

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 22 OCTOBER 2013

REPORT OF: DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR
BUSINESS SERVICES

LEAD OFFICER: SUSIE KEMP, ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: CONFIDENT IN OUR FUTURE, FAIRNESS AND RESPECT
STRATEGY 2013-2018

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SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To consider the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* which is designed to meet the Council's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and further embed Fairness and Respect across Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018 (Annex1)*.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approving the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* will support the delivery of the Council's commitment to promote 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.

DETAILS:**Background**

1. The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* is an updated version of the Council's current equality and diversity strategy; *One Council One Team, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2012-2017*¹ which was approved by Cabinet on 27 March 2012. The Strategy has been reviewed as part of the annual business planning process to ensure that it is aligned with the Corporate Strategy *Confident in Our Future*², which was endorsed by full Council

¹ See <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/fairness-and-respect>

² See <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/how-the-council-works/our-performance/our-key-strategies-bookcase/confident-in-our-future-corporate-strategy-2013-18>

on 16 July 2013. This will ensure that Fairness and Respect remains an integral part of the delivery of the Council's priority areas of work. It will enable open and transparent progress reporting against the Strategy through the Council's performance management 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; and
 - 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 they think they 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; and
 - publish those objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public.
4. The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* meets these requirements by setting specific and measurable objectives designed to meet the aims of the general equality duty, and ensuring they are accessible to the public.

Updating the Strategy

5. The Council's Corporate Strategy for 2013-2018 *Confident in Our Future*, was endorsed by full Council on 16 July 2013. The Fairness and Respect Strategy has subsequently been reviewed to ensure it is aligned with aims of the Corporate Strategy.
6. It has also been reviewed to ensure it is based on current evidence of priority needs for groups with protected characteristics. Evidence used to inform the refresh has included the most recent Census data and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
7. In updating the Strategy, the focus has been on reviewing the Council's Fairness and Respect priorities. This has involved retaining the current priorities where they continue to reflect organisational aims and evidence of need, with new priorities added that reflect changing aims and needs. The priorities have been further shaped in consultation with the Council Overview and Scrutiny

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.

Committee, the County Council's External Equality Advisory Group, Directorate Equality Groups and Trade Unions.

8. The table below shows the proposed new priorities which are linked to the Corporate Strategy. Of these six priorities, three remain unchanged from those set out in the *One Council One Team, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2012-2017* and three (starred) have been strengthened or widened to encompass a broader range of groups:

Corporate Strategy outcomes	Fairness and Respect Priorities
Surrey's economy is strong and competitive.	Provide targeted support to low-income families to increase access to employment, training and support networks.
Surrey's children have a great start to life.	Invest in our support to schools to further the attainment of pupils, especially those from vulnerable groups.
Surrey's children and young people contribute more and achieve more than they thought possible.	Help all young people to participate in education training and employment.*
Surrey's children and adults in need of support are protected and supported to lead an independent life.	Surrey's children, adults and families in need of support are protected and supported to lead an independent life.*
Surrey residents' health and wellbeing is improved.	Reduce differences in life expectancy and healthy-life expectancy between communities.
Surrey has strong and vibrant communities which are safe and protected from crime.	Protect people and their communities through partnership-based prevention and protection activity targeted on reducing the harmful effects of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour.*

9. To ensure that the Council's role as an employer is also represented in the Strategy, a priority has also been included which links to the Council's People Strategy⁴:

People Strategy outcome	To be a local employer of first choice, for people from all our diverse communities, including disabled and younger people.
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10. These priorities, if agreed, will be the Council's statutory equality objectives in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Delivery of the Strategy

⁴ See <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/?a=425865>

11. Work to identify specific measures for the Fairness and Respect priorities will be undertaken with the County Council's External Equality Advisory Group, which includes representative external groups and directorate leads for Fairness and Respect, at a workshop session on 11 November 2013. Measures will be based on existing data to enable progress reporting through performance management mechanisms and will be agreed by the Head of Policy and Performance and Head of HR and Organisational Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Services and Cabinet Member for Public Health and Health and Wellbeing as appropriate.
12. Progress against the priorities will be monitored through twice yearly progress reports which will be discussed with the Cabinet Member for Business Services, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Health and Wellbeing and the County Council's External Equality Advisory Group. The progress reports, along with detail of the agreed measures, will be made available to residents on the public website.⁵

CONSULTATION:

13. The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* builds on the extensive consultation undertaken to produce the current *One Council One Team, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2012-2017*. For the purposes of this strategy feedback has been incorporated from a number of groups including the External Equality Advisory Group, Trade Unions and Directorate Equality Groups. The Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also provided with the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy in September 2013.
14. Consultation resulted in the inclusion of the priority related to the Council's People Strategy as set out in paragraph 12 above. No further additional priorities were proposed as part of the consultation.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

15. There are no additional risks which need to be managed as a direct result from this report.
16. Integrating 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 performance management arrangements.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

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

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

18. The section 151 officer confirmed that there are no material financial implications of this report and that implementation of the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness*

⁵ The information will be made available at <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/equality-and-diversity/fairness-and-respect>

and Respect Strategy 2013-2018 may incur some small additional costs but will be within existing staffing and non-staffing resources.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

19. 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 Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* enables the Council to meet this requirement alongside the specific measures that will be adopted following further discussion with the County Council’s External Equality Advisory Group.
20. 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 paragraph 5 above.

Equalities and Diversity:

21. The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* is crucial to the Council in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, specifically by ensuring the Council has agreed equality objectives for 2013-2018.
22. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Strategy and is attached as Annex 2 to this report. The summary of key impacts and actions is set out below:

<p>Information and engagement underpinning equalities analysis</p>	<p>The draft Fairness and Respect priorities were sent out for consultation during the period late July to early September 2013. The following groups were provided with the opportunity to comment: the External Equality Advisory Group, Directorate Equality Groups and Trade Unions. The draft Strategy was provided to the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team and Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment in September 2013.</p> <p>Data has been used from a number of sources to inform the strategy, including the 2011 Census and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</p>
<p>Key impacts (positive and/or negative) on people with protected characteristics</p>	<p>The <i>Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018</i> 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 <i>Confident in Our Future</i>, the Strategy features some protected characteristic groups more prominently; notably older people, younger people and people with disabilities.</p>

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 continue to be reported twice yearly and will be published on the Council's website. Work to identify specific measures for the Fairness and Respect priorities will be undertaken with the External Equality Advisory Group a workshop session on 11 November 2013.
Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated	N/A

Corporate Parenting/ Looked After Children

23. Achievement of the priorities in the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* will impact on Looked After Children, notably the priority 'Surrey's children, adults and families are protected and supported to lead an independent life' and the priority to 'invest in our support to schools to further the attainment of pupils, especially those from vulnerable groups'.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults

24. Achievement of the priorities in the *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* will impact on vulnerable children and adults, notably: 'Surrey's children, adults and families are protected and supported to lead an independent life'; and to 'protect people and their communities through partnership-based prevention and protection activity targeted on reducing the harmful effects of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour'.

Public Health Implications

25. The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* includes the priority to 'reduce differences in life expectancy and healthy-life expectancy between communities', the achievement of which will impact on public health. This priority is a continuation from the current *One Council One Team, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2012-2017*.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- The *Confident in Our Future, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2013-2018* will be published on the Council's website to ensure it is accessible to residents.
- The External Equality Advisory Group will continue to help to shape the delivery and measures of the Fairness and Respect priorities at a workshop on 11 November 2013.

- Performance measures and targets will be agreed for each of the Fairness and Respect priorities. Progress against these will be reported twice yearly from April 2014.

Contact Officer:

Rosalind Louth, Policy Manager (020 8541 9317)

Consulted:

- Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Leadership Team
- External Equality Advisory Group
- Directorate Equality Groups
- Trade Unions

Informed:

- As above

Sources/background papers:

- Government Equality Office (2011) Equality Act 2010 – Specific Duties to Support the Equality Duty. What do I need to know?
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2011) Objectives and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities

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