



**People, Performance and Development Committee
19 March 2014**

**'Confident in our Future' Fairness & Respect Strategy
2013-2018**

Purpose of the report:

This report updates the Committee on the progress of the workplace objective as part of the Fairness & Respect Strategy 2013-2018.

The report includes information requested by the Committee in September 2013 regarding the fairness agenda. Comparative data on peer local authorities has been sourced and detailed.

This report is being brought to People, Performance and Development Committee because the Committee will promote equalities and diversity according to the Scheme of Delegation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- a) The Committee notes the progress to date.
- b) Members are requested to consider how all Members of the Council could be encouraged to promote the council as an employer of first choice.

Introduction:

1. The council has been working towards a workforce which reflects the diversity of the county in line with the 2011 Census data. The Equality Act 2010 required the Council to publish at least one equality objective, which is now included in the refreshed Fairness and Respect Strategy, 2013-18. The specific workforce priority in the Strategy is **"To be a local employer of first choice, for people from all our diverse communities, including disabled & younger people"**

2. One of the key ways in which we can achieve a more reflective and diverse workplace is through attraction, recruitment and hiring. By earning a reputation as an employer of first choice; one that offers an accessible and inclusive workplace and real opportunities to progress and flourish, we can attract the best talent and provide the best services to all our residents.
3. Workshops at senior level have been held to identify the key areas of focus. These will focus on:
 - Age – Under 24 group
 - Disability
 - Part-time progression
 - Ethnicity at Senior Levels
4. Further understanding of where Directorates have positive performance and where further progress is needed is being delivered via a series of directorate workshops in 2013-14. Any identified activities are led by the Directorate Leadership Teams, and will focus on making the highest local impact, whilst contributing to the wider corporate objective.
5. The aim is to have agreed action plans, supported by monitoring milestones that address the workplace objective within the Fairness and Respect Strategy per directorate, by end of Q4 2013-14 (March 2014)

Directorate Workshops

6. 6 workshops have been held to date with the following directorates and services:
 - Environment & Infrastructure Directorate Leadership Team
 - Cultural Services Leadership team
 - Adult Social Care Direct Reports
 - Children's, Schools & Families Directorate Senior Managers Forum
 - Business Services Directorate Leadership Team
 - Fire & Rescue Strategic Managers
7. The main themes emerging from the workshops are summarised below
 - a. Age – We need to improve our attraction methods and community engagement opportunities to understand younger people's motivations and aspirations of the council as a prospective employer. A need to create more entry level positions was also identified.
 - b. Disability – We need to build trust as an organisation to improve disability declaration rates. Local attraction strategies and plans are required coupled with closer working with the Surrey Coalition for Disabled People. Improvements in ensuring a supportive and inclusive culture were also identified.

- c. Part time – We need to be more open to offering part time & Job share opportunities as part of the attraction and recruitment process. The council needs to further understand any barriers to progression and aspirations of part time workers. A trial recruitment system to make all posts job share or part-time as standard has been suggested.
8. Through the workshops, broad activities have been identified for each directorate.

Comparative data

9. As an action agreed at PPDC in September 2013, a benchmarking request was sent to the 14 local authorities including Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, and West Sussex. Only one response was received therefore research via published documents on local authority websites was conducted to obtain information.
10. The request asked ‘How has your organisation responded to the Equalities Act 2010 in relation to workforce, employment and reflecting the communities you serve, including any specific work streams, projects or activities?’
11. Further details can be found in **Annex 1**.

Conclusions:

12. The workshops have highlighted key activities and steps that directorates can take to improve our reputation as an employer of choice.
13. Directorate milestones will be reviewed on an annual basis. The disability and age workforce profile progress will be monitored in the monthly workforce information reports.

Financial and value for money implications

14. None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

15. The ‘Confident in Our Future’, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018 is expected to have a positive impact on all groups of people with protected characteristics in Surrey by setting the Council’s priorities on Equality and Diversity and embedding Fairness and Respect in Council services and in its workforce. Through setting priorities aligned with the Council’s Corporate Strategy ‘Confident in Our Future’, the Strategy features some protected characteristic groups more prominently; notably older people, younger people and people with disabilities.

Risk Management Implications

16. None

Next steps:

1. Complete outstanding workshops where necessary.
2. Sign off all directorate actions plans.
3. Refresh the workforce profile data in April 2014 to identify baseline monitoring points for all directorates
4. Report back to the Committee in April 2015 highlighting progress.

Report contact: Abid Dar, Equality, Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager

Contact details: 020 8541 9591, abid.dar@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

- The 'Confident in Our Future', Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018
- Published Strategy & Policy Documents via Local Authority Websites