

# **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework**

**2020 – 2024**

To support action promoting Community Cohesion, Anti-Racism, Equity and Justice

Draft Version 4 - September 2020

## **Epsom & Ewell's Long-term Vision – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

The Councils vision for Epsom & Ewell to be a creative and vibrant place can only be achieved through a strong commitment by the Council and Epsom & Ewell's residents, to encourage diversity and recognise and celebrate difference within the context of equity and fairness.

Part of the Council's long term vision, is to create a place that offers an excellent start in life, as well as ongoing opportunities and social/economic prosperity whatever a person's background. Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion matters is essential to achieving the long term vision.

This Council holds a vision for Epsom and Ewell of a borough where people support each other and work together to build a fair, inclusive and safe place for everyone. This vision will help to create excellent starts in life for everyone within the borough, as well as a culture of equitable opportunity and prosperity.

We believe that working together and demonstrating a strong community spirit is a sure way to deliver the spirit and letter of our long-term Vision. Actively promoting inclusion and diversity is integral to our vision and the success of our communities

We believe that Epsom and Ewell should be a place where everyone can thrive.

However, we recognise that this is not always the case, and that some people experience discrimination for a wide range of reasons. At the borough council, we do not think that this is acceptable. The Council is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse community and workforce brings.

We will do everything in our power to create equity of opportunity in our communities.

"Conversations" with our communities are vitally important and during the period of this framework the Council is committed to developing these conversations in different forms.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

As a public body, we have a specific duty under the Public Sector Equality Act 2010 to publish equality objectives that demonstrate how we are meeting our responsibilities.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a general equality duty on the Council to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The characteristics protected under the Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

As outlined in the [Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty](#), compliance with the duty will result in:

- Better informed decision making and policy development
- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users, resulting in better quality services which meet varied needs
- More effective targeting of policy, resources and the use of regularity powers
- Better results and greater confidence in, and satisfaction with public services
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce
- A reduction in instances of discrimination and resulting claims

More information about the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty please see the Equality and Human Rights Commission website which can be accessed [here](#)

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework**

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework outlines the Council's commitment and approach to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations in Epsom and Ewell over the next four years.

The Framework supports the key priorities set out in Epsom & Ewell's Four Year Plan. In a post COVID environment with significant budgetary challenges and an increase in demand for services, the Framework will enable the Council to develop services to meet resident's needs and to assess how changes in service delivery will impact residents.

## **The Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Approach**

### **Theme 1 - Developing Inclusive Communities and creating Community Cohesion**

- This theme is about developing a greater focus on promoting social inclusivity across all the Council's services and developing good community relations.

The Council's long term vision is to create safe and healthy communities brimming with opportunity and prosperity. This means communities in which everyone regardless of their background, beliefs, personal situation or identity feels welcome and able to prosper.

## **Theme 2 - Engagement and Accessible Services**

- This theme is about ensuring that Council services, information, consultation and engagement opportunities remain accessible to all residents, particularly those with protected characteristics. As a public body, we need to make sure all our residents are able to access our information and services. Not everyone is able to do this in the same way, so we need to make sure there is a range of options available.

## **Theme 3 - Workforce Inclusivity**

- This theme is about continuing to seek opportunities to build inclusivity into the Council's internal policies and procedures. The Council is committed to being an inclusive organisation providing opportunity for all.

## **Data and Evidence**

We will continue to improve our equality data, and using local intelligence and data insight to inform future service planning and formal decision making. We need to make sure our services are sensitive to, and reflect the needs of our residents. We can only do this by understanding what those needs are. We can use data to help us do this, and make sure that the right information is available to those who are involved in planning and taking decisions about service delivery.

## **Responsibility and Ownership**

Elected Members, Leadership Team, services, managers, teams, staff, contractors, partners, stakeholders and residents all have shared responsibility and ownership for realising and encouraging equality and diversity.

Members must fulfil their statutory responsibilities under equalities legislation to promote good community relations and as community leaders promote the framework through their work.

The Leadership Team will lead by example using the Framework to embed equality and diversity matters in all aspects of the Council's work. The Leadership Team will be active in the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that robust Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are undertaken where required.

Teams across the Council will ensure development and implementation of service inclusion and diversity actions ensuring completion of EIA.

The Inclusion & Diversity Group is chaired by the Head of HR & OD and includes other senior members of staff. The group meet regularly at least four times a year. The purpose of the Group is to:

- be the lead for inclusion and diversity in the Council
- review the framework and annual action plan as well as related policies

- will act as an advisory group to support with raising awareness of inclusion and diversity matters
- support and deliver of inclusion and diversity events to help raise awareness
- providing oversight of the delivery of EIA
- ensuring compliance with equality legislation

The Council's [Behaviour Framework](#) outlines that staff should be respectful and appreciate diversity. Staff should demonstrate a commitment to equalities which is further outlined with the Council's People Framework through a number of procedures.

Residents play a vital role in creating community cohesion and inclusive communities. The Council expects its residents to also be respectful to each other.

The Council is committed to creating equity, a place free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and work with residents to address inequality.

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA's) help us to consider policy, service or process and how it might affect the different groups affected by law. We use EIA's to find and remove barriers. This also helps us consider how best to provide help and support those who need it the most and to plan services that are as accessible and fair as possible.

EIA's are completed by relevant departments when new services are developed, there is a review of a service or a proposed major policy change. This is to make sure that they do not have unintended consequences for anyone with protected characteristics.

As part of the action plan a review of EIA guidance and forms will be undertaken to ensure that Heads of Service and Managers are clear of expectations and training provided to show how they should be used. This will also include a screening process which will allow the Council to determine when an EIA is required.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

There is no identified budget for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and all activities related to this strategy and action plan will be met from within existing resources. However there is identified budget to enable reasonable adjustments to be made to enable the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Financial sign off is required by the Head of HR & OD for all reasonable adjustments where funds cannot be identified from within existing service budgets.

### **Risks**

The Council has a legal duty placed on it to ensure compliance with the Equality Act and may be open to legal challenge if it is unable to evidence its approach and how it meets these requirements.

It is therefore imperative that this strategy and action plan are implemented effectively to ensure that compliance is reached and maintained.

## **Engagement**

Our Framework sets out our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion priority themes, which have been put together following a review of how the Council should discharge its equality duty, using guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Local Government Association and in consultation with, Members, Leadership Team, Inclusion & Diversity Group, Staff and Residents.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

The Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework is a four year framework which will be approved by Strategy & Resources.

The framework will be published on the Council's website to ensure that equality objectives are accessible to the public in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Action Plan will initially be for a two year period and will be reviewed on an annual basis, with an annual report submitted to Strategy & Resources Committee to demonstrate progress against each of the themes. This progress report will also be published on the Council's website.

Progress will also be monitored through the Inclusion & Diversity Group and Leadership Team with regular reporting on progress.

As part of the monitoring process annual workforce profile information will also be published on the Council's website.

# **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Action Plan 2020 - 2022**

## **Annex 1**

- **Theme 1. Developing Inclusive Communities**
- **Theme 2. Engagement and Accessible Services**
- **Theme 3. Workforce Inclusivity**

## Theme 1 - Developing Inclusive Communities

#	PRIORITY	ACTION	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
1.1	Tackling health inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting communities through the delivery of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Action Plan</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	Improvement in deprivation indices in key wards	<p>March 2022</p> <p>September 2020</p>	<p>Head of Housing &amp; Community</p> <p>Chief Operating Officer</p>
1.2	Encouraging and promoting greater participation from BAME populations across the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify barriers and seek to reduce these barriers through well designed service changes</li> <li>Residents are able to participate in activities within their communities</li> </ul>	Increased numbers of BAME residents accessing services	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Dependent upon the reintroduction of events</p>	Leadership Team

#	PRIORITY	ACTION	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
1.3	Work with representatives of different forums in order to network, exchange best practice and generally raise the Council's profile in relation to inclusion and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of implementing the recommendations from the LGA Comms review the Council will review how it consults and engages with residents</li> <li>To attend the Surrey Equality &amp; Diversity Network and support with raising awareness and learning</li> <li>Inclusion &amp; Diversity Group will continue to identify and work with key partners including Faithlinks, GIRES &amp; community groups</li> </ul>	<p>New communication and engagement action plan</p> <p>Attendance at meetings</p> <p>3 events/ updates per year</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>When Network is re-established</p> <p>When events are re-established</p>	<p>Head of HR &amp; OD / Head of PPG</p> <p>Community &amp; Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer</p>
1.4	Celebrating Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite local schools to contribute to a Borough Council programme celebrating multiculturalism and the achievements of differing communities in the Borough</li> </ul>	Event held and well attended with positive feedback	March 2022	Community & Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer
1.5	Tackling crime against protected characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	Increased reporting	Ongoing	Head of Housing & Community

## Theme 2 - Engagement and Accessible Services

#	PRIORITY	ACTION	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
2.1	Residents are able to participate in activities and services within their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding equality analysis into policy and strategy development to ensure all accessible for those with protected characteristics</li> <li>Programme of marketing of services</li> </ul>	<p>EIA undertaken</p> <p>Increased marketing / communications campaigns</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2021</p>	<p>Relevant Head of Service / Leadership Team</p> <p>Head of HR/OD</p>
2.2	Simplify and enhance our customer contact functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable customers to interact with services digitally</li> </ul>	Introduction of new service orientated modules	Phased approach from 2020/21 – 2023/24	Head of Digital & Transformation
2.3	Residents and other services can easily access information about Council services via a range of channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website review</li> </ul>	Accessible website WCAG2.1 compliant website	September 2020	Head of Digital & Transformation /
2.4	Promoting equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use EEBC Business Newsletters, Business Breakfasts and our conversations with the BID to raise issues of racism and prejudice in the workplace, encouraging equality in recruitment practices</li> </ul>	Delivery of I&D campaigns	March 2021	Head of HR & OD

#	PRIORITY	ACTION	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
2.5	Developing meaningful relationships and creating better understanding within our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop conversations with Community Leaders to better understand how the Council can best manage its services to support those communities and best use its influence to make a positive difference</li> </ul>	Meetings held with identified outcomes	October 2021	CEO
2.6	Information about residents and service users including those with protected characteristics is used to inform service improvements in a manner that is compliant with data protection legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough profile information with protected characteristics is available publicly</li> <li>Workforce profile is available publicly</li> <li>Promote and use of Surrey i data within services</li> <li>Participation in the development of the Social Progress Index (SPI) with Surrey County Council to develop ward level index</li> </ul>	Data updated and refreshed  Data published and available publicly	March 2021  March 2021  March 2021  March 2021	Head of HR & OD / Head of PPG
2.7	Improving the availability of equality data, and raising awareness of service user needs to inform service design across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the equalities data collected for services</li> </ul>	EIA's completed where required	March 2021	Relevant Head of Service

### Theme 3 - Workforce Inclusivity

#	PRIORITY	ACTION FOR	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
3.1	Having a diverse workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce profile and working to increase diversity</li> </ul>	Changes in diversity	March 2022	Head of HR & OD

#	PRIORITY	ACTION FOR	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
3.2	Employees, Councillors and contractors are aware of, and actively uphold the Equality Duty and their equality responsibilities and training resources are available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members Briefing evening or event on Equalities and Public Sector Duty</li> <li>• Training for new employees through e-learning</li> <li>• Ongoing training for staff</li> </ul>	<p>Briefing event &amp; training held</p> <p>New e-learning opportunities</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Dec 2020</p> <p>March 2021</p>	Head of HR & OD / Head of PPG
3.3	Equality considerations are clearly presented as part of the Councils formal decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion &amp; Diversity Group to review and embed the use of Equality Impact Screening and Assessments</li> </ul>	<p>EIA's undertaken for all potential impact</p> <p>New templates to be promoted, used &amp; assessed</p>	December 2020	Head of HR & OD
3.4	Ensure the People Framework supports employees in addressing inclusion and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out of Part 3 of People Framework with a specific focus on:</li> <li>• Inclusion &amp; Diversity</li> <li>• Dignity at work</li> </ul>	People Framework procedure to support staff	September 2021	Head of HR & OD
3.5	Employees and potential future employees are treated fairly and equally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace support for employees</li> <li>• Widen membership of the Inclusion &amp; Diversity Group</li> <li>• Increase those involved in the activities run or supported by the Inclusion &amp; Diversity Group</li> </ul>	<p>Provision of support</p> <p>No of those involved</p>		Inclusion & Diversity Group

#	PRIORITY	ACTION FOR	SUCCESS MEASURE	TARGET DATE	LEAD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group will review impact of these events/ activities</li> </ul>		September 2021	
3.6	Developing the workforce to recognise bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange unconscious bias training for LT/Managers</li> </ul>	Training delivered	March 2021	Head of HR & OD
3.7	Acknowledge that prejudice exists and provide a platform for discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	Listening events hosted and identifiable outcomes from events delivered	December 2020	Inclusion & Diversity Group