

EQUALITIES PANEL

6 July 2021
4.00 - 6.00 pm

Chair: Robert Pollock

Councillor member: Baigent, Cox, Flaubert, Healy and Smart

Public members: Graham Lewis, Orsola Spivack, Raheela Rehman, Susan Wan,

Officer members: Ariadne Henry

Other officers in attendance: Deborah Simpson, Helen Crowther, David Kidston, Vickie Jameson

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

21/10/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Staff members: Alistair Wilson, Lesley-Ann George, Naomi Armstrong

21/11/EP Tribute to Judith Margolis

A tribute was given for Judith Margolis by Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, before starting the meeting:

The Equalities Panel is very saddened that Judith Margolis, Public Member of the Panel, died recently of gallbladder cancer.

Judith has been on the Panel as a public member for a number of years, and before we started this meeting we wanted to pay tribute to her, including to her contribution on the Panel. Judith was a passionate advocate for local people and her insights on disability rights and tackling discrimination and poverty were hugely valued.

Outside of the Panel, she was Chair of Disability Cambridgeshire and Trustee for 10 years. Disability Cambridgeshire describe her as having been an “inspirational leader” and hugely important in ensuring the continuation of the charity’s work.

Judith also had extensive and committed involvement with a vast number of other organisations within the voluntary sector involved in the fields of disability rights and reducing poverty, discrimination and/or injustice.

The Panel is pleased that we were able to send her flowers and a card to thank her for her contribution to the Panel before she passed away. Our thoughts and heart-felt condolences are with Judith's friends, family, and colleagues at this difficult time.

21/12/EP Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

21/13/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The notes of the meeting of the 26 January 2021 were noted.

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, agreed to resend minutes from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's 16th December 2020 Business Coordination Board. These contain details on measures put in place to address disproportionality of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people affected by the use of Stop and Search.

Helen Crowther also shared that the Race Equality Toolkit for businesses will be shared with the Equalities Panel once the final draft is ready.

21/14/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

21/15/EP Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, delivered a presentation on Cambridge City Council's Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024 that is due to go to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on 7 October 2021. Helen shared:

- Some key achievements of the previous Single Equality Scheme (2018 to 2021), such as that the Council:
 - Resettled 125 refugees in and near Cambridge
 - Became the 5th local authority to be awarded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation

- Provided nearly 7,900 hires for the Shopmobility service
- The consultation process for the Single Equality Scheme (SES) 2021 to 2024 from summer 2020 to the present, including details on internal meetings with key groups of staff and external meetings with voluntary and community sector organisations supporting different equality groups.
- Information on the Community Inclusion and Engagement Questionnaire undertaken to identify the needs of different communities in the city. The questionnaire findings are being used to inform the SES 2021 to 2024, where they are supported by findings of national research on issues experienced by equality groups. Helen noted that the findings of the questionnaire are not fully representative of the Cambridge population, as 202 people completed it and some equality groups were under-represented in responses, including young people and people from diverse ethnic communities.
- A summary of the proposed objectives of the new Scheme for 2021 to 2024, carried over from the 2018 to 2021 Scheme. The objectives are to:
 - Increase our understanding of the needs of communities
 - Improve access to and take-up of Council services
 - Help ensure all residents have equal access to public activities & spaces and are able to participate fully in the community
 - Tackle discrimination and promote community cohesion
 - Ensure that our employment and procurement policies and practices are non-discriminatory and work towards a more representative workforce
- Three proposed priorities of SES 2021 to 2024 relevant to the objectives that are:
 - To identify opportunities to hear from people with protected characteristics about their experiences of inequality and discrimination: especially relating to poverty and impacts of COVID-19.
 - To collaborate with voluntary and community sector, public sector, and private sector partners, and people directly experiencing discrimination and disadvantage to address equality issues.
 - For services to use intersectionality as an analytical framework in responding to residents' and customers' needs.
- Some of the key issues raised in consultation on the SES 2021 to 2024 and

areas of work that will be taken forward to address these issues:

- Digital exclusion has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Council plans to help address this through further collaboration with the Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership. The Council will also provide face-to-face appointments when digital exclusion means people cannot get support using the Council's new 'digital first' customer services model and plans to support sheltered housing scheme staff to improve their digital skills to help residents.
- Mental health has worsened during the coronavirus pandemic. Cambridge City Council aims to develop strong working relationships with mental health services, so City Council staff have a better understanding of the services and continue to provide training for Council staff on best practice in supporting service users with mental health problems.
- Loneliness and isolation have been increasingly experienced by young people and disabled people. The Council will look for opportunities to address this through its Community Grants and through its community development work.
- Some organisations supporting different ethnic groups wanted more opportunities for celebrating different cultures. So far in 2021/22 the Council has been supporting CB Mentoring to set up a mentoring project for young people from Black communities in Cambridgeshire. In 2021/22 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month has been marked in the city for the first year. Cambridge City Council also plans to liaise with Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, Cambridge Women's Resource Centre and other relevant partners about setting up a group for South Asian women.
- Voluntary and community sector organisations that the Council consulted with highlighted that hate crime and hate incidents have been increasingly experienced by people with hidden disabilities, transgender people and South Asian people. Cambridge City Council will continue working with partners in the Community Safety Partnership to help address this issue and continue to provide a Racial Harassment service. The Council plans to encourage other organisations to sign up to Safer Spaces, a campaign run by the Encompass Network, to help organisations identify best practice to be inclusive, safe and welcoming for LGBTQ+ people. In addition, the

Council has developed communications to help raise awareness of the difficulties people with hidden disabilities may have with complying with public health restrictions and to tackle public harassment they experience during the pandemic.

Following the presentation, Equalities Panel members were invited to ask questions or provide feedback on the areas of work and priorities of the new Single Equality Scheme. Panel members asked:

- For more information on how the aims of the Black Lives Matter and may be incorporated into the new SES.
- For details on how the new SES will address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on equalities groups.
- Whether other vulnerable people, as well as many digitally excluded people, will have opportunities to book face-to-face appointments with customer services.
- If local information on anti-Semitic hate crime is available, given that incidences have risen nationally.
- What metrics are in place to measure the success of initiatives addressing inequalities relating to Covid-19.
- Whether the Council is planning to adopt a transgender equality policy.
- What local support is in place to support young people who are LGBTQ+ who have mental health issues.
- What impact that Covid-19 has had on Cambridge City Council's budget and by extension the SES.

In response to these queries, Helen Crowther explained:

- The Council motion on Black Lives Matter specifically asked that in the SES the Council should review employment and retention, with an emphasis on consultation with BAME staff.
- The Council has supported the establishment of a BAME staff group, and will continue holding discussions on race equality issue with all staff members by taking part in Race Equality Week each February.
- The BAME staff group felt that supporting internal promotions is important to retaining BAME staff and to ensure BAME staff are represented in higher pay bands. As a result of this feedback, the Council is developing training for all staff relating to progression in the workplace and applications.

- The Black Lives Matter motion also asked the Council to use its role as a public leader to further race equality and tackle discrimination. The Council will be working with Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum on a needs assessment with ethnically diverse communities, which aims to help identify needs that may be addressed through working with partners.
- In addressing the impact Covid-19, an overarching priority of the Scheme is to continue to develop work with partners to tailor support to people's needs (especially mental health services, Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership, Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum and the Food Poverty Alliance).
- In considering how poverty has been exacerbated for certain groups during the pandemic, the Council aims to make sure it identifies opportunities to hear from people with protected characteristics directly about their needs. Tackling loneliness especially of young people and disabled people will continue to be a priority.
- The Council's Customer Services would make face-to-face appointments with other vulnerable people as well as digitally excluded people. People may be vulnerable due to mental health issues or from experiencing domestic abuse, for instance.
- The Council will ask Cambridgeshire Police if there has been a local increase in anti-Semitic hate crime.
- The feedback on the increases of hate crime experienced by people with hidden disabilities, transgender people and South Asian people was from anecdotal evidence from voluntary and community sector organisations that have been consulted on the new Scheme.
- It is difficult to get local indications of the extent of hate crimes in the city experienced by different groups. A high proportion of people do not report hate crimes or incidents and local figures for each equality group are very low, making it difficult to identify patterns.
- The Council does not currently have plans for a specific transgender equality policy, but the Council has taken a range of action, including producing a pronouns protocol for staff, providing Transgender Awareness training for staff and Councillors, and signing up to Safer Spaces (an Encompass Network campaign to identify good practice for organisations to be welcoming, inclusive and safe to LGBTQ+ employees and service users).

- The Council's Children and Young People's Participation Service (CHYPPS) works with The Kite Trust to signpost and refer young LGBTQ+ people needing support. A Panel member also shared that The Kite Trust is a member of Fullscope, working together with other charities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to improve the mental health and well-being of all young people.

David Kidston, explained that the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy includes a number of different metrics to measures aspects of poverty. The Council is also introducing a Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) that can help track households that come in and out of poverty. The Council is also working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council on a wider project looking into the impact of Covid-19 on particular groups. A report on Covid impacts on poverty and inequality in Cambridge could be presented to a future meeting.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, shared that the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's budget has been 20% net revenue.

21/16/EP Equality in Employment End of Year Workforce Update: April 2020 - March 2021

Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, presented the Equality in Employment report and key information shared included:

- At 31 March 2021, there were 816 staff now compared to 827 at 31 March 2020.
- Staff representation in terms of sex is 52% male and 48 % female and has been broadly 50% male and 50% female for a number of years. Gender pay data for 2020 identified there has been an improvement in the gender pay balance between females and males. There are fewer women in the lowest quartile of the pay bands.
- The highest percentage of staff were in the 45-54 age band, and there are relatively fewer people aged under 24 or over 65. This has been consistent for a number of years.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of BAME people in the workforce from 7.54% at 31 March 2020 to 7.71% at 31 March 2021. BAME representation across the pay grades has improved.
- Cambridge City Council is proposing to increase its target of the percentage of disabled staff to 8.5%. At 31 March 2021, 7.11% of staff declared they

are disabled, which is similar to the previous year. The Council will be looking at why numbers of applicants declaring a disability are declining.

- The 2021 Census data will further help the Council to review its data and set new targets for the percentage of disabled staff and BAME staff as a proportion of its workforce.
- The Council has worked towards increasing representation of BAME people, partly by promoting employment opportunities through networks with far reaching and diverse audiences. Following feedback from the BAME staff group on improving retention of BAME staff, the Council is also developing training for staff around preparing for roles as internal promotions.
- Overall attendance for training across the Council was up in 2020/21, but there was a marked decline in the number of males attending training accounting for 29% compared to 71% female attendees. The Council will look at teams with a high number of males in operational roles to identify actions which identify the imbalance in training attendance between the sexes in this last year.
- Last year there was an increase in staff declaring their sexual orientation, but this year it was lower. We will continue to monitor this.
- The number of job applicants in the 25-54 age group has increased.
- Cambridge City Council has still been using BAME as a term but will be talking to the BAME staff group about terminology that is used in future reporting. The report breaks down overall workforce data and training into categories on ethnicity used in the Census.
- The largest group of people declaring a religion is Christian, which has been the case for a number of years.
- There were 9 promotions compared to 25 in the previous year. There were fewer job roles recruited to in 2020/21 .
- Actions to focus on from the Equality in Employment report include to:
 - Continue monitoring the number of staff declaring as LGBT in case this continues to decline.
 - Follow up on actions relating to recruitment and promotion of BAME staff
 - Using new Census data as a comparator once available
 - Develop an understanding of and address low proportion of disabled applicants
 - Develop an understanding of the change in training attendance by males

The Panel members asked questions on and provided feedback on the Equality in Employment report:

- The Council was asked if more use could be made of infographics to make the information more understandable and if figures may be used in the report as well as percentages. It was suggested that the information on gender pay reporting was especially unclear.
- A Panel member asked whether BAME is a term the Council should still use given reports that this may be disrespectful, and if transgender identity may be reported on as well as sex in the report.
- The Council was asked if data that is unchanging needs to be covered in the report.
- Another Panel member asked if there are processes put in place to increase internal progression and promotion.

In response to these questions and feedback Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, said:

- The Council has changed the look of the report recently and can also look at more use of infographics to make the information clearer for next year. Data on quartiles relating to the gender pay gap is included in the report because it is a requirement of the government to report back on this but it could be held elsewhere as it is not that accessible.
- It is still helpful to report back on statistics that are not changing (for instance the male/female split) because these findings are a key feature of our workforce and understanding of the identity of the organisation.
- The Council is looking to give more support with internal promotion. It did recently have a Management Development Programme and Management Apprenticeships, but attendance of different groups was lower than their representation in the workforce relating to ethnicity. Therefore, the Council is looking into how it can encourage people to be confident to apply for internal positions.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, said that Cambridge is one of the sixth youngest cities in the country due to its University but pointed out that the Council has an older workforce. He commented that the Council needs to think about how it ensures it represents its community/ the local population, including related to senior BAME representation.

21/17/EP Disability Confident

Victoria Jameson, Recruitment Manager, delivered a presentation on the Disability Confident Scheme, with which the City Council is accredited. Key points made were:

- Disability Confident was introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2016 to replace the Two Ticks scheme. It encourages organisations to regularly review and develop their processes, helping employers to attract, recruit and retain staff who declare themselves as having a disability.
- There are three levels to the Scheme and Cambridge City Council is a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer.
- 20,000 employers have signed up to Disability Confident and this number is increasing.
- As a Disability Confident Employer, Cambridge City Council has made a commitment to take practical steps to offer positive employment opportunities and are committed to developing the full potential of employees with a disability.
- As at 31 March 2021, 7.11% of the Council's workforce declared themselves to have a Disability. For positions advertised in 2020/21, 5.42% (37) of applicants declared a disability and 7.4% (4) of all people who were appointed declared a disability.
- Disability Confident Level 2 is split into two themes: one about the recruitment of people with a disability, and the other on support and retention of staff with a disability.
- There are a number of actions that the organisation takes and has committed to; some of which include:
 - Displaying the Disability Confident logo on recruitment literature
 - Sharing opportunities with organisations that support disabled people (like the Shaw Trust, Richmond Fellowship, GET Group, Papworth Trust and Cambridge & District Citizens Advice)
 - Ensuring that Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are written and published in such a way that promotes the whole entity of the job, being less prescriptive in asking for skills that exactly match roles and focussing on transferrable skills, when people can learn this within the role.

- Applicants are selected on their abilities and merits according to the requirements of the job. No personal or equality information is available to the panel and applications are anonymised.
- Applicants are asked whether there are any specific arrangements they need to be available for them to be able to make an application or to attend/ participate in interviews.
- The Council can signpost to the Access to Work scheme if people require assistance not covered by the Council's reasonable adjustments.
- Staff can discuss flexible working with managers in review meetings and this is supported by the Council's Flexible Working Policy.
- Cambridge City Council provides wellbeing classes, activities and promotions to support staff within the workforce.
- The Council has a contract with an occupational health provider to support employees and complement its Absence Management Policy.
- The City Council has a contract to provide confidential support to employees via an Employee Assistance Programme.
- The Cambridge City Council Corporate Induction provides all new employees with a half-day session on Diversity & Disability Awareness.
- Terms of reference for staff groups have been published to ascertain if there is the appetite amongst the workforce for setting up a Disability staff group (or other types of staff group). The Council previously had a disability staff group but membership lapsed and staff currently have not expressed an interest in re-establishing it.
- Staff surveys are run to listen to staff about their experiences of working for Cambridge City Council.

The Panel members were invited to ask questions and provide feedback on the information from the presentation outside the meeting. They were asked to offer any thoughts or suggestions on what more the Council can do to understand any further barriers and how these can be addressed, so that representation across the organisation is increased.

A Panel member asked if Cambridge City Council would pursue Level 3 Disability Confident and what this would involve.

Victoria Jameson provided background on the different levels, explaining that Level 1 is about considering becoming Disability Confident (Committed), Level 2 is about meeting the criteria (Employer) and Level 3 (Leader) entails significant additional commitment to becoming a champion within local and

business communities. There are a number of health and social care organisations which are signed up to Level 3 of the scheme and the Council may lead by example to get other types of organisation signed up at this level.

21/18/EP Any Other Business

Panel members were invited to contact Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, with any ideas for future agenda items or feedback or questions on the agenda items from this meeting.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, shared that the Council is interested in revisiting the terms of reference of the Equalities Panel in relation to considering inviting larger employers to the Panel to learn about steps they are taking to promote diversity and inclusion in the their workforce and wider contribution to equality in Cambridge.

21/19/EP Date of Next Meeting

11 January 2022.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

CHAIR