

Public Document Pack

Equalities Panel

EP/1

Tuesday, 3 October 2023

EQUALITIES PANEL

3 October 2023

4.00 - 6.00 pm

Chair: Suzanne Hemingway, Interim Director of Communities

Councillor members: Cllr Flaubert; Cllr Healy; Cllr Smart; Cllr Porrer; Cllr Thittala Varkey

Public members: None in attendance

Officer members: Alistair Wilson, Ariadne Henry

Other officers in attendance: David Kidston; Helen Crowther; Lynsey Fulcher; Paul Boucher; Victoria Jameson

Eddie Stadnik and Louise Tan also attended from Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/12/EP Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from public members Orsola Spivak and Raheela Rehman, and staff members Lesley-Ann George and Naomi Armstrong.

23/13/EP Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

23/14/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 10 January 2023 were noted and there were no amendments made.

23/15/EP Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/16/EP Review of Equalities Panel

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, provided brief context for the review into the role of the Equalities Panel for supporting Council-led

initiatives promoting equality and diversity. As part of the review the council aims to identify how and if the Panel or another formalised partnership can help develop a whole systems approach to tackling inequality and discrimination.

Helen shared that a key part of the review involved seeking feedback from current and former Equalities Panel members on their experiences of being involved with the Panel. She shared some common themes from conversations so far including:

- That members felt that the Panel has played an important role in raising the profile of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work at Cambridge City Council. Panel members also often mentioned the strong quality of many of the reports that were brought to the Panel.
- Some members shared that the Panel has helped to raise their personal awareness of EDI issues.
- However, often members were not sure what concrete/practical changes have been made to improve EDI that resulted from their feedback on Panel, given that the Panel itself is not a decision-making body. Some members asked whether recommendations made by the Panel could be explicitly attached to a leadership role or a function (e.g. committee) that has authority to decide whether to take on recommendations or not.
- There was varied feedback from members on how the meeting might be structured differently to get the most from members' engagement. There were very varied suggestions on different means that the Panel might engage with partners by expanding the remit of Panel or developing a new structure.

Helen shared that there will be a longer agenda item on the review at a future Equalities Panel meeting.

Councillor Mairéad Healy, The Executive Councillor for Communities, shared her view that the Panel has been due a review for a long time to improve accountability around EDI. A particular concern of Councillor Healy's is the lack of diversity at senior levels in the council.

One member shared that they felt agreement on the future of the Panel needs to be achieved at a cross-party level.

23/17/EP Needs assessment for ethnic minority people

Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer, provided an overview of findings of a needs assessment of ethnic minority people in Cambridge that

was commissioned by Cambridge City Council and undertaken by Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum in 2021. There were 132 responses to the needs assessment. Information on the ethnic background of respondents was shared and other characteristics of respondents. Key findings shared were captured in the background report for the Panel meeting. In addition, Helen also shared emerging recommendations based on key learning from the findings, including to:

- Raise awareness of what happens when hate crime is reported to encourage increase in reporting.
- Raise awareness of support available through public services for groups with highest needs for public services, especially for those who may be less likely to access them. (Louise Tan from Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum added the importance of raising awareness of the Racial Harassment Service of Cambridge City Council too.)
- Look into current opportunities for ethnic groups and organisations that support them to feed into the development of policy.
- Explore the potential to work with employer networks to connect business to ethnic minority communities, especially Black communities, to provide greater employment opportunities that match levels of educational attainment.
- Explore how to tackle difficulties in accessing health services with the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Health Equality Partnership.
- Further exploration with communities of findings from this research to get further context.

Whilst Helen was presenting, Eddie Stadnik and Louise Tan added clarifying comments relating to the findings. Comments included:

- Findings around poverty for South Asian people in the survey are consistent with national statistics indicating housing costs and food poverty is especially an issue for Bangladeshi and Pakistani households.
- Issues in accessing health services for ethnic minority groups have also arisen in other health projects that the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum has worked on with other partners like the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service and Cambridge City Council with the Integrated Care System. This is especially a concern as Covid-19 has further exacerbated health issues.
- 25% of East and South East Asian people were not confident in using IT in the survey despite educational and financial status.
- For the indications of social exclusion for survey respondents, there was an increase of between 10% to 15% after Covid-19.

Comments and questions were shared by Panel members, including:

- One member expressed that they were disappointed at the low response rate to the survey and questioned whether the findings of the survey were sufficiently representative to be used by the Council to inform future decisions. They felt that using council resources for research with a low response rate was unfair to ethnic minority communities.
- Another member shared that they felt the response rate was a very large sample for a qualitative piece of social research and therefore was robust.
- How many replies were from students?
- What was the proportion uncomfortable applying for jobs with businesses?

In response to the questions and comments:

- Helen Crowther shared that 4 people completing the survey were in full time education or training and that people were not explicitly asked if they felt comfortable applying for jobs in the business sector. They were asked about comfortableness applying for jobs in specific public sector organisations, the voluntary and community sector and areas of transport, leisure and recreation and training.
- Eddie Stadnik shared that the main intention of the research was to collect information from seldom heard communities who needed more prompting and support to undertake the survey. The 132 respondents were responding on behalf of their households too, which meant they reflected the experiences of far more people than the 132 individual respondents. Moreover, the findings mirror that of other research (local and national), so it is likely that with a larger response rate the findings would still be similar.

23/18/EP Cambridge Together

Paul Boucher, Transformation Programme Manager, delivered a presentation on his report prepared for the Equalities Panel on engagement during February and March 2023 as part of the Cambridge Together project. The engagement as part of the Cambridge Together project sought to understand the similarities and differences in the way a range of stakeholders imagine the future of the city and to create a Cambridge Rich Picture tool in the form of visual illustrations. The tool is designed to support future conversations about the city with communities, partners, and stakeholders, helping to clarify similarities and differences in expectations, and providing valuable insight for Cambridge, of which the Council is a part.

Paul's presentation especially highlighted the feedback around things that matter to various communities and how the engagement approach has helped/not helped to increase the participation of seldom heard communities and the lessons we have learnt. For instance, Paul shared that the council would especially have liked to spend more time engaging with faith and disability groups, and young people. The report is available in full, here: [Equalities Panel 03102023- Cambridge Together - Residents and Community Engagement.pdf](#).

23/19/EP Equality in Employment report 2022/23

Vickie Jameson, Recruitment Manager, and Lynsey Fulcher, Head of People, shared highlights from the council's Equality in Employment report, which provided a profile of the City Council Workforce as of 31st March 2023. The report provides a snapshot of the year covering recruitment, learning & development, starters, leavers, promotions, employment, pay bands and flexible working. This is analysed relating to age, disability, ethnicity, religion/belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Some highlights shared were:

- The highest representation of staff is in the 55 to 64 age group (this has changed from 45 to 54 since 2010). City Pay Band 1 has the widest representation of ages (under 18 to 65 and over).
- A total of 7.37% of the workforce declared a disability, down from 8.15% as at 31 March 2022 (this is a decrease of 5 individuals).
- 9.09% of the workforce are from an ethnic minority background, up from 8.32%.
- 47% of the workforce are female and 52% male. A total of 56% of promotions were for women and 44% for men.
- The Gender Pay Gap is the difference between the average (mean and median) earnings of men and women across a workforce. The gender pay gap in the council is 0.95% mean or 6.81% median. This means that for every £1 men earn, women earn 92 pence. The more transparent the council is about pay, and the action it is taking to reduce pay gaps, the more people are aware and can help to contribute to reduce the gap. It is not just about increasing pay for women: actions to reduce our pay gap need to encompass more than just pay and include indirect policies like greater flexibility in the council's roles.
- 116 staff have not declared their religion, an increase from the previous year. 46.7% of staff have no religion. 44.6% of staff identify as Christian, a slight increase from the previous year.
- 6.76% of staff declare themselves as LGBTQ+, an increase from last year. 93.2% of the workforce declare themselves as heterosexual, a

slight decrease from last year. 118 individuals preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation, a decrease from last year.

Vickie and Lynsey also shared actions the council will undertake for the rest of 2023/24 and beyond to help improve workforce diversity and promote inclusion. The council will:

- Increase the target of ethnic minority staff representation in our workforce to 10% in line with the most recent census data (23.3% in Cambridge).
- Look for further opportunities to increase disability representation in the workforce.
- Continue to monitor internal promotion activity including reviewing career pathways across the organisation.
- Continue to monitor its Gender Pay Gap and extend this to Ethnicity Pay Gap monitoring.
- Explore the possibility of a flexible bank holiday policy.
- Ensure that the People & Culture Strategy addresses key equalities, diversity, and inclusivity matters.

Panel members provided the following feedback on the presentation:

- One member said it was great to see improvement in the council's diversity and suggested that one way to improve ethnic diversity might be to provide more apprenticeship opportunities to ethnic minority people.
- Another member shared that they were concerned with the ethnic diversity of staff at senior levels and asked for the council to monitor this going forward. They suggested that managers hiring new staff might be held accountable and asked to justify where they have shortlists of all White people. The Panel member asked if the council has anonymised applications.
- A member shared that they appreciate the council looking into flexible Bank Holidays and monitoring workplace flexibility requests relating to gender. They offered to put the council in touch with staff networks at Anglia Ruskin University so that the council can learn about their progress and successes in supporting the networks.

One non-Panel member shared that it would be helpful for the council to report on proportions of staff with other religions than Christianity when presenting the data. Another non-Panel member shared that the Commission for Race Equality's UK research found that where Asian people put names on job applications, they were less likely to get interviewed, and that where Black

people use English names, they were more likely to get interviews but less likely to get the job.

Vickie Jameson shared that the council anonymises job applications.

23/20/EP Any Other Business

Cambridge City Council provided a formal thank you to Graham Lewis, former public member of the Equalities Panel who stepped down last year for his significant contribution to the Panel. It was stated that Graham has been hugely important to the Panel having been a member since the Panel was introduced before 2010. Graham brought lots of knowledge to items at the Panel having always been involved in roles promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in his 20+ years in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The council also formally thanked Susan Wan for her role as a public member on the Panel since 2016 who also stepped down last year too. The council expressed that it was especially appreciative of Susan's insights into the council's work towards developing a more diverse workforce representative of the Cambridge population. Susan's insight came from her role in the Faculty of Economics at the University of Cambridge.

The Equalities Panel expressed that Graham and Susan will be hugely missed on the Panel. The council has been in touch with them both as part of its review into the Panel to provide them with a greater opportunity to share their experiences of being public members over the years.

23/21/EP Date of Next Meeting

9 January 2024.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank