

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 23 JUNE 2015



REPORT OF: MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

**LEAD OFFICER: SUSIE KEMP – ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
JULIE FISHER – STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR BUSINESS SERVICES**

SUBJECT: CONFIDENT IN SURREY'S FUTURE: EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND RESPECT STRATEGY 2015-2020

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To consider *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020*, which is designed to meet the Council's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and continue to mainstream and embed best practice in equality, fairness and respect across the Council. This Strategy has been refreshed to align with the Council's Corporate Strategy, *Confident in Surrey's Future: Corporate Strategy 2015-2020* in order to help achieve the Council's three strategic goals of wellbeing, economic prosperity and resident experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet approves *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* and agrees that progress towards its priorities should be reported on an annual basis through the Council's corporate performance reporting arrangements.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approving *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* will support the delivery of the Council's commitment to ensure best practice in equality, fairness and respect, in the services it provides and in its workforce. It will also ensure that statutory requirements for the publication of equality objectives continue to be met.

<u>DETAILS:</u>

Background

1. *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* is an updated version of the Council's current equality strategy¹, approved by Cabinet on 22 October 2013. The Strategy has been reviewed following approval of the Council's Corporate Strategy² on 10 February 2015, to ensure it continues to align. It will ensure that equality, fairness and respect remain an integral part of the delivery of the Council's priority areas of work and will enable more open and transparent progress reporting through the Council's corporate performance reporting arrangements.
2. The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic³ and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
3. In addition, Surrey County Council as a public authority listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (the specific duties) is required to:
 - Prepare and publish one or more objectives that the Council thinks it should achieve, to do any of the things mentioned in the aims of the general equality duty at least every four years.
 - Ensure that those objectives are specific and measurable.
 - Publish those objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public.
4. *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* meets these requirements by setting specific and measurable objectives designed to meet the aims of the general equality duty in a manner that is accessible to the public.

¹ See http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/38296/Fairness-and-Respect-Strategy-2013-18.pdf

² See http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/44932/Annex-1-Corporate-Strategy-2015-20v-final.pdf

³ The 'protected characteristics' defined in the Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality); religion or belief (including lack of belief); sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnerships is also protected but only with regards to the need to eliminate discrimination.

Updating the Strategy

5. Following approval of the Council's Corporate Strategy by the Council in February 2015, the current Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-18 was reviewed to ensure it aligned effectively and further improve its accessibility and format.
6. The Council approached the refresh by focussing first on the evidence base of the needs of residents with protected characteristics. This drew upon data from Surrey-i, the Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Residents Survey and other evidence from Directorates. An evidence 'snapshot' of the major findings of this review is available on Surrey-i⁴.
7. The Strategy, priorities and evidence have been further shaped through engagement with:
 - The Council Overview Board (on 3 June 2015)
 - The Council's Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network (providing officer oversight of the Strategy).
 - Directorate Equality Groups (Council staff who support service equality analysis and delivery).
 - The Surrey Equality Group, (external partners representing residents with protected characteristics, Council service representatives and Trade Unions).
8. *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* is supported by the *People Strategy 2013-18*⁵ and the *Customer Promise*⁶. It helps deliver the Council's commitment to be a best practice employer for all staff and to reflect the diversity of Surrey's population through a specific priority to be a local employer of first choice for people from all our diverse communities, including disabled and younger people.
9. The table below shows the proposed new priorities. Priority 4 is unchanged from the current Strategy and priorities 1-3 have been updated to reflect evidence of need:

1. Ensure Surrey's children, adults and families are supported and helped to lead more independent lives.
2. Support all children and young people to participate and succeed in education, training and employment.
3. Support preventative actions to reduce health inequalities and increase wellbeing for our communities.

⁴ See <http://www.surreyi.gov.uk/get/ShowResourceFile.aspx?ResourceID=1574>

⁵ See http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/38297/People-Strategy-2013-18.pdf

⁶ See <http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/complaints-comments-and-compliments/customer-promise>

4. Be a local employer of first choice for people from all our diverse communities, particularly for disabled and younger people.

10. As a result of the setting of specific, measurable equality objectives in *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020*, the Council will be better placed to focus, prioritise and target improvements in policy making, service delivery and employment on areas where it will be able to make the greatest difference. Surrey's most vulnerable residents will benefit from specific consideration of their needs and a focussed Council-wide approach. The Strategy also ensures the Council meets its statutory equality requirements.

Delivery of the Strategy

11. Work to identify specific measures and actions to embed the equality, fairness and respect priorities within service priority plans⁷ is being undertaken with the Council's Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network, Directorate Equality Chairs and the Surrey Equality Group. Progress will be reported upon annually through the Council's corporate performance reporting system.
12. An implementation plan is also being developed to ensure effective communications and engagement with residents, staff, and partners. The Directorate Equality Groups and the Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network will promote awareness of the priorities, and HR will also update training materials for staff.

CONSULTATION:

13. *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* builds on consultation undertaken to produce the current strategy *Confident in Our Future: Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018*. This Strategy has further been developed in consultation with a number of groups including the Surrey Equality Group (including Trade Unions), the Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network, and Directorate Equality Groups. The Council Overview Board also reviewed the draft Strategy on 3 June 2015.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

14. There are no additional risks which need to be managed as a direct result of this report.
15. Continuing to integrate equality, fairness and respect into the Council's business planning process will help ensure that any associated risks are managed as part of the Council's corporate performance management arrangements.

⁷ Please see the service priority plans within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2020, http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/55844/MTFP-201520-final.pdf

Financial and Value for Money Implications

16. Priorities within this Strategy will be delivered within existing and planned resources.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

17. The section 151 officer confirms that there are no material financial implications of this report and that implementation of the *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* may incur some small additional costs but will be within existing staffing and non-staffing resources.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

18. The Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty placed a requirement on the Council to publish objectives that show how it will eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people from different groups. The *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* enables the Council to meet this requirement alongside the specific measures that will be adopted following further development with the Surrey Equality Group, the Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network and Directorate Equality groups.
19. In identifying the relevant objectives the Cabinet needs to have due regard to the points set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty as referred to in paragraphs 2-3 above.

Equalities and Diversity

20. Summary of equalities impact assessment carried out for this strategy:

<p>Information and engagement underpinning equalities analysis</p>	<p>Engagement on the draft Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy and its priorities was conducted during the period February to mid May 2015. The following groups were provided with the opportunity to shape the Strategy: external Surrey Equality Group (including Trade Unions), Directorate Equality Groups (DEGs), Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network, Leader of the Council, current and previous Portfolio Holder for Equality and Diversity. The draft Strategy was reviewed by the Council Overview Board on 3 June 2015.</p> <p>Data has been used from a number of sources to inform the Strategy, including the 2011 Census, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, information available on Surrey-i and equality Surrey County Council workforce data. This information was brought together in one place as an evidence snapshot of the needs of residents with protected characteristics in Surrey.</p>
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Key impacts (positive and/or negative) on people with protected characteristics	The <i>Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020</i> is expected to have a positive impact on all residents with protected characteristics in Surrey. It sets out the Council's priorities on equality and diversity and helps to embed equality, fairness and respect in Council services and in its workforce. It supports all Surrey residents, particularly the most vulnerable, and staff to be healthy, safe and confident about their future.
Changes you have made to the proposal as a result of the EIA	N/A
Key mitigating actions planned to address any outstanding negative impacts	Progress against the priorities in the Strategy will be reported annually and will be published on the Council's website through the corporate performance reporting system.
Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated	N/A
Information and engagement underpinning equalities analysis	<p>Engagement on the draft Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy and its priorities, was conducted during the period February to mid May 2015. The following groups were provided with the opportunity to shape the strategy: external Surrey Equality Group (including Trade Unions), Directorate Equality Groups (DEGs), Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network, Leader of the Council and portfolio holders for Equality and Diversity. The draft Strategy was reviewed by the Council Overview Board on 3 June 2015.</p> <p>Data has been used from a number of sources to inform the Strategy, including the 2011 Census, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and information available on Surrey-i. This information was brought together in one place as an evidence snapshot of the needs of residents with protected characteristics in Surrey.</p>
Key impacts (positive and/or negative) on people with protected characteristics	The <i>Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020</i> is expected to have a positive impact on all residents with protected characteristics in Surrey. It sets out the Council's priorities on equality and diversity and helps to embed equality, fairness and respect in Council services and in its workforce. It supports all Surrey residents, particularly the most vulnerable, and staff to be healthy, safe and confident about their future.
Changes you have made to the proposal as a result of the EIA	N/A

Key mitigating actions planned to address any outstanding negative impacts	Progress against the priorities in the Strategy will be reported on a yearly basis and will be published on the Council's website through the corporate performance reporting system. The delivery and specific measures for the priorities will be further shaped and developed with the external Surrey Equality Group and key internal stakeholders during June-July 2015.
Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated	N/A

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

21. Achievement of the priorities in *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* will positively impact on Looked After Children, notably the priorities: 'Ensure Surrey's children, adults and families are supported and helped to lead more independent lives' and 'Support all children and young people to participate and succeed in education, training and employment'.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

22. Achievement of the priorities in *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* will positively impact on vulnerable children and adults, notably the priorities 'Ensure Surrey's children, adults and families are supported and helped to lead more independent lives' and 'Support preventative actions to reduce health inequalities and increase wellbeing for our communities'.

Public Health implications

23. *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* includes the priority 'Support preventative actions to reduce health inequalities and increase wellbeing for our communities', the achievement of which will positively impact on public health.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

24. Actions:
- *Confident in Surrey's Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020* will be published on the Council's website (with alternative formats on request) to ensure it is accessible to residents.
 - Performance measures and targets will be finalised for each of the Strategy's priorities. Progress against these will be reported annually from April 2016.
 - An implementation plan will be rolled out to include communications to residents, staff and partners. Officers will continue to work with the Surrey Equality, Group, Directorate Equality Groups and the Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network to promote awareness of the priorities. HR will also update any training materials for staff.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

- Council Overview Board
- Continuous Improvement and Productivity Network
- Surrey Equality Group (including Trade Unions)
- Directorate Equality Groups
- Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Business Services and Resident Experience and former Member for Health and Wellbeing
- Head of Policy and Performance and Director of People and Development

Annexes:

Annex A – Confident in Surrey’s Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020

Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment for Confident in Surrey’s Future: Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020

Sources/background papers:

- *Equality Act 2010*, [Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018](#), [Evidence ‘snapshot’ for Equality, Fairness and Respect](#), [Council’s Corporate Strategy for 2015-20 Confident in Surrey’s Future](#), [People Strategy 2013-18](#), [Our Customer Promise](#).
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