andy Bell of band 'Erasure' will be giving a concert for diversity at the Corn Exchange 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The Junction will also be holding an indoor festival for one night. There have been changes in how the Pink Festival receives its funding hence the change in format this year according to Graham Lewis. Other upcoming events include a skills management event for young people run by local charity SexYOUality taking place at the Guildhall. There will also be the cabaret marquee at the Big Weekend this summer.

## **16/5/EP      Equality in Employment Report**

Deborah Simpson introduced the report (pages 41-74 in the Document Pack) and summarised key findings regarding trends in the workforce.

This is an annual report with data since 2008 on how the City Council is doing in terms of equality. The Council is becoming smaller with 910 members of staff. The targets illustrated are based on census data. The data reveals for example a slight decrease in BAME representation and a slight increase in disabled staff. Officers need to look at what more we need to do regarding representation in the Council. The recent TUPE transfers of staff included a high percentage of BAME staff within the transfers. From April 2017 the Government will set targets on apprenticeships. Officers will also need to look

at any obvious barriers to access to (corporate) training. The data also shows that 51% of staff have been with the Council for ten years or more indicating a relatively low staff turnover.

Panel members were invited to ask questions regarding the report.

(i) Graham Lewis described the report as concise and informative and containing the correct level of detail.

(ii) Raheela Rehman enquired as to the reduction in applications from the BAME community and whether the City Council was reaching the correct calibre of people. Deborah Simpson confirmed there was an action to look at the recruitment process and whether there were any barriers. The impact of the TUPE transfers is likely to be apparent for the next 1-2 years. Increasing representation of BAME staff in light of this will present a challenge which provides additional justification to examine any obvious barriers in the recruitment process.

(iii) Cllr O'Connell enquired as to potential to capture Traveller data within the report, whether there was a mechanism for self-reporting mental ill health as a disability and whether applicants or staff were forced to declare gender. Deborah Simpson confirmed Traveller data could be included but that no applications had been received this year. In terms of disabilities, HR become aware of absences from work via the Manager and that the process was very much self-declaration. Mental health is not recorded separately. With new starters, there is an opportunity for 100% data capture with the monitoring sheet kept separately from the application form. In relation to the question on gender, the options are currently Male/Female with the application form providing no third option at the moment. Deborah Simpson undertook to look at this as the application form is currently being reviewed.

Suzanne Goff confirmed that within the Staff Guidelines Pack, the forms could be changed to reflect gender as a spectrum but this is a work in progress as across the Authority, this may mean hundreds of forms would need to be changed.

(iv) Orsola Spivack asked whether it was possible to differentiate the disabilities within the data as the support needs of staff would likely vary. This is not currently being captured. In recruitment applicants are asked if they need any support to attend the interview. All unsuccessful applications are destroyed over time. It would be difficult for officers to analyse at this time.

(v) Susan Wan enquired regarding apprenticeships and how the data would compare with other organisations.

The Council originally had the target of 20 apprenticeships over 4 years, which has been reduced to 15 (page 47 of the report). Apprenticeships do not replace existing jobs and are not a guarantee of a future role in the organisation. New targets will be in place from April 2017 and further information is expected in June from Government on the implementation of the levy and targets.

The employment targets are produced in relation to the census data, based on the population who are economically active. As fewer organisations are reporting to the same level of detail there is no easy way of capturing the data, it's difficult to make comparisons.

Susan Wan asked whether further apprenticeships could provide promotion opportunities and could be part -time. Deborah Simpson confirmed this would make a difference and that officers were currently looking at full apprenticeships not part time apprenticeships.

### **16/6/EP      Equality and Diversity Partnership**

David Kidston introduced this item as an opportunity to revisit the forward programme to ensure the issues being covered were still relevant. Panel members were invited to provide officers with some steer.

The Panel agreed that the issues listed under 1.1 were still relevant and should continue to be discussed. Updates on the strands listed under 1.2 would be appreciated when appropriate.

Cllr Abbott stressed that domestic violence or sexual abuse did not solely affect women. Susan Wan added that children and young people's issues were acute and could be covered under Mental Health issues as listed within 1.1. Orsola Spivack added that some topics could be collated such as financial abuse and fraud being discussed under the Older People's Issues. Joe Obe stressed the need to keep hate crime under discussion which could be linked to attitudes towards immigration according to Orsola Spivack.

As the number of foodbanks has increased in and around the city, Joe Obe stressed the need to keep anti-poverty under discussion.

**ACTION: Antoinette Jackson and David Kidston to schedule a series of themed meetings and discuss how these could be structured as part of the rolling programme of the Equalities Panel.**

### **16/7/EP      Equalities Panel programme for 2015/16**

Ari Henry in Jane Wilson's absence provided some background information and presented the proposals for a Cambridge-wide Equality and Diversity Partnership. The Panel were invited to provide their feedback and to consider what the challenges as well as opportunities might be for such an organisation.

Judith Margolis welcomed the Partnership but questioned whether the voice of smaller charities would be heard over that of the larger charities.

Graham Lewis stated that he had attended a small charity meeting recently where staff resource was available. According to Ari Henry, this would not include all larger groups but those groups that had contributed to the strategy and were relevant to their sector. As some issues are personal, these could be heard as part of themed working groups.

Antoinette Jackson added that it would be up to the groups to decide how the Partnership would work. This goes straight to the heart of the issue on the Forward Programme about resource and resilience.

Susan Wan added that the challenges were not underestimated but that this was initiative was welcomed. Orsola stressed that the aim should not be to compartmentalise but that the remit of the Partnership should be kept wide. Ari Henry stressed that the groups would shape the Partnership as there was no wish for officers to control or limit its remit and that some refinements had already been made.

### **Any Other Business**

A candle-lit vigil is to be held tomorrow evening (Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June) at 6pm outside the Guildhall, organised in partnership with SexYOUality.

Antoinette Jackson thanked everyone for their contributions.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

**CHAIR**