

EQUALITIES PANEL

21 November 2016
4.00 - 5.30 pm

Chair: Antoinette Jackson

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

Elected Members: Councillors Abbott, O'Connell and Ratcliffe

Staff Members: Ariadne Henry and Joe Obe

Officers:

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Strategy Officer: Suzanne Goff

Safer Communities Partnership Support Officer: Louise Walker

Supported Housing Manager: Frances Swann

16/8/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Donald Adey, Councillor Peter Sarris and Karen Lee.

16/9/EP Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

16/10/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 2nd February 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

16/11/EP Domestic Violence and the White Ribbon Campaign

Louise Walker gave a presentation on domestic violence and the role of the Council's Safer Communities team and the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership. This was in response to a previous request from the Panel to receive a presentation on the Council's work on domestic violence.

Louise explained that domestic violence is defined as controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. It can affect anyone, regardless of gender or sexuality, and can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. The key points raised in Louise's presentation included:

- i. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), 8.2% of women and 4% of men were estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in 2014/15.
- ii. 1,744 incidents in Cambridge City were reported to police during 2015/16, but it is likely that the actual number of incidents was higher due to under-reporting of domestic violence to the police by victims.
- iii. The Government has published a national 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' strategy for 2016-2020, which required all Police and Crime Commissioners to carry out a domestic violence needs assessment.
- iv. The Community Safety Partnership's priorities for 2016/17 are: all violence, including domestic violence; exploitation, particularly of women and children; personal property crime; and anti-social behaviour within vulnerable groups.
- v. In addition to domestic violence and the White Ribbon Campaign, the City Council's Safer Communities team focuses on: anti-social behaviour; the Neighbourhood Resolution Panel; the PREVENT agenda; racial harassment and community cohesion; and Syrian refugee resettlement.
- vi. The City Council has been awarded White Ribbon status for two years from February 2015. The Council's role is to raise awareness of domestic violence issues.
- vii. The Council has appointed 7 ambassadors and has carried out a range of activities to date, including: launching a community forum; establishing quarterly forums and subgroups for businesses and education organisations; holding talks for professionals; hosting a domestic violence survivors conference; and maintaining a webpage and circulating the newsletter produced by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Panel members asked a number of questions about domestic violence and the White Ribbon Campaign:

- i. Ariadne Henry asked whether schools and Universities had engaged in the White Ribbon Campaign. Louise Walker confirmed that Anglia Ruskin University, the University of Cambridge, and a number of

Cambridge further education colleges and schools are represented on the education forum under the campaign. However, she explained that different organisations were progressing at different speeds, with some beginning with incident logging and training, and others moving on to other steps.

- ii. Susan Wan asked how the Council will measure the impact of work to promote the White Ribbon Campaign. Louise Walker explained that this will be assessed following the achievement of the White Ribbon status in February 2015 as part of the Council's application to renew its status in 2017.
- iii. Raheela Rehman asked for more information on the research referred to in the presentation. Louise Walker said that the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (Government) rather than the City Council. It is a sample survey and the results are used alongside police statistics on reported incidents of crime to provide information for the government.
- iv. Graham Lewis asked if victims of domestic violence are rehoused and if so, does this tend to be outside Cambridge. Louise confirmed that victims are usually rehoused outside Cambridge, but that occasionally some victims may be temporarily rehoused within Cambridge depending on their situation. The city also receives victims of domestic violence who are being relocated from other places.

Panel members also asked several questions about the PREVENT agenda:

- i. Councillor O'Connell asked where referrals for PREVENT can come from. Louise Walker explained that referrals can come from Councillors, frontline staff or from communities.
- ii. Raheela Rehman asked what training is available on PREVENT issues. Louise Walker explained that the Home Office prescribes the training and that over 200 frontline members of staff, community leaders and some Councillors have been trained in Cambridge.

ACTION: Louise agreed to provide members of the Panel with further details of the PREVENT training courses.

16/12/EP Older People

Frances Swann gave a presentation on older peoples issues, including safeguarding, financial vulnerability, and digital inclusion. This presentation was in response to a previous request for an update on these issues and how they affect older people in Cambridge.

Frances explained that safeguarding means protecting the interests of adults or children who are at risk of harm. For adults there are 10 Categories of abuse which include physical, sexual, financial, psychological and institutional abuse. The 2014 Care Act also introduced a requirement for local authorities (the County Council) to take action in cases of self-neglect and this may include a mental capacity assessment where appropriate. The key points raised in Frances's presentation included:

- i. The City Council has made 256 safeguarding referrals to Cambridgeshire County Council in the last 4 years. 40% of these referrals were for people aged 65 or over, of which 32% were for self-neglect/risk of suicide.
- ii. There has been an increase in familial abuse of older people.
- iii. 52 of the 256 safeguarding referrals were for suspected financial abuse.
- iv. Some older people do not claim the benefits that they are entitled to and are struggling financially as a result. The City Council's Revenues and Benefits service has targeted campaigns focussed on improving benefit take up.
- v. The City Council's Council Tax Support scheme also protects older people.
- vi. Vulnerable older people tend to be more reliant on cash than electronic means of payment. When they leave hospital, they may struggle to leave their home to access the cash they need, so the City Council is working with Age UK and others to support older people to set up direct debits for household bills.
- vii. The City Council has been commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to provide a tenure-neutral support service (known as the 65+ service) for older people in Cambridge. As part of this service, staff visit older people in their homes to assess their needs and signpost them to relevant services. In 2015/16, 835 assessments were made.
- viii. 25% of referrals made by the 65+ service related to support with finances. £192,000 in additional benefits payments were made following these referrals, including attendance allowance and pension credits.
- ix. To date the Government's Welfare Reforms have focussed mainly on working people rather than older people, but some changes could affect

older people, if they are living with someone under 65 who is working and earning over the income threshold.

- x. 65% of all those who are digitally excluded are aged over 65. Statistics show that the older people are less likely to access and continue to use the internet.
- xi. The Council is launching a Getting Online project for older people. Older people in the Council's sheltered housing accommodation are currently being recruited and trained as digital champions and will be supporting other tenants to get online.

Councillor Abbott asked whether older people who cannot leave their homes to access services would be provided with 1 to 1 support. Frances Swann explained that the 65+ service visits older people in their homes to carry out assessments, and it is hoped that the digital champions would visit people in their homes as well as in communal settings. The Council is also working with befriending schemes who provide one-to-one support for older people in their homes.

16/13/EP Single Equality Scheme Update

David Kidston gave an update on selected projects from the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan that are being delivered during 2016/17. These included:

- The Council's residents' survey, where a number of steps have been taken to ensure that the findings are representative of the Cambridge population.
- A range of equalities training courses for Council that have been provided, including a series of transgender awareness courses for staff and voluntary groups that have been very well attended.
- Work with the Encompass Network to promote Council facilities and activities as Safer Spaces for LGBT residents
- A range of events organised with partner organisations to celebrate Black History Month in October, including a digital exhibition of photographs from the Imperial War Museums showing the contribution of Black and Commonwealth soldiers to the British Armed Forces.
- Several projects that are being taken forward to promote digital inclusion, including the work with older people outlined by Frances Swann under Item 4 and the establishment of a digital inclusion hub at the Meadows Community Centre.
- A number of projects focusing on disability, including:
 - a new requirement for safeguarding training, including accessibility and equality training, for all licensed taxi drivers as part of the Council's new taxi policy;

- work to support the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Crisis Concordat;
- expansion of outreach advice services for people suffering mental health due to financial issues; and
- internal and external activities to celebrate World Mental Health week

Members of the Panel asked a number of questions in relation to the various projects:

- i. Raheela Rehman asked whether the digital exhibition was still available. Ariadne Henry said that the exhibition was still available online and that she would circulate a link to Panel members.
- ii. Raheela asked how the Council would measure the impact of digital projects. Suzanne Goff explained that the Council would be using the national Digital Outcomes Framework to measure the impact of projects.
- iii. Raheela and Graham Lewis commented that the transgender awareness session at the Diversity Forum was of high quality and was well attended by external organisations.

Cllr Abbott commented that the number of people in mental health crisis presenting to Accident and Emergency services had increased, despite the new services being provided under the Mental Health Concordat. Suzanne Goff explained that although the sanctuary had been launched in March, it had not been promoted widely until October, so people may not have been aware of the support available. Graham Lewis said he was aware anecdotally that the sanctuary was providing very effective support for those experiencing mental health crisis. Judith Margolis added that the aim of the scheme was also to reduce the impact on police resources, of responding to people in mental health crisis.

16/14/EP Any Other Business

In response to questions raised by members of the Panel, there was a discussion about the impact of the EU referendum and the US presidential elections on community cohesion and hate crime in Cambridge.

Antoinette Jackson said that there has not been a significant rise in reported hate crime in Cambridge since the referendum, but the Police and the Council's Community Safer Communities service continue to monitor this. She also reported that the Leader of the City Council had organised a public

meeting to discuss the impact of Brexit, but this had focussed primarily on employment, trade and research issues.

Members of the Panel suggested that, to help counter any rise in community tensions, the work that the Council and partner agencies in Cambridge do to promote equalities should be promoted more. For example, events such as Black History Month successfully bring together people from different communities. Antoinette Jackson agreed that the Council would consider what more it could do in this area.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

CHAIR