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Equalities Panel

EP/1

Tuesday, 11 January 2022

EQUALITIES PANEL

11 January 2022

4.00 - 6.00 pm

Chair: Robert Pollock

Councillor member: Baigent, Flaubert, Healy and Smart

Public members: Graham Lewis, Orsola Spivack, Susan Wan

Officer members: Alistair Wilson, Ariadne Henry, Lesley-Anne George, Naomi Armstrong

Other officers in attendance: Clarissa Norman, David Kidston, Helen Crowther, Michelle Lord, Sally Hodgson, Hannah Hancock (Cambridge Business Against Crime (CAMBAC), and Jenny Granshaw (Cambridge Business Improvement District)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

22/20/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Katie Porrer and public member Raheela Rehman

22/21/EP Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

22/22/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The notes of the meeting of the 6 July 2021 were noted.

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, said that the Single Equality Scheme 2021-2024 was approved at the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee in October 2021. She asked Panel members to share the Race Equality Toolkit with their networks of businesses and other organisations. Helen also said that following the Panel meeting she would share statistics on hate crime from Cambridgeshire Police from 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, said that an update on progress relating to Disability Confident would be shared at the next Panel meeting.

22/23/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

22/24/EP Customer Service Operating Model Equality Impact Assessment

Clarissa Norman, Customer Services Operations Manager, and Sally Hodgson, Transformation Consultant, delivered a presentation on the new Customer Service Operating Model and equality impacts. They shared:

- How the Customer Service Model changed from April 2021 – Reception previously was open to drop-ins during the morning and booked appointments were held in the afternoons. Since April 2021, customers have been encouraged and supported to use digital options to interact with us. There is also triage, which establishes the level of support required by customers. Face-to-face appointments can be booked for people if their needs are complex, or they are not digitally capable.
- A summary of key impacts identified in the Equality Impact Assessment for protected characteristic groups:
 - Age: older people are less likely to be digitally capable and often need to travel further for appointments. Young people with complex needs may benefit from assisted digital support, triage, and advocacy.
 - Disabled people are more likely to be digitally excluded. Some disabled people might have multiple or complex needs relating to a learning disability or their mental health, or the impacts that being in a crisis has on their disability – these people would benefit from assisted digital support, triage and advocacy. The enhanced digital support offer may benefit people with some disabilities or impairments too, like mobility and sight impairments.
 - Race: people for whom English is a second language may be impacted by the inability to have drop-in face-to-face support.
- The Council has developed a set of measurements for ongoing monitoring to inform and improve the service - as well as to identify emerging impacts, including for people with protected characteristics. Website accessibility is reviewed independently each month with high ratings reported (94%) and fixes applied to any emerging issues.

- The Council developed and delivered an internal and external communication plan when implementing the new model. There is ongoing liaison with internal colleagues and external Partners, including those supporting equality groups.
- Staff are receiving ongoing training and coaching relating to the new model.
- Progress against performance measures were shared with the Panel. For instance, one measure was volumes and types of 'assisted digital' support provided - for which there is a need for more granular detail on protected characteristics of people supported. The Council has performed very well for the measure on positive feedback on digital service provision.
- Service take-up was shared with the Panel, indicating that website transactions have had the biggest increase in take up, which partly links to availability of different website transactions that were not available before the implementation of the new Customer Services model. Website transactions in April to December 2019 were 42,243 compared to 124,709 between April and December 2021. Face-to-face visits have decreased significantly: from 42,243 between April to December 2019 to 4,872 between April to December 2021. However, taking into account overall contact with the Council (across all types of contact) between these periods, contact with the Council has remained similar to before the new model was introduced.
- Of 3,000 customers contacting the Council between April 2021 and November 2021, 7% needed a face-to-face appointment due to having complex needs or being vulnerable, digital assistance was provided to 10.5%, and 29% were referred to a digital option. 7% had digital capability and capacity but refused to take the digital option.
- Qualitative feedback on the new model was shared. There are positive case studies where customers have responded well to being 'taught' how to use systems by themselves, and no complaints have been received regarding the new service model.
- There are barriers to measuring impact such as implications of coronavirus restrictions, implications of system restrictions (like only being able to record a single reason for assistance required when there might be multiple reasons), and how historically collection of personal characteristics data has not been captured (and data protection legislation restrains this). There

might be people 'slipping through the net' that the Council does not come across, as there would have been for the old model.

- Future plans relating to the Customer Service model include to further improve measures to identify emerging impacts to further tailor services, to continue proactive consultation with communities, and to join up with ongoing work on the Our Cambridge Transformation Programme to ensure service aspirations are delivered and maintained.

The Panel members were invited to provide feedback and ask questions about the new Customer Service Model and its Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

- A Panel member asked when the EqIA was last updated and how the updated version is different to the original. They also asked if the Council knows how many of the 29% referred to digital options took up this support.
- The Panel emphasised the importance of undertaking equalities monitoring and of not only relying on complaints as feedback, as vulnerable people do often complain, and there will be people needing support who are not receiving it.
- The presenters were asked why there had been a dramatic reduction in face-to-face support and for the definition of "website transactions".
- A Panel member queried a point in the EqIA that stated there had been a reduction of the equivalent of 9.9 full time posts but there had only been 1 full time staff member who became redundant on a voluntary basis. They also asked whether the Council was confident that it could deliver support with fewer staff members given that coronavirus has led to increased level of need.

Clarissa Norman and Sally Hodgson provided the following answers to the Panel members' questions:

- The EqIA was updated in December 2021 based on information the Council holds on customer contact since the new model has operated. It looks at data on service usage, performance measures and customer feedback. The Council will be proactively undertaking further communications with communities and partners to be able to determine how far vulnerable people are being reached.
- The Council is working towards improvements in tracking customers' journey end-to-end, so in future hopes to be able to monitor how many people that are referred to digital options take up this support.

- The Council is looking into how best to capture information on characteristics of people using the service, including for volumes and types of 'assisted digital' support provided. Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, added that improving services' equalities monitoring is a key priority in the Single Equality Scheme 2021 to 2024. How this will be collected and what is collected will be context specific, partly because the General Data Protection Regulations mean that clear justification for collecting this data needs to be made on case-by-case basis.
- Website transactions include anything people can do for themselves online, such as updating a Council Tax account and registering to vote.
- Taking all the data together on customer interactions, the level of customer interaction has remained the same as 2018. The staffing levels to deliver customer services have proved viable since the new model was introduced, as customers can now find more solutions online than before. This has also meant that Customer Services has been able to release team members to help support the most vulnerable.
- The 9.9 full time equivalent staff was made up of 6.5 full time equivalent vacancies being carried at the time of the review, 2 members of staff who left or got promoted to new roles outside of the authority, and one voluntary redundancy.

Naomi Armstrong, Staff member of the Panel and Benefits Manager, added that there has been an increase in the caseload for vulnerable people on benefits during the pandemic and Universal Credit has been rolled out over this period. The Council reviewed its Council Tax Reduction scheme in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, so Universal Credit claimants do not need to claim Council Tax Reduction. Therefore, even though there has been a larger rise in applications for Council Tax Reduction, the automated process has met that need and made things easier for customers. The Council's main aim in changing methods to support customers is around making processes easier for customers.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, thanked Clarissa Norman and Sally Hodgson for their work in implementing this large culture change in the way the Council supports customers, and in continuing to work to find and reach vulnerable people who may not come forward for support.

22/25/EP Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning

Michelle Lord, Arts Development Officer, presented information on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning project. By way of background to the project, Michelle shared:

- Region of Learning's strategic aims are to:
 - Increase children and young people's learning engagement; particularly those from low-income backgrounds or who face inequalities of access
 - Recognise and acknowledge children and young people's extracurricular, informal, formal and out-of-school engagement, and its contribution to lifelong learning, skills and career development
 - Provide robust, relevant and visible evidence of the impact on children and young people, including social mobility, education, soft skills, wellbeing and social care, and post-16 outcomes on a population scale
- The model is based on national research that demonstrates the clear benefits to young people of taking part in additional learning activities, including extracurricular, out-of-school, leisure based, informal and formal activities. Where young people take part in these activities, benefits include:
 - gaining more transferable skills
 - building social and cultural capital
 - increasing educational attainment
 - developing greater employability
 - better health and wellbeing
 - improved career aspirations
 - greater likelihood to engage in lifelong learning
 - less chance of experiencing poverty in later life
 - improving social mobility
- However, only 25% of disadvantaged children and young people take part in any additional learning activities, compared to 75% of their more advantaged peers.
- A live prototype was delivered in 2018-19 in Trumpington (with the highest number of income support claimants in Cambridge) and Littleport (a Social Mobility Opportunity Area) with young people aged 14 and under. A total of 400 young people were engaged, and most were on free school meals. Over 50% engaged in an activity they had not tried before due to the scheme and the prototype engaged 35 activity providers.

- Consultation was undertaken with young people and their families, other local authorities, the skills and career sector, the education sector, arts and culture organisations, and businesses and other employers.

A description of the Region of Learning project was provided by Michelle:

- It focuses on supporting young people into the labour market, especially people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) at risk of social exclusion. It connects young people with learning and job opportunities in areas they are most interested in and supports them to develop career pathways.
- Funding of £1.6 million has been secured to support 1,070 young people aged 15 to 24 with a focus on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough until December 2023.
- It is a strategic partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. Form the Future is a partner of the project providing careers guidance and learning and job opportunities.
- It brings together ground-breaking elements of the Council's live prototype with the award-winning RSA Cities of Learning model.
- The Shift Ignite project has been launched as part of Region of Learning for young people aged 15 to 24 who are interested in understanding how to become self-employed, who would like to learn entrepreneurial skills, or would like to learn what is involved in developing their own micro-business.
- Under Region of Learning, a platform for connecting young people with courses and job opportunities has been developed, which are mapped related to the learner's postcode (to identify what is in their locality).
- Young people can access opportunities to earn digital badges where they have undertaken activities that develop skills, learning and experience that are not recognised through formal education. The badges earned are added to a digital CV people can use to track their own progress and share. The badging standard has been developed by the RSA and City & Guilds, who also endorse the Standard.
- Learning pathways are being developed by grouping badges to help learners progress their goals, and currently a wellbeing pathway is in development. Digital badges are issued by venues or locations where

learning happens through QR code or onto via a repurposed library card (together forming a 'universal passport to learning, skills and opportunity'.

- Region of Learning is engaging with numerous formal and informal learning providers and employers. In relation to the latter, currently the project is mostly engaged with employer networks but is interested to develop more relationships with SMEs. For employers the project can help them to attract a local talent pool with the right skills to apply for positions, demonstrate social value activity around training and development, and support more inclusive recruitment processes.
- So far 135 young people have been onboarded including: 18% from non-White British background, 24% of participants with disabilities, 13% of participants living with a single parent, 98% young people at risk of NEET and 2% of unemployed young people.
- Region of Learning has an equalities and diversity implementation plan with SMART aims and objectives, available via the Council website.
- The digital platform is due to launch in June to the cohort currently supported, and the Council is exploring opening up the availability of the app on a broader basis to enable organic sign up (subject to funding).
- The project is developing approaches with the County Council for a data research platform and academic partnerships to implement robust impact measurement of the Region of Learning against a number of outcomes for young people

Panel members were invited to feedback and ask questions:

- One Panel member commented that they were very impressed with the level of youth participation including co-design and another shared that they were "blown away" by the information shared.
- A Panel member asked how low-income young people can participate upon leaving school where they might lose access to devices and the internet.
- Another Panel member was interested in managing safeguarding risks in encouraging young people's participation through online platforms, and how the project is managing this.
- The Panel asked for a copy of the slides to look at in more detail and provide any feedback relating to engaging employers, shaping the wellbeing digital badge pathway, and engaging unemployed young people.

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive, commented on the project as an exemplar of the type of partnership approach to working and facilitation that the Council intends to develop further through its Transformation programme. He commented that the Region of Learning project had received funding from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, Arts Council England in addition to the European Social Fund. He also asked which other local areas are implementing a model that has similarities with the Region of Learning.

In answer to the questions above, Michelle Lord said:

- Since the pandemic much more is known about the extent of, and issues associated with, digital exclusion in the city. Region of Learning will work with the Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership and Cambridge 2030 to help people to access IT. For instance, Cambridge 2030 has provided 20 laptops to support the Shift Momentum 'Ignite' strand of the project. Region of Learning online content is accessible via smartphone, as this was identified as especially important during its pilot in Littleport and Trumpington because many low-income young people can afford a smartphone where they cannot afford a PC. Cambridgeshire County Council's Libraries Service is a partner and can help people access PCs, and the digital badges can be acquired using the repurposed library card account (meaning less IT access is required).
- The Council has presented Region of Learning to the Office for National Statistics and many other areas have been looking to engage young people in similar initiatives. They have found it hard to get initiatives off the ground due to difficulty in identifying ways to monitor their projects' impacts. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Region of Learning project is more advanced in this and its prototype brought together over 900 different data points to measure impact.
- There has been interest in a similar approach to Region of Learning by other Combined Authorities including Tees Valley CA (covering five unitary authorities - Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees), Sheffield City Region CA (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield), the Creative Estuary (7 East London Boroughs) and Letchworth Garden City in adopting the approach we have developed. The bespoke model in development for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

will include elements that will support Brighton, Plymouth, and Southampton City Council.

- The approach to safeguarding taken by Region of Learning is a 'privacy by design' approach giving over control on what data is shared and what is not.
- The presentation slides can be shared with Panel members.

22/26/EP Cambridge Purple flag status

Jenny Granshaw, Leisure & Night-time Project Manager at Cambridge BID, delivered a presentation about the Cambridge Purple Flag scheme, which is co-managed by Cambridge BID (Business Improvement District) and Cambridge Business Against Crime (CAMBAC), with support from a wide range of partners, including Cambridge City Council. Jenny said:

- Purple Flag is an award driving up standards of the night-time economy (between 5pm and 5am) and is a national initiative of the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM). There are over 70 cities, including Cambridge, with the award status. ATCM also manages knowledge sharing forums as part of the initiative (such as on drink spiking, supporting vulnerable people, and on following coronavirus guidance).
- Each location given the Purple Flag award has been assessed by an independent panel that considers crime statistics and the diverse and inclusive offer for customers at night.
- In Cambridge, customers' safety on the streets is protected by:
 - Taxi licencing that is regulated by Cambridge City Council and safeguarding training the Council provides to drivers. Customers can directly report concerns about taxis to the Council.
 - Taxi marshals provided by Cambridge BID and CAMBAC that diffuse or de-escalate unsafe situations where needed, and note down taxi licence plates for customers travelling alone. The marshals are present every payday weekend and have been present during particularly busy periods (for instance, every weekend over the Christmas period).
 - Street pastors available from 10pm on Friday and Saturday that support people who are unwell or vulnerable, and provide a dedicated space for assistance where needed.

- In venues, there is support from the Ask for Angela initiative whereby people can approach staff members in venues and 'ask for Angela' if they require discreet assistance.
- Venues reopened in July 2021 and in November 2021 WAVE (Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement) training was provided on identifying and supporting people especially at risk. People who may be at risk can include people protected characteristics, such as people with poor mental health, disabilities, and women.
- To reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour in licenced venues, CAMBAC provides a membership scheme for businesses that includes a provision of a radio for reporting incidents between venues and to the police. Police have also had undercover and uniformed officers patrolling venues and providing venues with drink testing kits to help combat spiking.
- Presenting about the Purple Flag to the Panel is one means of resident engagement required for retaining the award status to inform joined up planning and strategy.

Following the presentation, Panel members were invited to ask questions to Hannah Hancock (from Cambridge Business Against Crime (CAMBAC) and Jenny Granshaw:

- One Panel member shared a personal experience of race discrimination experienced by a woman they were with on a night out in Cambridge. The person was refused entry with their party and, as a result, was separated from the group making them vulnerable.
- The Panel emphasised that safety at night is not just an issue for women but for people with other protected characteristics too, like race.
- Another Panel member thanked the presenters for their information and initiatives for improving safety at night, as this provides reassurance for parents. They said that the initiatives and involvement of Jenny and Hannah in Purple Flag is helping ensure women have a voice about safety in the night-time economy and can be heard.
- One member of the Panel who is a Councillor thanked the presenters and said information shared in the presentation would be useful for responding to queries from constituents.
- Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, asked how many venues attended the WAVE training in November. Helen asked that given the

personal experience shared by a Panel member, whether local case studies sharing customers' experiences relating to safety were shared in the training.

In response to the comments and questions:

- Hannah Hancock asked if the Panel member might put the individual who experienced the discrimination in touch with CAMBAC. Hannah advised that whenever a customer has an issue like this with a licenced premises, it is important that it is reported to the Police and to the Council's Environmental Health Service (responsible for licencing premises).
- Hannah Hancock said that in 12 years of working at CAMBAC it is the first time that predatory behaviour has been addressed as a type of crime by trained Police Officers, door staff and so on. Addressing predatory behaviour prevents incidents occurring that harm people.
- Jenny Granshaw said that 13 venues attended the training in November and many of the venues sent numerous representatives. There will be another session in the spring. At the training, attendees were asked about how they have responded to issues relating to vulnerability and resources and materials are shared with them, including for Ask for Angela. Jenny said that local experiences might be incorporated into future training sessions.

22/27/EP Any Other Business

There was not any other business.

22/28/EP Date of Next Meeting

5 July 2022.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

CHAIR

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