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1. Statement of Intent

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.

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.

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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 both 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.
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 **objectives** the Council aims to achieve within the next four years.

The Framework complements and reflects the key priorities set out in **London Borough of Sutton’s Corporate Plan 2014-2018, and its commitment to being an Open Council**. The Framework is informed by the Council’s **PRIDE values**:

- working in **partnership** with the people who live or work in the borough;
- making our services open and accessible so that everyone is listened to and treated with **respect**;
- seeking **innovative** approaches in order to provide better services;
- promoting **diversity** and ensuring that we recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality; and
- empowering everyone so that we can all 'take part and take pride' as active citizens and employees.

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

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. Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) are used by committees, boards, CMT and DMTs to determine the impact of the Council’s initiatives.

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 Equality and Diversity Forum form part of this structure in relation to other Council Committees and management arrangements.

![Diagram of London Borough of Sutton Equality governance arrangements]

**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, including:

1. Being the advocate and leader for equalities in the organisation.
2. 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.

3. Providing oversight for the delivery of integrated impact assessments, and ensure relevant learning is shared across the organisation.

4. Advising and utilising the Equality and Diversity Forum as a mechanism for consulting and examining the council’s policies, projects and programmes.

5. Ensuring compliance with equality legislation.

The Group meets at least four times a year (to coincide with the Equality and Diversity Forum).

**Equality and Diversity Forum**

The Equality and Diversity Forum is a formal mechanism (included in the London Borough of Sutton’s Constitution) that provides an opportunity for the Borough’s equality and diversity groups to engage with the Council. The purpose of the forum is to provide advice to the Council, its committees, officers of the Council, and to other public service providers on equality and diversity issues concerning all aspects of their work.

The function of the Forum is to:

1. Make recommendations to the appropriate decision making body of the Council and other public service providers on the development of their equality and diversity policies, practices and action plans;
2. Contribute to the development of their strategy for the implementation of agreed equality and diversity policies, practices and action plans;
3. Maintain an overview of equality and diversity issues relating to all aspects of their work;
4. Receive and comment on all relevant reports in relation to agreed equality and diversity objectives and action plans;
5. Contribute to the annual review of the Council and other public service providers’ corporate and service area objectives relating to equality and diversity.

The Forum is chaired by Councillor Adrian Davey and meets up to four times a year. It has representatives from a number of the Borough’s community organisations and groups. For a full list of members please see the Equality & Diversity Forum webpage here.

From 2014, the Council will strengthen the consultative and ‘critical friend’ role of the Forum through the introduction of a Roundtable session in order to more thoroughly examine the impact of
Council projects and programmes on the needs of our different and emerging communities. Members of the public or groups/organisations (i.e. those which are not standing members of the Forum) with an interest in the projects and programmes being examined are invited to attend and participate in the Roundtable which will be included on two Forum agendas a year.

If you are interested in formally joining the Forum or finding out more about this or the Roundtable, please call the Sutton Contact Centre on 020 8770 5000 or complete a General Enquiry Form (www.sutton.gov.uk).
3. Roles and Responsibilities

As previously described, the Equality & Diversity Forum and Equality Champions Group have defined and important roles in developing, implementing, embedding and reviewing equality and diversity in the London Borough of Sutton.

However, 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**

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.

**Corporate Management Team**

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 Integrated Impact Assessments are completed (where appropriate).

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**Figure C**

**Integrated Impact Assessments**

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, Sutton introduced the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to assess the possible impact, of policies, service delivery plans, strategies, projects or other initiatives.

The IIA includes four criteria against which assessments are made: equality and diversity; health and well-being; local economy; and sustainability. In all instances, the questions on equality and diversity and health and well-being must be completed. The local economy and sustainability questions must be completed when they are relevant to a proposal.

The IIA is intended to encourage officers to think about proposed changes from four key perspectives and to evidence their thinking in a way which support Sutton’s choices and ensures policy changes do not have a disproportionate impact upon any particular or vulnerable groups.

The IIA is intended to ensure evidence-based decision making and has been adopted as part of Sutton’s transition to becoming an outcome-focused Strategic Commissioning Council.

By completing an IIA for all projects and service developments Sutton will ensure greater consistency across the whole Council as all Directorates will be applying the same criteria to proposals.
**Directorate Management Teams**

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.

**Staff**

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.

**Contractors**

Contractors who deliver services on behalf of 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.

**Partners**

Partners must be aware of and aligned to the Council’s equality and diversity policy commitments and the objectives set out in this Framework reflecting the Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty. Partners should understand and demonstrate commitment to the application of this Framework in key and relevant areas of their work.

**Stakeholders**

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 and Sutton Onboard, or engaging with their Local Committee, the Equality & Diversity Forum and/or Speak out Sutton. For more information on these mechanisms please contact the Sutton Contact Centre on 020 8770 5000 or complete a General Enquiry Form ([www.sutton.gov.uk](http://www.sutton.gov.uk)).
Residents

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.
4. Equality & Diversity Principles

London Borough of Sutton will adhere to the following equality and diversity principles when working to meet the objectives of the Equality and Diversity Framework:

- Working in partnership with equality and diversity organisations, the voluntary sector, and local businesses to promote, recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality. This can be achieved in a number of ways including working in partnership to organise and deliver key community events, and supporting advice, information and advocacy services.

- Working with residents to create communities which challenge discrimination & embrace difference.

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

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

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

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

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

- Working towards developing a workforce which is representative of local communities and ensuring employment policies are fair and robust.

- 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.
5. Equality & Diversity Objectives

London Borough of Sutton’s equality and diversity objectives for the next four years are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusive communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objective 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Community engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objective 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Community assets, cultural activities, parks and green spaces</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 5</strong></td>
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<th>Health</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Needs Assessment.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objective 7</strong></td>
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**Education, skills and employment**

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<th><strong>Objective 8</strong></th>
<th>Influence and support schools to engage with pupils to promote tolerance, mutual understanding and respect, and to challenge stereotypes and bullying.</th>
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<td><strong>Objective 9</strong></td>
<td>Encourage and support work to the increase of the availability of training and employment for people with an impairment or disability, and to increase the number of young people, particularly vulnerable and BAME individuals taking vocational courses or apprenticeships.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 10</strong></td>
<td>Deliver targeted skills and employment programmes to groups of individuals more prone to unemployment or who have been out of work over a long period of time.</td>
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**Housing**

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<th><strong>Objective 11</strong></th>
<th>Ensure that the housing service delivers fair outcomes for all people in the community and empowers people seeking housing or in financial hardship to find and keep their homes.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 12</strong></td>
<td>Promote and increase the availability of social housing stock that addresses the needs of vulnerable adults and families with children, and is accessible to people with a disability or long-term or life-limiting conditions.</td>
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**Crime and violence**

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<th><strong>Objective 13</strong></th>
<th>Find new ways to encourage people to report ‘hate crime’, identify any subsequent trends and put in place actions to address them.</th>
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<td><strong>Objective 14</strong></td>
<td>Deliver and review the effectiveness of the Council’s Domestic Violence Strategy with a view to increased reporting levels of domestic violence and abuse in Sutton and a reduction in the number of domestic violence incidents.</td>
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</table>

**Responsible commissioning and procurement**

| **Objective 15**     | Ensure we involve people from different communities in the shaping, development, implementation and monitoring of local services and that service changes address the needs of residents in an equitable way, taking account of the needs of people with protected characteristics. |
| Objective 16 | Encourage capacity building of all organisations (micro, SME, large, mutual’s, social enterprises, consortiums and the voluntary sector) in an equal, fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner in accordance with public sector procurement regulations, having regard to the social value of grassroots delivery of goods, services and works to the borough’s residents. |
| Workforce |
| Objective 17 | Provide staff with training and development opportunities so that they have the skills, abilities and confidence to respond appropriately and sensitively to diversity and discrimination, both within the workplace and when delivering services and communicating with residents. |
6. Monitoring

The Equality and Diversity objectives are aligned to the priorities in the Council’s Corporate Plan 2014/15-2018/19. 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 Equality & Diversity Forum, 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.