

**EQUALITIES PANEL**

16 July 2019  
4.00 - 6.00 pm

**Chair:** Antoinette Jackson

**Public Members:** Judith Margolis, Raheela Rehman, Dr Susan Wan and Orsola Spivak

**Elected Members:** Councillor Porrer

**Staff Members:** Alistair Wilson, Ariadne Henry and Lesley-Ann George

**Officers:**

Head of Housing: David Greening

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer: Helen Crowther

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**19/33/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

- Public Member: Graham Lewis
- Elected Members: Councillors Collis, Smart, Page-Croft and Thittala
- Staff Members: Joe Obe and Naomi Armstrong

The Panel welcomed new Members to the Panel who were present: Councillor Porrer and Staff Member Alistair Wilson

**19/34/EP Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

**19/35/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> November were approved and signed as an accurate record.

**19/36/EP Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance**

The Panel received a presentation from David Greening, Head of Housing, on the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), which covered the following points:

- i. Ways that domestic abuse can impact differently on people with different protected characteristics: including age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and sex.
- ii. DAHA is a partnership between Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, Peabody and Gentoo.
- iii. DAHA's mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process for social housing providers.
- iv. Priority areas of DAHA include policy and procedures, case management, risk management, equality and diversity, perpetrator management, partnership working, staff training and publicity and awareness.
- v. The aims of DAHA include: improving staff confidence in identifying and dealing with domestic abuse; standardising processes so residents get the right response every time; increasing staff interaction with local initiatives; reducing costs to housing providers from domestic abuse; and reducing cost to public purse via earlier interventions by housing providers.
- vi. The City Council has been working on DAHA accreditation since May 2018 and holds a monthly steering group. The Council was first assessed for accreditation in May 2019 and will be reassessed in August/ September 2019.
- vii. A lot of progress has been made so far, including developing new policies and procedures for our City Homes and Housing Advice teams, undertaking case audits, carrying out risk assessments, developing a new policy for staff impacted by domestic abuse, and including information on domestic abuse in the Council's tenant handbook.
- viii. Some next steps for DAHA include developing a corporate approach beyond Housing Services to domestic abuse by asking Council services to sign up to a new domestic abuse new flagging system, ensuring there are clear linkages between domestic abuse and safeguarding policies, and developing a target hardening approach (making homes safer for

survivors of domestic abuse). The Council is also supporting CHS Group through the accreditation process and is in conversation with South Cambridgeshire District Council that is considering signing up.

The Panel Members commented on how different protected characteristics may be impacted by domestic abuse, and asked questions on DAHA, including:

- i. How many domestic abuse cases does the Council respond to?
- ii. Does the Council only focus on domestic abuse cases relating to Council housing properties or in relation to other housing and service providers?
- iii. The Council needs to give further consideration to mental health issues caused by abuse, including effects on children, and also how perpetrators might have mental health issues. The Panel also asked what training Council receive around mental health.
- iv. Are we linking our DAHA work to our safeguarding policy?
- v. Financial abuse can be caused where Universal Credit is going to one member of a household. The Council and partners need to work with the Department for Work and Pensions to highlight financial abuse in these instances.
- vi. People in some BAME communities may be afraid to report domestic abuse due to fears of stigma or being disowned by members of their community.
- vii. Cambridge Women's Aid is running an 'Ask Me' campaign to support people to talk about domestic abuse if it comes up in conversation.
- viii. The Council needs to make sure that it refers people to the correct agencies, particularly if other issues are identified in addition to domestic abuse. The Council's referral process needs to be robust and it needs to follow through to check if the aims of referral have been achieved.
- ix. Consider seeking information from the Council's Children and Young People's Service regarding how domestic abuse impacts on children that the Council works with.

David Greening, Head of Housing, commented on feedback and answered questions asked:

- i. DAHA considered 20 domestic abuse cases dealt with by the Council's Housing Advice service prior to January 2019, and 20 cases that were dealt with after this date

- ii. Part of the DAHA process is to engage with partners in order to improve the Council's process of responding to domestic abuse, including relating to referrals and signposting.
- iii. Domestic abuse affects people in complex ways and we are not specialists in providing a lot of the support that is necessary for people. The council undertakes risk assessments to understand the seriousness of particular cases of domestic abuse, and it has good links to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Centre (MARAC). If a referral is not considered appropriate for MARAC, the Council refers people to Women's Aid who we fund to provide 24/7 support for survivors of domestic abuse. Women's Aid work with children who are survivors of domestic abuse as well.
- iv. The Council undertakes a lot of training for staff around mental health but we cannot provide specialist support in this area.
- v. A range of statistics we hold could identify which protected characteristics we support with domestic abuse.

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, agreed to send the Panel the equality impact assessment for the customer policy relating to DAHA for any feedback from the Panel.

### **19/37/EP Cambridge City Council Single Equality Scheme 2018 - 2021 Year one Review June 2019**

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, presented the Year One Review of the Single Equality Scheme. This provided feedback on progress made for the first year of the 2018 to 2021 Scheme (so 2018/19) and new actions identified for 2019/20, the second year of the Scheme. The presentation:

- i. Shared that the Council publishes information annually to demonstrate how it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty (S.149 of the Equality Act 2010). The Year One Review went to the Council's Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019.
- ii. Highlighted some key achievements in 2018/19 of the Council, including: leading the development of a Cambridgeshire-wide policy on how funding for Disabled Facilities Grants are awarded, meeting our pledge to help resettle 100 refugees, and developing a new Sickness Absence Management Policy for Council staff.

- iii. Identified progress and further actions for 2019/20 relating to three key areas of priority that were identified when the Council developed the 2018 to 2021 scheme. These priorities were: supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to access public services and tackle discrimination they face; tackling loneliness experienced by older people and people in new communities; and supporting service users with mental health issues.
- iv. Shared some new actions for 2019/20 that included identifying how the Council can better support tenants with hoarding issues (who are more likely to have mental health issues like anxiety), developing a street charter for visually impaired people, and starting a period poverty campaign.
- v. Emphasised that the following equality and diversity campaigns are still being delivered across Council services: Equality Pledge, Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, STOP Suicide, Dementia Friends and Safer Spaces.

Panel Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- i. For clarification if the Children and Young People's Participation Service undertakes work with care leavers.
- ii. Whether the Cambridge Local Plan consider equalities issues in new communities in the city.
- iii. Further information on the Disabled Facilities Grants Review
- iv. One Panel Member commended the work the Council has undertaken to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to access public services in 2018/19.

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officers, and other Council officers provided the following responses:

- i. The Children and Young People's Participation Service mainly works with younger age groups, so it is unlikely to undertake much work with care leavers.
- ii. The new communities in the Southern Fringe of Cambridge have a particular demographic profile. For example, a recent survey of Southern Fringe residents found that the population of the Southern Fringe is slightly more ethnically diverse than Cambridge as a whole and that residents speak 48 different languages. To help support new

communities and address potential isolation, the Council provided Community Development Officers at an early point in the development of the Southern Fringe and provided grants to support community groups to form. The Council is currently working with Cambridgeshire County Council to consider what the needs and demands are for public services in the Southern Fringe.

The Panel were asked about future topics they would be interested in hearing about at the Panel. Panel members said that they would be interested in items on:

- i. hate crime and reporting centres
- ii. drug dealing by young people, care leavers and other vulnerable people in County Lines gangs.

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, agreed to undertake further research to identify relevance of the topics for the Panel in terms of the level of work we are undertaking on these issues compared to our partners, and agreed to send information to Panel Members on these areas of work via email if the topics are not relevant for Panel meeting discussions.

### **19/38/EP Equality in Employment End of Year Workforce Report April 2018 - March 2019**

A presentation was undertaken by Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, on the Equality in Employment report that monitors the profile of the workforce. Key findings were:

- i. The highest representation age group is 45 to 54, which is similar across local government.
- ii. The proportion of staff aged 25-34 has reduced, which partly reflects the fact that 50% of Council staff have worked for the Council for 10 years and have progressed through the age bands
- iii. 27% of the workforce is aged 55 plus, but only 18% of corporate training attendances were by people of this age, so we are exploring if there are any reasons for this and looking at all training
- iv. People aged 65+ are represented in all pay bands other than senior management
- v. There were 6.37% people declaring a disability, which has gone down from last year (6.97% for 2017/18). The target for disabled people's representation will remain at 7.5% for 2019/20.

- vi. 10.17% of our leavers declared they had disabilities, and some of the leavers were staff transferred to a service and are now employed by South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- vii. In the Council's employment policies there is no underlying evidence of unequal treatment.
- viii. There is a high representation of disabled people in senior roles.
- ix. 23 BAME people have been appointed in 2018/19 compared to 6 in 2017/18. There were still some BAME people leaving the workforce voluntarily or through transfer to another employer and many of the new appointments had not started yet, so the increase is not reflected in workforce representation overall at 31 March. There was 7.59% BAME representation in 2018/19, compared to 7.18% for 2017/18. The target for BAME people's representation will remain at 9.5% for 2019/20.
- x. BAME people are under-represented in most pay grades. BAME people tend to be represented most in lower pay grades, but there have been some new appointments in higher grades that have not started yet.
- xi. There is a 50% split between female and male people in the Council workforce. This is different to local government as a whole, which has 78% female employees.
- xii. There is high representation of female employees in senior roles in the Council.
- xiii. 69.5% of leavers were female, and this is in part explained by the Planning Service, that was predominantly female, being transferred to South Cambridgeshire District Council as a shared service.
- xiv. Year-on-year, staff have been more likely to declare data on religion and sexual orientation.
- xv. Christianity is the most common religion. There has been an increase in people declaring themselves to have no religion.
- xvi. 3.18% declared themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning in 2018/19 (compared to 2.62% for 2017/18).
- xvii. Our gender pay gap is in favour of men. The mean for the pay gap is 2.45% (compared to 3.19% for 2017/18), which is better than the local authority mean. The median pay gap is 5.53% (compared to 5.91% for 2017/18). A number of factors impact on the Council's gender pay gap, including the transfer of services to shared services.
- xviii. Some actions to help improve workforce representation for 2019/20 are to:

- Conduct an audit of BAME recruitment applications in 2019 to understand the increase in BAME appointments and what more we can do
- Undertake a Disability Confident review in late 2019
- Keep monitoring employment policies to ensure there is no underlying evidence of unequal treatment
- Capture data on all training provision, not just for corporate courses
- Undertake further work in identifying reasons for leaving of voluntary leavers
- Continue to monitor and contextualise the gender pay gap to see if anything can be done to reduce it.

Panel Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- i. How does the Council ensure that criteria for positions are not set too high?
- ii. Is the profile of jobs in the Council is changing?
- iii. Are professional service jobs hard to recruit for due to costs of living in the city?
- iv. Do we have a staff network for disabled people and is this part of our criteria for Disability Confident?
- v. What happens where profiles of existing staff change? How can they update their equality monitoring information?
- vi. Visibility of BAME staff can help to encourage other BAME people to apply for roles at the Council

Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, answered the questions:

- i. The Council needs to consider lengths of job descriptions and if all 'essential criteria' are really essential. The Council also needs to consider if it is proportionate for people to apply for specific positions via an application form or if CV applications are adequate.
- ii. Some of our services have been transferred to South Cambridgeshire District Council (Planning and Waste), which changes the profile of our workforce and jobs we recruit to. There have also been other changes to services that require people to have slightly different skills in the same jobs than they would have been required to have before.



- iii. It can be hard to recruit people into professional roles that require specific qualifications, such as Environmental Health Officers and Building Surveyors. One way in which the Council tackles this is by enabling people to work remotely, which encourages people from other locations beyond Cambridge to apply and accept positions.
- iv. There are no staff networks running currently due to lack of demand for them from staff.
- v. Staff can update their own equality monitoring information if anything changes, and the Council also carries out an annual data validation exercise, which involves writing to all staff asking to confirm if their monitoring information is still accurate

Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, agreed to check criteria for Disability Confident to see if having a staff network for disabled people is a requirement.

### **19/39/EP Any Other Business**

Antoinette Jackson, Chief Executive, has agreed to explore legalities around enabling Councillors who are on registered parental leave to nominate a proxy to cast their vote at Council. A report shall go to Civic Affairs in October. (This issue was raised by Councillor Porrer further to the recent amendments in Parliament to allow proxy voting for MPs on parental leave.)

Ariadne Henry, Community Development Officer, shared information about her work helping the Roma community to put in a bid for a project to explore their heritage through DNA and language analysis. The project aims to bring people of different communities together with the six museums across East Anglia that have signed up

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

**CHAIR**

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