

EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

Head of Service:	Shona Mason, Head of HR & Organisational Development
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework

Summary

This report provides details of the Council's working draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the working draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework.**
- (2) Agree that the three themes can go out to public consultation.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Now that the Council has a long term Vision and Four Year Plan it is vital that the Council has a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework to help achieve the aspirations of the Vision and commitments of the Four Year Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council is subject to the Equalities Act and the Public Sector Duty which means that we have a duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

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- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 2.2 These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
- 2.3 With recent events such as COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter movement there is a current spotlight on equality matters. This spotlight has also sparked an appetite for the Council to influence and achieve more in relation to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- 2.4 At Council on 14 July 2020 a motion was passed which is detailed as follows:
- 2.4.1 This Council notes and values the contribution that Epsom and Ewell communities and social media groups are making in support of community cohesion, anti- racism and calls for equality and justice.
- 2.4.2 In support of these local initiatives, including the “We Stand Together” movement, the Borough Council will:
- Invite local schools to contribute to a Borough Council programme celebrating multiculturalism and the achievements of differing communities in the borough
 - Use the EEBC Business Newsletter, Business Breakfasts and our conversations with the BID to raise issues of racism and prejudice in the workplace and, leading by example, encourage equality in recruitment practices, investment in unconscious bias training and other active ways to create equality.
 - Use the Community Safety Partnership to encourage local people to use their voice and report hate crimes to the police, and to develop with our partners a system for monitoring the outcomes of such reporting.
 - Continue our conversations with Community Leaders to better understand how the Borough Council can best manage its services to support those communities and best use its influence to make a positive difference.
 - Listen to our own staff about their experiences and create an environment where they can speak freely, and raise awareness among Officers and Members to ensure equal access to services

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- Commit to work with partners and lobby the government for immediate action to implement the recommendations on the recent PHE report on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
- 2.5 The commitments the Council has made as a result of the Council motions have been incorporated into the working draft DE&I action plan.
- 2.6 The working draft DE&I Framework has been developed around three themes:
- Developing Inclusive Communities and creating Community Cohesion
 - Engagement and Accessible Services
 - Workforce Inclusivity
- 2.7 Once finalised the framework will not only ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory obligations but will also encourage and take action to create an inclusive Borough for our residents to live in and for our staff to work.
- 2.8 The working draft action plan has been developed to incorporate actions initially over a two year period (2020-2022) and would then be reviewed on an annual basis. This is due to the impact of COVID19 and the fact that we are part way through 2020-2021.
- 2.9 It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken on the framework's three themes to ensure that the Council can be confident that the Framework represents the needs of our community. It is proposed to consult on whether the three themes capture the issues that affect our residents and staff.
- 2.10 Once the working draft framework is approved the next steps will be to develop a consultation plan. It is proposed that consultation will take place during the autumn with a view to finalising the framework by the end of the calendar year.
- 2.11 The Framework and Action Plan will be informed by the feedback from the consultation. Upon completion and finalisation of each of the documents there will be a further report back to Strategy & Resources to approve the final Framework and Action Plan.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

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3.1.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. As part of the consultation process it will be important to consider the impact assessment of any future framework. This will need to be considered as part of the consultation process once the feedback is collated.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 There are no crime and disorder implications for this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 There are no safeguarding implications for this report.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 There are no dependencies for this report.

3.4.2 Upon development of the Framework and action plan, a number of dependencies may be identified. As detailed within the draft DE&I framework developing diversity, equity and inclusion will require input from many different groups.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 N/A

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications for this report other than identified resources from within existing budgets.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The Public Sector Duty was created by the Equalities Act 2010. It consists of the general equality duty which is the overarching requirement or substance of the duty, and the specific duties which are intended to help performance of the general equality duty.

5.2 The equality duty applies to public authorities and must be considered as part discharging the Council's activities. Examples of this include: policy decisions, individual decision-making, budgetary decisions, public appointments, service provision, and statutory discretion, etc. The Framework will be a key document in evidencing how the Council will discharge the Duty.

5.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** the working draft of the Framework will need to be further developed following the close of the consultation exercise on the three themes.

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6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** All of the Council Key Priorities are engaged.
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** None

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None