

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

1. Sutton Council's vision of "... a community in which all can take part and take pride" is underpinned by five values, which support its equality and diversity strategy. They are: -
  - Working in **Partnership** with the people who live and 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, more cost effective services;
  - Promoting **Diversity** and ensuring that we recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality; and
  - **Empowerment** so everyone can 'take part and take pride' as active citizens and staff.

### Areas of responsibility

2. As stated in the London Borough of Sutton Constitution, the purpose of the Forum is to enable representatives of the Borough's equality and diversity groups to engage formally with Sutton Council in order to make a meaningful contribution and add value to its work and the work of other public service providers serving the community.

#### The Forum:

1. Makes 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. Contributes to the development of their strategy for the implementation of agreed equality and diversity policies, practices and action plans;
3. Maintains an overview of equality and diversity issues relating to all aspects of their work;
4. Receives and comments on all relevant reports in relation to agreed equality and diversity objectives and action plans;
5. Contributes to the annual review of the Council and other public service providers corporate and service area objectives relating to equality and diversity;
6. Make recommendations to the committees and officers of the Council and public service providers on priorities for the allocation of their resources in relation to their areas of responsibility.

### Membership

3. The membership of the Forum will include a maximum of five councillors, in proportion to the number of members on each party group on the Council. The

executive councillor with responsibility for the equalities portfolio is to be included in this number and shall be the Chair of the Forum.

4. There shall, in addition, be representatives on the Forum from organisations supporting and/or representing groups with protected characteristics in the Borough, reflecting the breadth and diversity of the Borough's communities. All representatives shall be approved by the Chair, who will also have discretion to remove representatives where they do not meet the PRIDE principles in paragraph 1 above.

### **Composition of the Forum**

5. The Forum shall have a Chair, who will be a serving councillor and a Vice-Chair.
6. The Vice-Chair shall be elected from amongst the local community representatives who sit on the Forum.
7. The Chair shall preside at each meeting. If they are not present then the Vice-Chair shall take the Chair. If the Vice Chair is also absent the Forum shall choose a member from amongst its number to preside as Chair for that meeting.
8. The Forum may invite, at the Chair's discretion, other persons to attend and speak at its meetings.
9. The Forum may co-opt at a meeting such persons with particular and relevant skills, knowledge or experience to serve on the Forum at each such meeting or series of meetings during each year in order to assist the conduct of specific business.
10. A minimum of two councillors shall constitute a quorum.

### **Roundtable**

11. There shall be a Roundtable function within the Forum to examine the impact of Council projects and programmes on the needs of our different and emerging communities.
12. Members of the public or groups/organisations can be invited at the discretion of the Chair to participate on the Roundtable.
13. The Roundtable shall be limited to inclusion on two Forum agenda's per calendar year.

### **Meeting arrangements and servicing**

14. There shall be at least four ordinary meetings of the Forum each year.

15. The Minutes of each meeting may be circulated to members of the Executive of the Council, and the decision making bodies of public service providers, if they so request.
16. The Council's Chief Executive shall arrange for the servicing of the Forum, including the Committee Manager support and attendance by staff members. The chief officers of the public service providers shall arrange for the regular attendance by appropriate staff members.
17. The Council's Chief Executive and the chief officers of the public service providers shall arrange for timely reports to be presented to the Forum for its consideration.
18. Any agenda item to be considered for approval by the Chair must be submitted to the Committee Manager at least **three** weeks before the meeting.
19. The Committee Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes of every meeting of the Forum are promptly prepared and provided to the Forum and officers of the Council and the other public service providers.

#### **Review of the Terms of Reference**

20. The Forum shall review its terms of reference annually and make recommendations to the Executive accordingly.