

Portfolio	Corporate
Ward(s) Affected	All

**Purpose**

**To update Members on the work undertaken in 2015 to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy.**

Background

1. The Council has continued to work to meet the legislative requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), with our programme of Equality Impact Assessments and implemented recommendations from the Equality Strategy Action Plan which has also been updated and is attached as Annex A. An explanation of the Equality Act is contained in Annex B.

Current Position

2. The Council is still following the requirements to publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the General Equality Duty. The Council does this by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments demonstrating analysis of the effect that the Council's policies and practices have had on people from equality/protected groups and publishing these on the Council's Equality and Diversity web pages.

Equality Strategy Action Plan

3. The actions completed from the Equality Strategy Action Plan (see Annex A) in 2015 include:
  - Officer and Member dementia awareness training undertaken;
  - The opening of the Wellbeing (Dementia) Centre and development of the Memory Garden;
  - The establishment of the Saturday Club at Windle Valley Centre for carers and the cared for with dementia;
  - Capital works have been progressed to make improvements to the gypsy/traveller sites;
  - Surrey Heath Faith Forum Lunch held 18 November 2015;
  - The appointment of an internal voluntary minority ethnic group staff representative;
  - The appointment of two internal voluntary staff disability mentors; and
  - The review of four Equality Impact Assessments by the Officer Working Group as set out below.

Equality Impact Assessments

4. The programme of Equality Impact Assessments has been undertaken in 2015. Four internal policies have been completed including reviewing the Disciplinary Policy; Grievance Policy; Data Protection Policy; Smoking policy and Exceptional Payments Policy.

### Disability Two Ticks

5. As an accredited organisation, the Council is required to implement and annually review practices that meet the scheme's five commitments in relation to recruitment, employment, retention and career development of people with a disability.
6. The Council have ensured that recruitment adverts confirm commitment to the disability two ticks and the Council are advertising on a wider range of sites. The Council is also ensuring that all existing policies are applied reasonably and fairly in order to make reasonable adjustments without avoidable detriment to the affected individual. The Council has also delivered Deaf Awareness training and Mental Health Awareness training.

### Surrey Heath Faith Forum

7. The third Surrey Heath Faith Forum Lunch was held on 18 November 2015 at High Cross Church Camberley. The aim was to encourage different faith groups in Surrey Heath to work together and strengthen inter faith relationships. A number of faiths were represented by people from the Sikh community, Buddhist community, Hindu community, Muslim community, Jewish community, Christian community and Baha'i community. The event was hosted by Surrey Heath Borough Council, Surrey Police, Churches Together in Camberley, and Surrey Faith Links. The event was held as part of the National Inter-Faith Week.

### Dementia

8. The Council is working closely with Surrey County Council (Adult Social Care) and the Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group with respect to dementia. In February 2014, a number of members of staff attended a dementia cascade course. This provided them with information which they can pass onto colleagues. Also several members of staff and elected members are dementia friends and some have become dementia champions. The wellbeing centre opened in Bagshot late last year which is being used by a number of partners including the Alzheimers Society; Carers Support; and song for life (singing for carers and the cared for with dementia). The Saturday club at the Windle Valley continues to grow with a good mix of carers and the cared for with dementia. The Council is currently funding a befriending pilot in Heatherside to provide help and friendship to people who have recently being diagnosed with dementia.

### Gypsies and Travellers

9. The Council manages two permanent traveller sites for Surrey County Council under an agency agreement. One site is located in Bagshot and the other is in Chobham with each having 15 pitches. The site in Chobham is about to undergo major refurbishment which should create one additional pitch. This is subject to planning permission. The old electricity meters on the Bagshot site which operate using prepayment cards purchased from the post office are being replaced by new meters connected directly to the supplier.

### Options

10. Members are asked to note the update on the work to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy.

### Proposal

11. That members note the update on the work to meet the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy.

### Resource Implications

12. The resource to continue improvement of equality practice at the Council has been reduced but limited on-going work is being achieved within existing staff resources and through work with partners.

### Recommendation

13. That members note the update on the work to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy and Action Plan.

Background Papers: Nil

Annexes: Annex A Equality Strategy Action Plan  
Annex B The Equality Act Explained

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