

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

2021 – 2024

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

Tracking

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|------------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Policy Title | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Framework | | |
| LT sign off | 17 February 2021 | | |
| Committee | Strategy & Resources | Date approved | 30 March 2021 (TBC) |
| Review due date | March 2022 | Review completed | |
| Service | HR & OD | | |
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Revision History

| Revision Date | Revisor | Previous Version | Description of Revision |
|----------------|-------------|--|--|
| September 2020 | Shona Mason | Draft Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Framework 2020- 2024 | Initial draft approved for consultation with residents, Members and staff |
| March 2021 | Shona Mason | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Framework 2021 - 2024 | Updated post consultation and to take account of impact of COVID19 on resources to deliver action plan including timeline of framework |
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Epsom & Ewell's Long-term Vision – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Council's 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 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. Through our interactions with our residents, we recognise that many people in Epsom & Ewell are held back because of inequality, discrimination and the lack of opportunity connected to one or more of the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. We also recognise that there are other causes of inequality or exclusion such as people being excluded because they have a low income, are socially isolated, live in poor housing or due to poor health. At the 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. This framework affirms our commitment to tackling inequality not just because it is our legal duty but also because in doing so helps create a more successful Borough.

Issues relating to other forms of inequality or exclusion are considered through other strategies and areas of Council work such as our Health & Wellbeing Strategy and HR & OD Strategy.

Valuing Epsom & Ewell's Diversity

Epsom & Ewell is becoming ever more diverse. This is one of its great strengths and being a more inclusive organisation will help the Council to:

- Understand our communities well and listen to them more closely
- Make decision which are informed by different points of view
- Develop and deliver the best possible services for all

The Borough Profile's provide information and insight to the makeup of the Borough. There is a link to this [DATA](#)

Harnessing the Benefits of Epsom & Ewell's Diversity

To harness the benefits of diversity we are building an inclusive organisation that actively recognises the contribution of people from different backgrounds, in all aspects of the Council's plans and work.

Being inclusive is not just about inviting different contributions but also tackling inequalities and advancing greater equality, as well as fostering good relations between people.

Diversity refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique.

Equity refers to fairness and equality in outcomes, not just in support and opportunity.

Inclusion means refers to the behaviours and social norms that ensure people feel welcome.

"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 (LINK), 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 three 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.

Our Principles

- To be a learning organisation, working to make improvements
- To learn from our mistakes and experience
- Engage with communities, partners and stakeholders
- Fulfil our duty under the Equalities Act 2010
- Require our contractors to abide by the Equalities Act 2010

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.

Delivering for our Communities

We want people and organisations in Epsom & Ewell to see the Council as a community leader in addressing equality and inclusion. Our aspirations in delivering equity and inclusion are to:

- Leading by example across our whole organisation
- Taking a strategic approach to promoting equity and inclusion with a specific action plan
- Listening to communities and individuals about their lived experiences of all forms of inequality and exclusion and taking what is said into account when we make decisions

Impact of COVID-19 on BAME Groups

There is clear evidence that COVID-19 does not affect all population groups equally. Many analyses have shown that older age, ethnicity, male sex and geographical area, for example, are associated with the risk of getting the infection, experiencing more severe symptoms and higher rates of death.

Public Health England produced a report to help better understand the impact of COVID-19 on BAME Groups and can be found [here](#).

The pandemic has highlighted inequalities that exist and there are many challenges faced by residents in the Borough as the pandemic continues. As part of the Borough's recovery our community needs to be stronger and more resilient than before and the DEI framework will help the Borough to achieve this.

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, contactors, 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 aspect 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 Councils [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 three 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 one 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 2021 – 2022

Annex 1

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

Theme 1 - Developing Inclusive Communities Year 1

This action plan has been developed in response to both changing demographics and also the impact on the most vulnerable due to the pandemic

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1.1 | Tackling health inequalities in the Borough | <p>The Health & Wellbeing Action Plan to be updated to reflect health inequalities and impact of COVID-19</p> <p>Addressing health inequalities with a clear focus on supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Social Isolation and loneliness • Promoting health impact with local projects <p>Lobby, with partners, 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.</p> | <p>Plan updated</p> <p>Increased level of support / promotion</p> | <p>September 2021</p> <p>March 2022</p> <p>Ongoing for the duration of the plan</p> | <p>Head of Housing & Community</p> <p>DEHR</p> |
| 1.2 | Community Engagement | <p>COUNCIL MOTION - 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.</p> | | | |

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| | | Set up further community conversations with key groups | 2 further meetings held | September 2021 | Head of HR &OD |
| | | Review of consultation and engagements and a refresh of the citizens panel to attract greater representation across the Borough | Updated plan and Citizens Panel | March 2022 | Head of PPG |
| 1.3 | Encouraging and promoting greater participation from BAME populations across the Borough | From consultations identify barriers and seek to reduce these barriers through well designed service changes | Increased numbers of BAME residents accessing services (Reporting via LT Dashboard) | March 2022 March 2022 | Head of PPG Head of Housing & Community |
| 1.4 | Encourage, share and promote events that celebrate Diversity | Develop a new community/civic event to bring people together and promote the best of the community with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion | Events held and supported | March 2022 | Head of HR&OD / Head of Operational Services |

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|---|---|--|-------------|---------------------------------|
| | | COUNCIL MOTION - Invite local schools to contribute to a Borough Council programme celebrating multiculturalism and the achievements of differing communities in the Borough | | March 2022 | Head of Property & Regeneration |
| 1.5 | Support vulnerable members of the community to tackling crime against protected characteristics | COUNCIL MOTION - 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. Improving Community Engagement as part of the Partnership | Initiatives to improve Communication/ engagement | March 2022 | Head of Housing & Community |

Theme 2 - Engagement and Accessible Services Year 1

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|--|---|--|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Equality considerations are clearly presented as part of the Councils formal decision making process | New committee report template to include equality and diversity Equality Impact Assessments to be completed for all major decisions and policies | Improved reports focused on equality matters | Ongoing | CLO/Head of HR&OD/ Relevant HoS |
| 2.2 | Improved accessibility of residents to information, services and activities | Improved website in line with Accessibility legislations | EIA undertaken | Ongoing | Head of Digital & Transformation |

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | Programme of marketing of services and activities including the harder to reach groups Database or list of harder to reach groups developed | Increased marketing / communications campaigns | March 2022 | Head of HR/OD |
| 2.3 | Introduction of My Council Services to enhance access to digital services | My Council Services operational | Introduction of new service orientated modules | Phased approach from 2020/21 – 2023/24 | Head of Digital & Transformation |
| 2.4 | Improved communication to businesses on equality matters | COUNCIL MOTION - 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 | Delivery of I&D campaigns | March 2022 | Head of HR & OD |
| 2.5 | Developing meaningful relationships and creating better understanding within our community | COUNCIL MOTION - 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 | Meetings held with identified outcomes | September 2021 | Head of Housing & Communities / Head of HR & OD |
| 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 | Borough profile information with protected characteristics is available publicly Workforce profile is available publicly Promote and use of Surrey data within services Participation in the development of the Social Progress Index (SPI) with Surrey County Council to develop ward level index | Data updated and refreshed Data published and available publically | September 2021 September 2021 September 2021 - March 2022 September 2021 - March 2022 | Head of HR & OD / Head of PPG |

Theme 3 - Workforce Inclusivity Year 1

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION FOR | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|---|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 3.1 | Having a diverse workforce | Workforce profile and working to increase diversity through active recruitment campaigns to attract diverse talent | Changes in diversity across workforce | March 2022 | Head of HR & OD |
| 3.2 | Employees, Councillors and contractors are aware of, and actively uphold the Equality Duty and their equality responsibilities and training resources are available | Members Briefing evening or event on Equalities and Public Sector Duty Mandatory Training for new employees through e-learning Ongoing equalities training for staff | Briefing event & training held New e-learning opportunities | December 2021 December 2021 March 2022 | Head of HR & OD / Head of PPG |
| 3.3 | Ensure the People Framework supports employees in addressing inclusion and diversity | Roll out of Part 3 of People Framework with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion & Diversity • Dignity at work | People Framework procedure to support staff | September 2021 | Head of HR & OD |
| 3.4 | Treat employees fairly and equally | Workplace support for employees Increase those involved in the activities run or supported by the Inclusion & Diversity Group | Provision of support No of those involved | December 2021 | Inclusion & Diversity Group |

| # | PRIORITY | ACTION FOR | SUCCESS MEASURE | TARGET DATE | LEAD |
|-----|--|--|---|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 3.5 | Developing the workforce to recognise bias. Acknowledge that prejudice exists and provide a platform for discussion (combine with above) | Arrange unconscious bias training for LT/Managers and 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 equally access to services. | Training / event delivered | September 2021 | Head of HR & OD |
| 3.6 | Acknowledge that prejudice exists and provide a platform for discussion | COUNCIL MOTION - 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 | Listening events hosted and identifiable outcomes from events delivered | December 2021 | Inclusion & Diversity Group |