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1. **Statement of Intent**

1.1. The Council's vision is to build a community in which all can take part and all can take pride. This vision can only be realised through a true commitment by the Council and Sutton's residents to promote diversity and ensure we recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality.

1.2. The London Borough of Sutton understands that we live in a society that is unequal and that people do face discrimination and harassment. The Council as a community leader, a service provider, a major employer and a commissioner of goods and services, has a clear social and legislative responsibility (see Figure A) to prevent discrimination and advance equality. By working to eliminate discrimination and promote equality we will empower our residents and help them to realise their full potential.

1.3. We commit to fulfilling both the letter and the spirit of our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any other subsequent legislation relating to equality. We require our contractors and the organisations that we fund to abide by all the equality legislation that applies to them and to assist the council in upholding its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.4. We commit to being a learning organisation about equality and inclusion, always ready to improve our practice and to address new issues as they arise. We will seek to understand and address the root causes of inequality and exclusion in Sutton and to focus our efforts on tackling those root causes. If we make mistakes, we will put things right and learn from our experience.

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**Figure A: Public Sector Equality Duty.**

As a Local Authority, we are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (the Equality Duty), created by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Duty requires public bodies 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. A number of specific duties are set out in secondary legislation to accompany the Equality Act 2010. These duties require public bodies to:
  - Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years, and
  - Publish information, at least annually, to show their compliance with the Equality Duty. This must include information relating to its employees and to people who are affected by the public body’s policies and procedures.

For 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](#). The Commission has been mandated by Parliament to challenge discrimination, and protect and promote human rights. The Commission produces a range of publications and guidance which can inform the work of the Council and educate the public.

1.5. The Equality and Diversity Framework explains the Council’s commitment and approach to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations in Sutton over the next 4 years. It sets out:
   - The governance arrangements for equality and diversity within the Council;
   - The roles and responsibilities for equality and diversity in Sutton;
   - Overarching principles governing the Council’s approach to equality and diversity; and
   - The equality related objectives the Council aims to achieve within the next four years.

1.6. The Framework complements and reflects the key priorities set out in London Borough of Sutton’s Corporate Plan, Ambitious For Sutton 2018 -2023. In a climate of significant budgetary challenges, decreasing government expenditure and grants, and increasing demand for services, the Framework will be an important tool for guiding the delivery of the Council’s services in the future, and to assess the impact of changes in delivery methods on service users and residents.
2. Governance

2.1. Policy Context

The Sutton Plan is a shared, cross-borough vision put together by public and voluntary sector partners (including the Council) with input from residents, voluntary and businesses. The Sutton Plan partners have agreed on the following five principles – each one aimed at improving the lives of residents across the borough:

- Think Sutton first.
- Provide seamless coordinated services.
- Build stronger communities.
- Work across sectors.
- Intervene early.

2.2. Among other aims the Sutton Plan work aims to:

- Reduce inequality between the wealthiest and the most disadvantaged parts of the borough;
- Pilot joint early intervention schemes that tackle social problems and injustice;
- Provide equal access to services for all residents across the borough.

The Sutton Plan guides the Council’s aspirations and also provides a vehicle for understanding equality and diversity opportunities and issues across the borough.

2.3. London Borough of Sutton’s governance and scrutiny framework is built upon a committee system, in order to achieve more open and more transparent decision making. Decision making by the six primary committees and supporting committees and boards is supported by the Corporate Management Team, which oversees progress against the Council’s stated priorities. In addition, the Directorate Management Teams quality assure the outcomes delivered as a result of the Council’s plans, and the services they provide to residents. Equality Impact Assessments are used by committees, boards, CMT and DMTs to determine the impact of the Council’s initiatives.

2.4. The London Borough of Sutton also has a specific governance structure in place to develop, implement, embed and review equality and diversity work.
Figure B sets out the equality governance arrangements and how the Equality Champions Group and Fairness Commission form part of this structure in relation to other Council Committees and management arrangements.

**Figure B: London Borough of Sutton Equality governance arrangements**

**The Sutton Fairness Commission**

The Sutton Fairness Commission terms of reference state the following about the role of the Commission:

‘The overall aim of the Commission is to work to ensure that the benefits of living in Sutton are enjoyed by all sections of society. The commission will work to 'eliminate discrimination', 'advance equality of opportunity' and 'foster good relations' amongst all in the borough, including those from 'protected characteristic groups'.'

In line with the Sutton Plan and LBS’s focus on partnership working the Fairness Commission will be the main vehicle for external equality and diversity activity. The Council will act as a critical friend for partners and will also receive input and feedback on its services, policies and commissioning processes via the Commission.

**Equality Champions Group**

The Equality Champions Group is chaired by the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Sutton and includes senior members of staff from each Directorate. The purpose of the Group is to champion and steer the Council’s approach to equality and diversity.
The Sutton Fairness Commission

2.5. The Fairness Commission is comprised of a range of partners (NHS, police, education, housing, fire and rescue, voluntary services and residents). The commission is hosted externally from the Council (by Community Action Sutton) and focused on issues determined by the Commissioners.

Membership of the Commission

1.1. The Commission terms of reference state that, ‘The members of the Commission will reflect the range of stakeholders with strategic responsibility for ensuring the equitable access to quality of life opportunities for Sutton’s residents, including the public, voluntary and community and private sector.’ From a Council perspective, the Fairness Commission will be supported by members and officers from the Chief Executive’s team (and other officers as needed). The Commission aspires to become the main vehicle for scrutinising equality issues in Sutton. The Council will support this by using the Fairness Commission to support its external equality and diversity aims.

1.2. ‘The Commission will review sub regional and local evidence relating to the discrimination and disadvantage of communities and in relation to quality of life themes and will annually agree a work programme that will provide the focus of the work of the Commission. The Commission aspires to operate as a part of the equalities infrastructure for the wider public sector in Sutton. Ultimately the Commission aspires to become the main vehicle for scrutinising equality issues in Sutton.’

The Sutton Fairness Commission will:

1. Be the main forum for LBS to seek input on key strategic decisions in relation to equality and diversity;
2. Act as a ‘critical friend’ on equality and diversity issues and as a means for sharing equality and diversity best practice around services, policies and commissioning processes;
3. Make advisory recommendations based on its own work and contribute to the development of strategy for the implementation of equality and diversity policies, practices and action plans;
4. Be invited to review and comment on relevant reports in relation to agreed equality and diversity objectives and action plans.
3. Equality and Diversity Principles

3.1. The London Borough of Sutton will adhere to the following equality and diversity principles when working to meet the objectives of the to help meet its equality and diversity objectives:

1. Working through the Sutton Plan partnership, the wider public sector voluntary sector, and local businesses to promote, recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality. This will mean working through the Sutton Plan Principles.

2. Working with residents to create integrated and cohesive communities which challenge discrimination & embrace difference.

3. Putting the needs of service users at the heart of delivery and embedding equality into the work of the London Borough of Sutton.

4. Ensuring an evidence and needs based approach is taken in all decision making through the delivery an Outcomes Based Commissioning approach and through the development and completion of Equality Impact Assessments for strategies, policies, programmes and projects and all the Council’s commissioning activities.

5. Monitoring and assessing the impact of our strategies, policies, programmes, projects and commissioning on equality, and, where appropriate, improve upon any adverse impacts.

6. Being open and transparent, publishing and ensuring easy access to equality information and outcomes.

7. Ensuring consultation and engagement with stakeholders is integral to the development, implementation and review of our strategies, policies, programmes, projects and commissioning activities.

8. Working towards developing a workforce which is representative of local communities at all levels and ensuring employment policies are fair and robust.
9. Drawing on best practice to continuously improve and strengthen our approach to equality and diversity in the workplace, when commissioning and delivering services and in our communication with residents.

4. Equality and Diversity Objectives

4.1. Core Objectives

Objective 1
Encourage tolerance, mutual understanding and respect between all community members and interest groups, including people with a disability, newly-arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, gypsies and travellers, people of different ethnicities and race, people of different faiths, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Objective 2
Target and challenge social isolation, particularly that experienced by people with a disability, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals, and older people at risk of isolation or with long-term conditions.

Objective 3
Strengthen the Council’s approach to engaging with residents and community groups so that they feel they have a say in the services the Council delivers, particularly people with a disability and faith and BAME groups. This includes maximising the use of existing Council mechanisms, such as borough consultations, Local Committees and external ones such as the Fairness Commission.

Objective 4
Empower equality and diversity organisations, the voluntary sector, local businesses and residents by monitoring and publishing equality and diversity information and outcomes so that they can understand the reasons for Council decisions and challenge any decisions that they believe are unjustified.

4.2. Equality Objectives in the Corporate Plan

The council’s vision as set out in the Corporate Plan Ambitious for Sutton
2018 - 2023 is about a commitment to improve the lives of local people. It allows us to focus our resources where they are needed in order to deliver Sutton’s priorities and to provide transparency about why the council needs to take certain decisions in order to achieve specific outcomes for different groups. Set out below are the outcomes based commissioning areas with the key commissioning activities listed underneath, that support our equalities agenda.

**Being Active Citizens**

All residents live healthy lifestyles and are enabled to be economically, socially and physically active.

**The physical environment is maintained and improved for all residents**

- Improve opportunities for looked after children, providing more apprenticeship places for care leavers.

- Use our enhanced library service to grow the readers of the future and narrow the digital divide.

- Take a whole family approach to addressing issues for young people, and embed the Family Group Conference service to empower families to find their own solutions to emerging problems.

- Ensure there is accessible and good quality support for carers across the borough.

**Making Informed Choices**

Individuals, families and communities are able to access a diverse range of information, advice and guidance to make informed choices and enable them to sustain change.

Wide range of accessible sources of information and advice available at the
**right time**

- Leisure services meet the needs of Sutton residents, enhance the services provided by other providers, and increase health and wellbeing.

- Ensure that all families in the borough have equal opportunities through access to good Information, Advice and Support Services, with an improved and co-produced Local Offer website for Children and Young People with SEND.

- Work with schools to deliver and promote healthy living habits in young people.

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**Living Well Independently**

Building on individual and community resilience and assets to help people maintain their independence for as long as possible

**Improve the resilience of residents and communities so they can live full and independent lives**

- Become the first borough recognised as an ‘Age-Friendly Borough’ by Age UK and continue to develop our status as a ‘Dementia-Friendly Borough’.

- Design support and provision to ensure that young people with SEND are prepared for adult life and become as independent as they can.

- Ensure that all eligible adults in need of social care receive a personalised service, taking a partnership approach to delivery.
### Keeping People Safe

**A joined up approach by all public services to ensuring that vulnerable residents are supported and kept safe**

- Increase mental health support for young people:
- Strengthen multi-agency working to improve outcomes for children, young people and families experiencing domestic abuse and violence.
- Reduce the number of young people becoming looked after

### Smarter Ways of Working

**Transforming our ways of working to manage reduced budgets and increasing demand**

**Redesign services to increase efficiency and utilise digital opportunities wherever possible**

- Deliver the Children’s Transformation Workstream (new operating model and workforce capability): Increase staff retention, thereby reducing agency and recruitment costs. Increase in multi-disciplinary teams. Work in an open systemic way with families and partner agencies. Rollout of the Restorative Programme.

- Implement new Adult Social Care operating model and workforce capability: Increase staff retention, thereby reducing in agency staff and recruitment cost. Rollout of new Learning & Development Programme.

- Redesign of Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding Operating Model: Implementation of Locality Model for Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding. Reduce the number of team changes for children, young
people and their families Reduction in statutory work and costly placements Reduction in unsuitable high-cost placements Increase in Family Group Conference activity which correlates to decreases in CIN, CP and LAC cases

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Achieving and promoting equality and diversity is a responsibility shared by all elected members, the Corporate Management Team, Directorate Management Teams, managers, staff, contractors, partners, stakeholders and residents.

Elected members

5.2. Elected members must fulfil their statutory responsibilities under equalities legislation to promote good community relations in all their work, particularly in their community leadership role. Members have a duty to take account of equalities considerations when reaching decisions and must be able to demonstrate that they have done so.

5.3. Members (as nominated by their political group through the Council’s outside bodies appointment process) will also represent the Council on the Fairness Commission.

Corporate Management Team

5.4. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) must champion and lead by example, using the Public Sector Equality Duty to encourage the integration of equality and diversity issues in all aspects of the Council’s work. CMT should actively help to promote equality and diversity issues and actions within directorates, and ensure that good quality Equality Impact Assessments are completed (where appropriate).

Directorate Management Teams

5.5. Directorate Management Teams must maintain an overview of equality and diversity for the directorate and ensure effective development, implementation and monitoring of service equality and diversity objectives.
and related actions, including ensuring completion and appropriate challenge of Integrated Impact Assessments.

Equality Champions Group

5.6. The Equality Champions Group is chaired by the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Sutton and includes senior members of staff from each Directorate. The purpose of the Group is to champion and steer the Council’s approach to equality and diversity, including:

- Being the advocate and leader for equalities in the organisation.
- Overseeing and informing the development and implementation of the Council’s equality and diversity strategies, policies, and guidance, and monitoring progress in achieving its aims.
- Reviewing equalities trends and issues within the Council’s workforce through regular workforce monitoring.
- Providing oversight for the delivery of equality impact assessments, and ensure relevant learning is shared across the organisation.
- Advising and utilising relevant external bodies (including the Fairness Commission) and internal bodies (such as the Council’s Staff Networks) where needed as mechanisms for consulting and examining the Council’s policies, projects and programmes.
- Ensuring compliance with equality legislation. The Group meets at least four times a year.

Staff

5.7. Staff should demonstrate commitment to equalities by:

- Championing equality and diversity in the borough when undertaking their work,
- Taking active steps to challenge discrimination and harassment in the workplace and the community,
- Making informed decisions, which consider the impact on people with protected characteristics and key community groups, and
- Understanding, complying and feeding into the equality and diversity processes in their directorates.
Staff Networks

5.8. In 2018 the Council reinvigorated its staff networks. Staff networks are led by staff and formed in line with the protected groups. The groups are supported by Human Resources and work so that network members are able to support one another and also bring forward ideas to the Council for improvement. Each network has a senior management sponsor who will support the networks and communicate issues that they raise to other bodies, CMT and elsewhere as appropriate.

Commissioned services

5.9. The services that we commission at the London Borough of Sutton must comply with the Equality Act 2010, including incorporating the Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty commitments in all dealings and practices on behalf of the Council in all areas assessed as relevant to the duty.

Stakeholders

5.10. Stakeholders should contribute to the process of setting, monitoring and reviewing all equality and diversity objectives and action plans. Opportunities for stakeholders and communities to engage with the Council include joining the Online Residents Survey Panel, or engaging with their Local Committee, the Fairness Commission or via one of our consultation or engagement activities.

Residents

5.11. Residents are key to the development of an inclusive community in which we can all take pride. The Council expects its residents to be tolerant and respectful in their interactions with others. We want to work with residents to create a just society, free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice, and to tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

Training

5.12. The Council provides up to date training, information and advice to councillors and officers on the role of Equality Impact Assessments and how they should be used.
6. Monitoring

6.1. The Equality and Diversity objectives are aligned to the priorities in the Council’s Corporate Plan 2018/19 - 2023/24. The Council will identify the actions it will take to achieve these objectives through the annual Commissioning and Finance planning process. Progress will be monitored by the Equality Champions Group and where relevant in partnership with the Sutton Fairness Commission, and presented in the quarterly performance and finance reports to Strategy and Resources Committee. Additionally, the achievements will be reported every year through an annual report for residents to show the work being done by the Council in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the objectives within the Framework to promote diversity and recognise and celebrate difference.

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