

Appendix 1

1. Legislative background

The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer, as a service provider and as a leading agency in building resilient communities in the Borough. This paper reports on the activities undertaken by the Council in 2025-2026 to progress our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework. It provides evidence for meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, which places a specific duty on us 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 other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The nine characteristics protected under the Act are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

2. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Framework

Following a consultation with our residents (Vision), the Council set out its Four-Year Plan (2020-2024). The plan strove to develop a successful future through harnessing the benefits of diversity and equality, by developing the Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework (DEI) 2021-2024 alongside its equality and diversity ambitions. The DEI Framework was refreshed in 2024 and the themes remain valid and the ambitions under the earlier plan hold true. Once the new East Surrey Unitary Authority has been established, the Council will revisit this.

3. Three thematic objectives of the DEI Framework

Our DEI Framework sets out the following 3 thematic objectives and progress has been made through a range of activities as reported from pages 3 to 16 of this report.

- **Developing inclusive communities and creating community cohesion**
This objective aims to develop 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.
- **Ensuring engagement and accessible services**
This objective relates to ensuring that Council services, information, consultation and engagement opportunities remain accessible to all residents, particularly those with protected characteristics. As a public body, the Council needs to make sure that all residents are able to access its information and services. Not everyone is able to do this in the same way, so it needs to make sure there is a range of options available.

- **Building workforce inclusivity**

This objective 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.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) – Our progress in 2025-2026

A range of activities have been undertaken in 2025 -2026 to support our progress towards the three thematic objectives and priorities. An update is provided in the tables below.

Thematic Objective 1- Developing Inclusive communities and creating community cohesion

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
1.Greater understanding of our local communities and their protected characteristics	1.1 Publish the Borough profile with data from the ONS 2021 Census Data	●	Completed - The Borough Profile was approved by the Senior Leadership Team on 10 December 2025. It is now published on the council's website as well as intranet.
1.2 Tackling health inequalities and socio-economic deprivation in the Borough	1.2a Implement community and wellbeing projects targeted at communities most impacted by the wider determinants of health	●	<p>After a public consultation with residents and stakeholders, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 – 2028 was approved by the Community and Wellbeing Committee in July 2025. The aims of the strategy are to improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of all residents through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improving access to physical health activity in the borough.• creating health and wellbeing opportunities for residents of the borough, and• supporting residents to connect with others. <p>The strategy is designed to support all residents, with particular attention given to children and young people, older adults, individuals whose health is affected by broader social and economic factors and those whose personal circumstances may disproportionately increase their vulnerability to poor health and wellbeing. It also includes specific references to those who are disproportionately impacted by isolation, disability, digital exclusion and people with long-term health conditions.</p> <p>The Community Development Plan has been developed until March 2027. Projects being considered include (but are not exhaustive of), Youth Diversion, Community Football, Digital inclusion, adding value to the warm hubs, sport, activity and creative</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
			<p>programmes, and bursary programmes for refugees and those aged 12-15yrs old who experience barriers to activity.</p>
1.2 Tackling health inequalities and socio-economic deprivation in the Borough	1.2b Provide a range of services to support health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents	●	<p>The services are reviewed by the team at the Community and Wellbeing Centre to ensure the needs are being met. The Centre is a friendly, local support hub for the over 55s and it offers a programme of social and recreational activities throughout the week from art and music to quizzes and games etc. A range of facilities is available under one roof including hairdressers, foot clinic, entertainment hall, and communal dining area. Clients can have additional access to the assisted bathing room, laundry, foot clinic, hairdressing suite, and shopping service at the Community and Wellbeing Centre.</p> <p>The council's Dementia Hub provides specialist respite day care for people who are aged 50 or over living with dementia and memory loss. The specialist team run a programme of daily activities and therapies, helping clients grow confidence, build muscle strength, and encourage social interaction to combat feelings of isolation, loneliness, and depression.</p>
1.2 Tackling health inequalities and socio-economic deprivation in the Borough	1.2c Review feedback on our operational support for the Ukraine refugees, as gathered from the survey by the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network	●	<p>The charity, Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN), receives part funding from the council to provide services to all refugees in the borough including those from Ukraine and Afghanistan. Services cover advice and support accessing services, housing and schools. Since 2021, the Homes for Ukraine scheme has supported over 170 Ukrainian families by sponsoring them and providing homes in the borough.</p> <p>The council's refugee coordinator has worked closely with the EERN as well as organising safeguarding checks for prospective sponsors including DBS and home checks, alongside the council's Housing and Environmental Health teams. The coordinator has also arranged trauma-informed support training for sponsors, delivered by the Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust.</p> <p>The refugee coordinator has recently received an annual summary report from EERN confirming their outcomes and impact on the refugee community.</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
1.2 Tackling health inequalities and socio-economic deprivation in the Borough	1.2d Implement Year 3 of the Affordable Housing delivery plan	●	<p>The council has continued Year 3 of the Affordable Housing Delivery Improvement Plan through collaborative work with key stakeholders including housing providers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase opportunities/options for new housing development ensure an evidenced and robust affordable housing policy in the draft Local Plan, which will help to increase long-term delivery of affordable housing on section 106 development sites consider the housing potential of EEBC and other public body assets through a variety of projects expand the Private Sector Leasing scheme. Another Landlord Forum is planned early 2026, in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to promote the uptake of properties for the scheme <p>The council has successfully completed the purchase of three properties under the Local Authority Housing Fund 3 (LAHF3) scheme, and are close to adding another, which will increase the number of in-borough temporary accommodation properties.</p>
1.2 Tackling health inequalities and socio-economic deprivation in the Borough	1.2e Support homeless residents and those who are at risk of homelessness via Year 3 action plan of the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy	●	<p>The Housing service has continued to deliver Year 3 action plan in a challenging environment due to the ongoing cost of living crisis, low affordable housing supply, rental increases and a lack of resources for other agencies. Two progress reports have been submitted to the Community and Wellbeing Committee in March and November 2025.</p> <p>The council has provided housing advice and early prevention services to 170 households between April and September 2025. The additional Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2025/26, of which 49% is earmarked for homelessness prevention measures, will help boost the homelessness prevention work.</p> <p>Since the recruitment of the Housing Options (Move On) Officer, the Officer has helped to move on over 100 homeless households from nightly paid and temporary accommodation to settled accommodations, which has helped to limit expenditure.</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
1.3 Foster inclusive growth, skills & employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups	1.3a Provision of the Employment Hub for residents of all ages to find lasting work, including those who are refugees and people with additional needs.	●	<p>The council's Epsom and Ewell Hub is a free employment and skills service to local residents of all ages, including those who are refugees and people with additional needs, to assist them back into work or training. The council works with the Department of Work and Pensions, Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership and NESCOT college to offer personalised advice on CV building, job interview training and confidence-building resources.</p> <p>For the 12-month period between 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025, the Hub had 326 registrations for employment support.</p>
1.3 Foster inclusive growth, skills & employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups	1.3b Providing work placements and apprenticeship by the Council to match people with opportunities	●	<p>There are currently 2 apprentices working in the Environmental Health team and the Public Protection team. The council has provided a number of work experience for students throughout the year.</p> <p>EEBC regularly attend the Nescot jobs fair and we are developing a collaborative relationship with Jobcentre Plus by forwarding our vacancies to them when posted. Jobcentre Plus review their client list and recommend candidates who meet the job specifications.</p>
1.4 Support vulnerable members of the community including the groups with protected characteristics	1.4a Working with partners to implement the Community Safety Action Plan 2025-2027	●	<p>In late 2024, following an analysis of the relevant data and a consultation with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) partners, the CSP agreed priorities for 2025/27:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the most vulnerable or those at risk of harm • Serious Organised Crime and PREVENT • Identify and tackling crime and antisocial behaviour • Reduce reoffending by adult and young offenders <p>High level actions are being monitored through the Community Safety Partnership.</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
1.4 Support vulnerable members of the community including the groups with protected characteristics	1.4b Supporting vulnerable people in an emergency	●	<p>The vulnerable adults database is updated daily to ensure that the council has the latest list of vulnerable people who use our services on the database. This is in preparation for the event of an emergency such as fire, flood or blizzard. The council continues to work with partner organisations across Surrey to ensure that help and support can reach the vulnerable people during these events.</p>
1.5 Promote and celebrate Diversity, Inclusivity and Heritage	1.5 Implement projects as part of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy with consideration given to residents with protected characteristics	●	<p>The team which supports the council's Arts, Heritage and Cultural (ARC) Strategy has continued to work collaboratively with local communities to promote and celebrate the borough's diversity, inclusivity and heritage. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a programme of creativity to support social integration and positive mental health outcomes for Ukrainian refugee community in the borough through a partnership with the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network and creative stakeholders. • working with local stakeholders and partners to deliver a series of art/wellbeing sessions across the winter months (linked with warm hubs) to support residents living with multiple disadvantage, e.g. elderly people and people with disability • increasing accessibility to the borough's heritage via the Bloomberg Connects app • a successful bid to the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner to create another mural with a cohort of NESCOT students in September 2025 • championing cultural and creative career paths for young people within the borough by working with the national charity, Kids in Museums, as a Takeover Day at Bourne Hall Museum • at the Postgraduate 'Creative Futures' event held by University of Creative Art, the ARC programme officer gave a speech about creative roles in local government • completed installation of creative elements to Upper Bar area at the Epsom Playhouse to showcase archive from Bourne Hall Museum and art and design exhibition of NESCOT students.

Thematic Objective 2- Ensuring engagement and accessible services

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
2.1 Encouraging greater participation from different ethnic communities and LGBTQI+ ⁱ population as well as the VCFS ⁱⁱ in our community engagement mechanisms	2.1a Implement Year 2 of the Communications Strategy including accessible communication channels as well as engagement mechanisms and opportunities	●	<p>The council's Communication team has undertaken various actions in 2025/26 to support the DEI work. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the production of an editorial guide for staff which aims to make council communications more accessible across the organisation work to support engagement with residents, including veterans, students, young people, and refugees a programme of Awareness Days to further raise the profile of DEI internally and externally via social media and other communication channels. See 3.1b for further information.
	2.1b Deliver the Epsom and Ewell youth games	●	<p>The council has launched its first-ever Epsom & Ewell Young Legends programme in October 2025 which forms part of the council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. By offering free access to sports and creative activities for 9 to 11-year-olds, the programme aims to help children boost their confidence, develop new skills, make friends, and ease the transition for those preparing for secondary school.</p> <p>In launching, the council made a conscious effort to reach those facing barriers to participation, including children supported through the government-funded Holiday Activities and Food programme, and through foodbanks, children centres and other support services.</p> <p>A diverse range of activities ranging from sports and creative pursuits to basketball, Girls Rugby, Judo, Musical Theatre (song and dance), Yoga & Meditation, and art were offered. There was also a dedicated art session for children with SEN. Delivered by trusted and skilled professionals in a safe and supportive environment, the programme encourages children to try new things and have fun.</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
			<p>The sessions have now concluded, and the council looks forward to hosting a graduation/celebration event for the children who completed the programme of activity.</p>
2.2 Building meaningful relationships with our communities through better understanding of their needs	2.2a Support community and voluntary organisations to enhance our understanding of local communities and meeting their needs.	●	<p>The financial support from the council to these five voluntary and community organisations has continued in 2025/26: Age Concern Epsom & Ewell, Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell, Central Surrey Voluntary Action, RELATE Mid & East Surrey, and The Sunnybank Trust. These organisations provide support to some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough especially during the current cost-of-living crisis. The first two organisations have reported an increase of 25% and 22% respectively in the numbers of residents they are supporting. Their service reports have been submitted to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.</p> <p>The council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Group invited a Youth and Community Worker of the Twister groups to join its meeting in September 2025. Twister is a youth group for young people aged 10-19 (25 if SEND in Surrey) who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or are questioning their gender or sexuality in a safe environment. Youth workers at the four Twister groups build and establish trusting relationship with these young people. They offer information, advice, and guidance along with activities that range from having discussions about things that are important to these young people, through to doing such things as arts and crafts and learning new skills.</p>
2.2 Building meaningful relationships with our communities through better understanding of their needs	2.2b Grow and strengthen community partnerships in line with 3 strategic pillars of Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy	●	<p>The projects mentioned in 1.5 above shows the range of partnership engagement and development that has been nurtured, grown and strengthened since the launch of the strategy in 2023. The list of partners below is by no means exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloomberg Connects • Creative Minds • Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network • Laine Theatre Arts • LeSpleen • My Time for Young Carers • Nonsuch Voles

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epsom Picturehouse • Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School • Friends of Nonsuch • Girlguiding Epsom Division • GLF Schools • Kate McBarron • Kids in Museums • Love Me Love My Mind • North-East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT) • Positive Arts • St Clements Catholic Primary School • Stephen Bourne – local historian • The Horton Arts Centre • University for Creative Arts • We Power On • Whistlestops Arts
2.2 Building meaningful relationships with our communities through better understanding of their needs	2.2c Listen to community and voluntary representatives as to how the Council can best provide its services to support their communities and best use its influence to make a positive difference	●	<p>The council hosts/leads the Neighbourhood Board Partnership Forum (NHBPF) on a quarterly basis. This brings representatives from a broad range of services to a forum that seeks to understand and address the needs of local residents.</p> <p>The council attended the Mental Health awareness event on 10th and 11th October 2025 arranged by Love Me Love My Mind. This included a round table event with multiple partners. We secured additional contacts for invitation to the NHBPF and listened to their feedback in respect to what is needed in the community. This has helped to shape ideas for world suicide prevention day and for further community initiatives.</p>
2.3 Using Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as an integral part of service/system planning or change to inform decision	2.3a-d Services adopt the EIA as an integral part of service/system planning or change and submit EIA to inform decision making	●	<p>The council continues to use the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) tool to assess any potential impact on residents and staff with protected characteristics due to a policy and service development / change. Some examples of the EIAs undertaken by the council include: the Rainbow Leisure Centre Contract 2025 and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025- 2028. For the latter, a public consultation has been conducted online and the questionnaire has also been produced in hardcopy and made available in various local venues. Views of key partners have been gathered through various</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
making			forums and meetings. These EIAs have been submitted to the relevant committees and they are published on the council's website.
2.4 Considering equality, diversity and inclusion in our procurement cycle	2.4 Request all Threshold 4 contract bidders to submit their organisation's equality objectives (or similar) and their modern slavery statement (if applicable to contract)	●	<p>Between November 2024 and November 2025, we have had two Threshold 4 procurements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Rainbow Leisure Centre Contract, where the contract bidders were asked to submit their modern slavery statements as part of the tendering process, and the IDox contract, which was awarded using the Crown Commercial Services framework, which covers the equality considerations.
2.5 Improving accessibility of residents to information, services and activities	2.5a Improve EEBC website in line with Accessibility legislations	●	Our website currently complies with the WCAG 2.1 AA standard. The council continues to review its website to ensure its accessible and any issues to be addressed.
2.5 Improving accessibility of residents to information, services and activities	2.5b Ongoing development of 'My Council Services' to enhance access to digital services	●	'My Council Services' continues to be developed on the website to enhance residents' access to digital services as part of our ICT strategy. This portal enables residents to report issues affecting their local areas and access a range of services. All waste services are now fully managed within 'My Council Services', providing a single, streamlined platform for requests such as missed collections, new bins, and other waste-related enquiries.
2.5 Improving accessibility of residents to information,	2.5c Ensure that our venue, facilities and transport are accessible to residents and staff	●	In ensuring our venues, facilities and transport are accessible to residents and staff, the council has commissioned, for example, The Sunnybank Trust to review one of our venues. This is to ensure that the venue is accessible to visitors with learning disabilities.

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
services and activities			<p>There has been one equality related complaint, received from a resident, between October 2024 and October 2025. It related to the change of payment method used in Hook Road Car Park, from Pay on foot parking machines, which accepted card and cash payment, to RingGo payments only. It was resolved by explaining that several components of the barrier-controlled equipment were reaching 'end of life', and the Council deemed it uneconomical to purchase new equipment, and therefore the interim system of using 'RingGo' was introduced. It was also explained that 'Pay and Display' payment method remains available at the Depot Road and Upper High Street car parks.</p>

Thematic Objective 3 - Building workforce inclusivity

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
3.1 Strengthening the strategic leadership in driving diversity, equality and inclusion	3.1a Councillors and SLT community involvement /engagement activities	●	<p>Councillor Darren Talbot, Mental Health Councillor Champion, recently took part in a short video for The Good Company to help support an initiative that considers the impact of mental health on individuals, and the relationship between mental health and financial hardship. The aim is to increase awareness and reduce stigma. He has also previously visited two local mental health charities, Love Me Love My Mind and We Power On, to understand their areas of work and the challenges they face.</p> <p>In addition, the Neighbourhood Board Partnership Forum has a focus on mental health. The Forum is attended by senior council staff and Councillor Bernice Froud, ensuring engagement with our local charities and organisations.</p>
3.1 Strengthening the strategic leadership in driving diversity, equality and inclusion	3.1b Raise awareness with staff of key DEI events	●	<p>The council's Communications Team has launched a programme of activity to support Awareness Days that further enhance DEI amongst our staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodiversity Celebration Week • International Women's Day • Ramadan • Pride (LGBTQIA+) • Black History Month • Major holidays including Easter, Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Hannukah & Yom Kippur • World Alzheimer's Awareness Day and the council's Dementia Hub • Holocaust Memorial Day • Armed Forces Day • Remembrance Day, VE Day and VJ Day
3.1 Strengthening the strategic leadership in driving diversity, equality and inclusion	3.1c Raise awareness and promote training and development on carrying out Equality Impact	●	<p>Completed - All new staff are required to complete the mandatory equality e-learning module during induction. Existing staff are required to refresh this module once a year.</p> <p>The module includes a mandatory topic on Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for</p>

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
equality and inclusion	Assessment (EIA) as an integral part of any service planning/ change to committee/council in decision making.		managerial level. 44 managers completed the Public Sector - Equality Impact Assessments module via the Surrey Learning Portal between 7 January 2025 and 31 July 2025.
3.1 Strengthening the strategic leadership in driving diversity, equality and inclusion	3.1d Review the annual progress report of this equality action plan by the Audit & Scrutiny	●	The last version of this progress report was submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in February 2025. This report is an annual progress report of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework for 2025/26 activities.
3.2 Ensuring inclusive workforce strategies and policies	3.2a Produce a regular update on workforce profile including a breakdown of workforce by protected characteristics	●	As an employer, the council collects data to produce a workforce profile, including a breakdown of workforce by all nine protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act (2010). The latest report was published in February 2025 which shows that the data is consistent and accurately reflects the residential population in Epsom and Ewell according to the 2021 Census of the borough. The February 2026 profile is being produced at the time of writing this report.
3.2 Ensuring inclusive workforce strategies and policies	3.2b Develop targets and action plan based on the workforce and resident profiles.	●	Given the data is consistent and accurately reflects the residential population no specific targets have been set. Actions will be based on the TIDE self-assessment exercise referenced below 3.4c.
3.2 Ensuring inclusive workforce strategies and policies	3.2c Update the Gender Pay Gap	●	The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 introduced a requirement for employers with 250 or more employees to publish details of their gender pay gap. Our latest report has been based on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024. It has been submitted to the Strategy and Resources Committee in March 2025. The next report will be released in January/February 2026.

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
3.3 Ensuring inclusive workforce strategies and policies	3.3 Reviewing all employment policies and procedures to ensure their compliance with equality legislation and employment codes of practice. Once signed off launch and provide support to staff and managers.	●	<p>The following policies have recently been reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity at Work Procedure • Staff Code of Conduct • Managing Organisational Change • Learning and Development Policy • Pay and Reward Procedure <p>The council has re-accredited as a Disability Confident Employer.</p>
3.4 Listening and supporting our employees in addressing equality, diversity and inclusion	3.4a Continue to update the Sharepoint intranet page on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and communicate to staff	●	Completed -The DEI Sharepoint page has been updated to include new Equality Impact Assessments. The 2024 Borough Profile is also available on the Sharepoint intranet page which has been communicated to all staff.
3.4 Listening and supporting our employees in addressing equality, diversity and inclusion	3.4b Review the uptake of mandatory training on equalities by all Staff via Surrey Learning portal.	●	<p>Completed - In addition to 3.1c above, 193 staff members completed the Diversity, Equality and Discrimination module between 12 September 2024 and 31 July 2025 via the Surrey Learning Portal.</p> <p>In response to the new duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council also completed the mandatory training of all staff on Preventing Sexual Harassment between December 2024 and March 2025. The new duty, in force in October 2024, requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.</p>
3.4 Listening and supporting our employees in addressing	3.4c Conduct the ENEI TIDE self-assessment and benchmarking tool	●	Completed – The council has joined Onvero (formerly The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, also known as ENEI in short) as a member. This provides resources such as training guides and videos which will expand our fundamental DEI training available to all staff.

Priority	Action	Status	Progress update
equality, diversity and inclusion			The council has used the ENEI TIDE tool to conduct a self-assessment of its DEI work. A benchmarking report has also been produced by ENEI for participating local authorities. An in-person feedback was given by the Inclusion Lead of ENEI which will inform our DEI work for the following year.

ⁱ LGBTQI+ is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), Intersex, and others. (include the A!)

ⁱⁱ VCFS is an abbreviation for Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.