

**For General Release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET</b> <b>22nd June 2015</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Equality & Diversity - Learning and Development for Council Members
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Nathan Elvery, Chief Executive
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Mark Watson Cabinet Member for Communities Safety & Justice & Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities Safety & Justice
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT**

The Council working with its partners priority is to create a borough where people have a sense of belonging, are united by a sense of shared values around opportunity and fairness so that everyone can lead fulfilling lives. The Council aim is to make the borough a place where people want to live and work - a place where everyone has fair and equal opportunities and life chances. The Council's equality and inclusion objectives are:

- Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion.
- Foster good community relations and cohesion by getting to know our diverse communities and understand their needs.
- Encourage local people to be independent and resilience by providing responsive and accessible services offering excellent customer care.
- Improve empowerment and participation by strengthening partnership work with community, faith and voluntary sectors.
- Provide strong leadership, partnership and organisational commitment by enabling staff and communities to find solutions to the things that matter most to them.
- Become an employer of choice by recruiting, developing and retaining an efficient, talented and motivated workforce that broadly reflects the communities that we serve at all levels.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON & WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:**

Croydon is one of the most diverse boroughs in London. This rich diversity makes our borough distinctive, vibrant and is its core strength. Valuing Diversity is one of the Council's values and a public statement of our commitment. This learning and development programme will enable all our Members to further improve their understanding of the equalities and diversity agenda to support the delivery of our commitment to Diversity.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The core elements of the training have already been developed and tested and provision exists in the relevant budget to deliver this training in a cost effective and efficient way.

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:** This is not a key executive decision

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Recommend to all Members to undertake the equality and diversity on-line training programme for the purpose of developing a Council-wide baseline understanding and shared culture in respect of the equalities and diversity agenda which will further support the Council's Equalities Policy.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that all Members undertake learning and development in the core corporate value in relation to Equality and Diversity in order to develop a robust understanding of the issue and to unify the Council in consideration of matters relating to these issues and in the decisions and activities of the Council.

## **3. DETAIL**

### **3.1 Equality and Diversity**

The Council recognises it has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the money we spend and the people we employ and is committed to advancing equality and inclusion in everything we do. The Council has important functions as a:

- A community leader
- A provider and commissioner of services
- An employer

Valuing Diversity is one of the Council's core values. Equality and diversity training has been designed for the Council and the requirement to understand this agenda is critical for Members and Officers alike. The training provided on line is intended to improve their knowledge and understanding about equality and diversity in order to support our collective commitment to this core value. It will also enable the Council to develop a baseline understanding of these issues both in the performance of the specific statutory obligations for Local Authorities under the Equalities Act but also to go beyond a base compliance and to nurture a corporate sensitivity to the particular issues that arise ensuring that the delivery of the Equalities Policy is more effective.

The on line training will support Members both in its general principles as well as understanding the operational context in which Council policy and decisions are delivered. All Members of the Appointments Committee will be required to undertake the elearning given the employment functions exercised by this body as recently approved at the Council meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

A guide will be circulated to all Members indicating how the on-line package can be accessed. The learning programme is very flexible and can be completed in bite sized pieces rather than having to be completed in one sitting. It provides a greater choice in how and when learning is accessed. There will be contact details in case of any difficulties experienced and an opportunity to raise any issues during the training. Members are advised that this learning is mandatory for all Council officers and failure by them to complete the course impacts negatively on the outcome of their annual performance appraisal.

- 3.2 The Members Learning and Development Panel has responsibility for the Members learning and development programme of which this forms part. Accordingly, given the importance of these issue to the Council and its communities a report capturing Members participation in the elearning on equality and diversity will be presented in six months time to the Panel and will be placed in the public domain. It is anticipated that there will be a high degree of participation given the nature of the content and the accessibility of e-learning approach being offered to all Members.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report will help continue to strengthen the Councils consultative processes in developing further awareness of the impacts of actions and decisions relating to potentially vulnerable people and those with protected characteristics. Consultation is a key element in the delivery of equality and diversity processes.

#### **5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The recommendation presented in this Report are risk reduction measures in that the failure or inadequate Corporate responses in these areas presents a number of hazards to the Council relating to the health and wellbeing of its residents and employees which are reduced through effective decision making and corporate engagement on these topics. There are sufficient resources within current budgets to meet the costs of providing the learning and development.

(Approved by: Richard Simpson Assistant Chief Executive Corporate Resources and s151 Officer )

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor advises that the area of Equalities are key areas of legal concern for the Council touching a very wide range of corporate responsibilities and engagement. The recommendations in this report will assist the Council in delivering and demonstrating robust compliance with their operating principles.

(Approved by: Julie Belvir Borough Solicitor)

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 7.1 The Director of Human Resources advises that the Council's commitment to equality and diversity relies on a culture where people are treated fairly and do not suffer disadvantage because of their protected and/or personal characteristics. The recommendations in this report will assist the Council ensure a more integrated, flexible and creative work environment which allows talent to flourish.

(Approved by: Heather Daley, Director of Human Resources)

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. In summary, the Council must in the exercise of all its functions, "have due regard to" the need to comply with the three arms or aims of the general equality duty.
- 8.2 The proposed online equality and diversity training module will ensure all councillors have an understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its statutory duties. Councillors play an important role in championing equality and inclusion especially in relation to their roles as community leaders. The online equality training will help the council make progress towards achieving its equality objectives.

(Approved by: Sharon Godman Head of Communities)

## **9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION & OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

No alternatives were considered to the training. The on line training exists and has been undertaken by the Officers of the Council; and to maintain consistency it was considered appropriate to offer the same packages to Members with the opportunity to pick up on issues from a Members perspective.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Julie Belvir

*BACKGROUND PAPERS: none*