

**EQUALITIES PANEL**

20 November 2017

4.00 - 6.10 pm

**Chair:** Antoinette Jackson

**Public Members:** Graham Lewis and Orsola Rath Spivack

**Elected Members:** Councillors Abbott, Adey, and Sheil

**Staff Members:** Ariadne Henry and Lesley-Ann George

**Officers:**

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer: Helen Crowther

Senior Recruitment Advisor: Andrew Rowland

Independent living Supervisor: Clara Gomez-Serrano

Care and Support Manager: Laura Adcock

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**17/12/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed new Staff Member Lesley-Ann George.

Apologies were received from:

- Councillors T Moore and Ratcliffe
- Staff members, Karen Lee, Joe Obe and Jenna Varga; and
- Public members, Dr Susan Wan, Raheela Rehman and Judith Margolis.

**17/13/EP Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

**17/14/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting of the 20 June 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising:

Helen Crowther undertook to recirculate information on Prevent Training and open days at local Mosque's, as requested at the last meeting, as some members had not received it.

### **17/15/EP Disability Confident Communication and Implementation Plan**

The Panel received a presentation from Senior Recruitment Advisor, Andrew Rowland regarding the Disability Confident Scheme and Cambridge City Council's Communications and Implementation Plan.

The presentations covered the following issues:

- i. Disability Confident would replace the 'Two Ticks' Positive about Disabled People scheme.
- ii. Would consist of three levels:
  - Level 1 Disability Confident **Committed**
  - Level 2 Disability Confident **Employer**
  - Level 3 Disability Confident **Leader**
- iii. Would encourage development of commitment and actions to support disabled applicants and staff.
- iv. Outlined the internal communications process and stated that recruitment documentation would be updated.
- v. Stated that implementation would include raising the profile of our commitment to equality.
- vi. Cambridge City Council were now at Level 2, Disability Confident Employer.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Senior Recruitment Advisor stated the following:

- i. The new scheme encourages continuous improvements.
- ii. Information on the Disability Confident Scheme was available which could support small businesses.
- iii. It was hoped that the new approach would encourage more staff to declare disabilities.
- iv. Work was on-going to communicate with the Disabled staff group.
- v. Joint working with other local organisations was planned for the future.

Graham Lewis welcomed the scheme and hoped that this would discourage organisations from resting on their laurels. External challenge should result in on-going progress.

The Panel welcomed the work already undertaken and hoped to hear more in the future.

### **17/16/EP Dementia Action Alliance**

The Panel received a presentation from Independent Living Supervisor, Clara Gomez-Serrano regarding the Dementia Action Alliance.

The presentation covered the following issues:

- i. The local Dementia Action Alliance is initially coordinated by the Alzheimer's Society bringing local businesses together to create dementia friendly communities.
- ii. Partnership working was encouraged.
- iii. Significant numbers of local employers and businesses had signed up.
- iv. 18 City Council officers had been trained to lead on the required actions in their service areas.
- v. Events for older people had been held in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Music and movement had been encouraged. The events were very successful and more were planned.

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

- i. This had been a largely ignored area of need in the past.
- ii. Churches and faith groups had recently launched dementia awareness projects.
- iii. Taxi drivers have received compulsory dementia awareness as part of their safeguarding training.
- iv. Adding this training to new councillors' induction training was suggested.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Independent Living Supervisor stated the following:

- i. Guidance notes regarding City Council tenants known to be suffering from dementia could be added to the on-line notes (such as Orchard Housing System). However, the Dementia Action Alliance approach was more about awareness raising and to encourage approaching everyone with patience, kindness and understanding. Everyone would benefit, whether they have dementia or not, for example those with sensory impairment or poor mental health.

- ii. The Dementia Engagement & Empowerment Project (DEEP) brings together groups of people with dementia from across the UK and encourages use of simple language.
- iii. Wherever possible written information for the public should be as simple as possible and local authorities were encouraged to use 'easy read'.
- iv. Staff needed to be aware that infographics and colourful pages could be confusing for dementia sufferers.
- v. Use of video instead of text could be considered.
- vi. Dementia friend training is available to anyone interested (Contact Clara Gomez-Serrano or details are on line at [www.alzhiemers.org.uk](http://www.alzhiemers.org.uk))

The Panel thanked Clara Gomez-Serrano for her interesting and thought provoking presentation.

### **17/17/EP Exploration of links between Poverty and Inequality through our Anti-poverty Strategy**

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager, David Kidston and the Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, Helen Crowther, introduced this agenda item and asked the panel to split into smaller groups. The groups were asked to provide feedback on the Anti-Poverty Strategy 2017-2020 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). They were asked to identify further issues around how poverty affects people with protected characteristics that were missed, and any ideas for further actions the council could undertake to address these issues.

Group one made the following comments:

- i. The EqIA focused on the more obvious links between particular equalities groups and poverty and missed the multi layered impacts of 'intersectionality': for example, some BAME women may lack employment or health opportunities due to discrimination or language, cultural and religious barriers.
- ii. The lack of transport links for those on low income limited engagement with the wider community.
- iii. Maternity and associated costs (loss of income/transport) could result in poverty for some residents.
- iv. LGB and transgender residents are more likely to experience discrimination, which can lead to mental health issues and impact on employment opportunities and income levels.

Group two made the following comments:

- i. Young people in low paid employment face a number of challenges such as: lack of affordable housing forcing them to remain in the family home,

- lack of life skills and insecure jobs (often described as the 'gig economy').
- ii. The Council could look into support already provides for new tenants, especially young people, to see if can address more problems related to budgeting and life skills.
  - iii. The Council could work with partner agencies to improve transport links.
  - iv. Visible disabilities attract support while hidden disabilities, such as mental health issues, receive less attention. Discussed how mental health issues can be exacerbated by poverty and vice versa.
  - v. Discussed link between housing, poverty and inequality. Some protected characteristic groups, for example BAME people, are more likely to live in housing that is in disrepair or overcrowded HMOs. They may also be socially isolated due to language barriers. Can more be done to support these groups in the private rented sector?
  - vi. Language barriers result in social isolation for BAME groups.
  - vii. Targeted work with specific groups that are especially likely to experience social isolation, such as Bangladeshi women, could be successful.
  - viii. In developing the next Single Equality Scheme Strategy, we need to examine previous initiatives and learn from them about what works, and look for evidence based results.

### **17/18/EP AOB and Close of Meeting**

Ariadne Henry, Community Development Officer (Engagement & Inclusion) updated the panel on the following:

- i. Faiths Partnership: The first event took place recently and four smaller events are planned for the coming year. Request a report on the faiths survey from [Ariadne.henry@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Ariadne.henry@cambridge.gov.uk)
- ii. Equalities Partnership: This started with a series of training sessions on the different sectors. These went well and the series will be repeated next year. There will be a meeting of the full partnership at the end of January.
- iii. Disability History Month (DHM): Instead of a single event, there will be a series of Disability Arts workshops throughout the first six months of next year run in partnership with local disability arts organisations. Arts and Disability is the theme for DHM 2017.
- iv. There are a number of events being planned for the coming year to celebrate women's suffrage. The Council is supporting this coalition of individuals, local women's groups, the universities and public authorities.

- v. Holocaust Memorial Day: There is a new provider for the HMD activities. This work has started with a series of workshops with Michael Rosen (children's novelist and poet), and has involved 1330 local primary and secondary school children so far.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm

**CHAIR**