

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

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**Subject:** Fairer Enfield 2021-25  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Nneka Keazor  
**Executive Director:** Ian Davis, Chief Executive

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents the new Equality and Diversity Policy: Fairer Enfield 2021-25 to the Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

### **Proposal(s)**

2. It is proposed that the new Equality, Diversity Policy: Fairer Enfield 2021-25 is agreed and adopted by Enfield Council.

### **Reason for Proposal(s)**

3. The existing “Equal Opportunities Policy” was last updated in 2012. Since 2010, Enfield Council’s central government funding has been cut by 60%, whilst the borough’s population has grown by 13%. With a greater number of vulnerable residents to support, and fewer resources to support them, the challenge of effectively tackling inequality in the borough and across the organisation has become even more complex. This has been further compounded by Covid-19, and the evidence of differential impact of the virus and of the lockdown on different groups of people.
4. There is a statutory requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish one or more specific and measurable equalities objectives which should be updated at four-year intervals. If we do not publish and implement a new equalities policy and objectives, we would fail to demonstrate a clear commitment to tackling inequality and discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We would also be failing to adhere to our statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **Relevance to the Council Plan**

5. This policy reinforces our duty to comply with relevant legislation and statutory requirements and as the borough continues to grow, confirms our commitment to improve equality and diversity for all who live, learn and earn in Enfield, as reflected in our [Council Plan 2020-22](#). It outlines the behaviours and values that everyone working for the Council must demonstrate and the actions they must take in order to make this a reality.

6. Fairer Enfield is one of the cross-cutting themes in the new Council Plan and this policy sets out the principles which we need to follow across the workforce to ensure we deliver on this priority to tackle discrimination and promote and enhance equality, inclusion and diversity in all that we do.
7. The equalities objectives set out in the policy are consistent with the priorities and actions in the Council Plan 2020-22.

## **Background**

8. The new Fairer Enfield Policy will replace the existing “Equal Opportunities Policy”, which was last updated in 2012.
9. This new policy and the plan to implement the proposed equality objectives will help us to build our capacity to tackle inequality and discrimination and enhance equality and inclusion as we deliver our priorities and make difficult decisions regarding balancing our budget. The new policy clearly demonstrates to our staff and the community our shared vision for equality and the principles by which we will deliver on this.

## **Main Considerations for the Council**

10. The new draft policy (appendix I) clearly sets out Enfield Council’s approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. It provides a concise statement of principles to outline the Council’s vision for an equal and socially inclusive borough and workforce.
11. It sets out the structure of accountability, how we will use data to inform our work and how we will monitor the impact of our services and take mitigating action if there is any evidence of negative differential impact on a particular group.
12. The policy reinforces the Council’s duty to comply with relevant legislation and statutory requirements and confirms our commitment to improve the delivery of equality and diversity in the workplace and community. It also outlines the behaviours and values that staff must demonstrate and the action they must take to make this a reality.

- **Defining Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

13. In the policy we define an equal and inclusive borough as one where all residents, service users, Council staff and elected members are supported to fulfil their potential, are treated equally with respect and are actively involved in shaping the decisions that will affect their workplace and community.
14. The following four core values form the framework for a Fairer Enfield:
  - Equal Opportunities
  - Dignity and Respect
  - Diversity

- Inclusion

- **The Equality Act 2010**

15. The policy helps us to comply with the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The act covers nine protected characteristics and prohibits unfair treatment of people based on any of these characteristics. Enfield is going beyond its statutory duties under the 2010 Equality Act by seeking to also implement the Act's socio-economic duty (Part 1 Section). We commit to treating everyone equally regardless of socio-economic status and will work to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage caused by a person's socio-economic status.
16. Section 149 of the Equality Act states the "Public Sector Equality Duty", which requires public bodies to show due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The policy and objectives will help us to demonstrate how we are actively working to fulfil this duty.
17. The Equality Act requires local authorities to take positive steps to remove the barriers that an individual may face because they have a disability. Therefore, an easy read version of the Fairer Enfield Policy will be published to ensure that the document is accessible to people with special educational needs and disabilities.

- **Our approach to equality and inclusion**

18. In the policy, we outline the principles we will take as a community leader, service provider and employer to equality and diversity. At a time of considerable financial challenge for the local authority, we will continue to use our limited resources smartly and our workforce will continue to maintain high standards in service delivery to support all residents in the most effective and efficient way possible, tackle inequality and discrimination and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do.

- **Equalities Objectives**

19. The policy also includes our eight equalities objectives. It is a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010 that the Council must prepare and publish one or more equality objectives that it should achieve to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
20. To identify these objectives, we have analysed local data on the experiences of different groups in our communities, as well as national research on inequality. We have also learnt from the successful approaches taken by councils elsewhere, as well as other public, voluntary and community sector organisations. Furthermore, we have considered and discussed the views and experiences of the staff in our staff equality networks and our voluntary and community sector partners.

21. Each of these objectives are supported by dedicated actions and to ensure we achieve our objectives we will produce an annual action plan with named leads and outcome measures. We are confident that the actions identified in this policy can be delivered using existing resources. The action plan will be published on the Council website by April 2021 and reviewed on an annual basis.

- **Engagement**

22. The engagement period for the draft policy took place between 12<sup>th</sup> October – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020. We engaged with our staff, community and partners to gather feedback to help us further develop and improve our approach. Over 200 people took part in this engagement.

23. As part of this engagement, the Council used a wide variety of methods of data collection: questionnaire, notes from discussions at presentations and emailed submissions from stakeholders. When developing the final version of the policy, the information from each of these methods has been fully considered.

24. An engagement report has been attached as appendix II, which summarises the feedback from this engagement and how this has informed the development of the final version of the policy.

- **Embedding behaviours and ensuring ownership of Fairer Enfield**

25. The final version of the policy will form part of the Council's policy framework. In the Fairer Enfield Policy, we have outlined the roles of elected members and officers in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

26. The Equalities Board, which met for the first time in October 2020, will oversee the Council's processes to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, diversity and inclusion to create a Fairer Enfield. The Equalities Board forms part of the Council's committee structure and is made up of elected members from different political parties and community groups, representing a range of different protected groups.

27. The Executive Management Team will provide visible leadership on equality ensuring it is embedded into policy, strategy, service delivery, our culture and behaviours as well as ensuring that the Council is meeting its duty under the Act.

28. The Corporate Equalities Board is made up of directors within the Council workforce. The role of the Corporate Equalities Board is to drive the corporate equality, diversity and inclusion improvement programme, which aims to deliver on the principles of a fairer Enfield by building capacity across the organisation to improve the Council's approach. The Board has oversight of the implementation of the action plan for achieving our equalities objectives and provides challenge, assurance and advice on all matters relating to the delivery of this policy.

29. A lead director has been identified to oversee the delivery of each equality objective. Lead directors are responsible for the development of individual action plan and will report to the Board on performance and progress for their objective.

30. Furthermore, all members of our workforce are responsible for delivering services, working with our communities and one another in accordance with Council policies and procedures about tackling inequality and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

- **Using data to inform our work**

31. We will use data to better understand whether all members of the community have equal access to our services and are not discriminated against. This will inform how services can be developed and improved, subsequently helping to ensure that advancing equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to all our decisions and service planning.

32. Therefore, we will ask service users to provide us with information on their protected characteristics, always giving them an option to opt out of providing information if they prefer not to give it. This information will be stored securely, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We will use analysis from this information to determine whether we are providing a fair and equal service and make service changes as required.

33. As an employer the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is used to measure progress on Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans inclusion. The Council is also a disability confident employer and we also use our staff equality monitoring data to benchmark ourselves against other London Boroughs.

34. As a service provider we compare ourselves against other Local Authorities and use the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to review and improve performance across key performance areas which include knowing your communities; leadership, partnership and organisational commitment; involving your communities; responsive services and customer care; as well as a skilled and committed workforce.

- **Evaluation and further refresh**

35. The Fairer Enfield Policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing needs, new strategies and organisational restructure. Furthermore, the equalities objectives will be reviewed and updated every four years, in line with Public Sector Equality Duty.

36. Progress towards achieving our equalities objectives will be assessed annually by the Corporate Equalities Board, supported by the Corporate Strategy Service and the Knowledge and Insight team.

37. As part of our Public Sector Equality Duty, we publish an annual Equalities Report. This report examines progress on equalities targets for each service

and identifies some of the inequalities which persist across Enfield and demonstrates our commitment to overcoming these challenges. The report includes our workforce review which outlines the makeup of our workforce by ethnicity, age, disability and gender. It also shows how these groups are represented across different pay scales and includes the annual gender pay gap.

38. To ensure we uphold our Public Sector Duty, Equality Impact Assessments are used to monitor the equality impact of all key decisions, including by assessing whether groups are disproportionately affected by changes to policy or services and identifying action we need to take as a result to mitigate this.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

39. Anti-discriminatory practice is fundamental to the ethical basis of safeguarding and care provision and critical to the protection of people's dignity. The Equality Act protects vulnerable adults and children receiving our care and the workers that provide it from being treated unfairly because of any characteristics that are protected under the legislation. This policy clearly demonstrates our commitment to the Equality Act and provides clear principles and guidance for staff and service users on how we will ensure we are complying with the Act.

40. The new Fairer Enfield Policy will set out a clear commitment and framework for ensuring everyone working for Enfield Council promotes equality and inclusion and tackles inequality and discrimination in all aspects of their work.

### **Public Health Implications**

41. The COVID-19 pandemic has made explicit the inequalities that are deeply embedded within our society. We now know the virus disproportionately affects social groups according to patterns of inequality: those that are living in deprived areas with poor housing; those in insecure jobs or dependent on the welfare system; Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. By not addressing inequality we leave people vulnerable to further waves of the pandemic and other illness, both communicable and non-communicable.

42. The policy sets out our commitment to work across council services, local organisations and with the community to reduce inequality across the borough. Reducing inequality is fundamental to both improving health and building social capital. This policy should help to mitigate the effects of widening health inequalities attributed to national policy measures such as austerity and the benefit cap.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

43. The new policy will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics, as it sets out clear principles for all staff to follow in all aspects of our work. The policy sets out the requirement on staff to uphold the Equality Act and gives a clear approach for how they must consider the impact of their services on people's protected characteristics. The policy includes eight specific and

measurable equality objectives, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and we are developing a clear implementation plan for ensuring that we deliver on these to benefit people currently experiencing inequality within the borough.

44. The policy acknowledges the importance of all our staff networks - Women into Leadership; Ethnic Minority Network, Disability Working Group; Mental Health and Wellbeing Board; Young Professional's Network and LGBT+ Network and encourages managers to support their staff to attend these groups. The policy should therefore have a positive impact on staff who identify with any of these groups and wish to attend their meetings or events
45. An equality impact assessment has been completed and is attached as appendix III.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

46. The policy will not lead to either an increase or decrease in energy consumption. From the perspective of day to day environmental management, no risks associated with the proposal have been identified.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

47. The Council may suffer reputational damage and face legal challenge where it lacks a strategic approach to ensure the principles of the Equality Act are embedded across the organisation, if there is no clear action plan detailing how it will deliver and embed the principles of the Act across the organisation.
48. If we do not publish and implement a new equality, diversity and inclusion policy and objectives, we would fail to demonstrate a clear commitment to tackling inequality and discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. It would prevent us from improving capacity and practice across the organisation in this work. We would also be failing to adhere to our statutory duty, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to publish one or more specific and measurable corporate equalities objectives every four years.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

49. There is a risk that with the financial pressure on the council and the difficult decisions we will need to make in the coming months, we do not uphold the vision and principles of the policy. To mitigate against this, the Corporate Equalities Board has been set up to oversee the implementation of the policy and the objectives and will report back to the Executive Management Team on a regular basis on implementation. The new equalities objectives and the vision and principles set out in the policy are also reflected in the refreshed Council Plan and integrated into all decision-making for the Council.

### **Financial Implications**

50. There are no specific financial implications resulting from this policy which will be delivered with existing resources. If any additional resources are required

in the future, then these would need to be brought forward for a future decision.

## **Legal Implications**

51. Local authorities are subject to the general and specific duties set out in Part 11 of the *Equality Act 2010 (the Act)* (s.149 to 159).

Section 149 of the Act sets out the general duty and states that:

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Section 153 of the Act gives a power to ministers to set regulations:

(1) A Minister of the Crown may by regulations impose duties on a public authority specified in Part 1 of Schedule 19 for the purpose of enabling the better performance by the authority of the duty imposed by section 149(1).

The specific duties referred to in section 153 are intended to help public bodies (including local authorities) to meet the requirements of the general duty. By complying with their public sector equality duties, public authorities are more likely to meet their obligations under the Act

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353) require public authorities to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty set out in *section 149 of the Act*.
- Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives that should achieve one or more of the aims set out in section 149.
- Publish gender pay gap information.



The actions outlined in the report will assist in helping the Council meet its obligations under the Equality Act, including meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty and its obligations under the 2017 Regulations.

### **Workforce Implications**

52. The new policy sets out the principles by which we will approach equality and inclusion in the workplace, providing a concise, clear and simple set of principles which will need to inform and underpin Council ways of working.
53. From an HR perspective the implications will primarily apply to employee related aspects as opposed to the broader impacts of service provision and the delivery of external services to residents.
54. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against Enfield Council's employees/workers based on their protected characteristics. All staff and managers should foster good relations between their teams and other staff to advance positive and inclusive relationships and treat others with consideration and respect. Managers also have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity for all employees. HR/OD will provide the necessary framework and training to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities. HR will support managers to ensure that reasonable adjustments are provided to staff, where necessary, to ensure that they can thrive in the workplace.
55. The policy also acknowledges the importance of Enfield Council's staff networks for advancing equality within the Council's workforce. HR/OD will continue to engage with the networks as a vital voice of the workforce and support their members to overcome the challenges they face. HR/OD will provide advice and support to the networks to help them to develop and to maximise their impact across the organisation.
56. The policy outlines the importance of equality of opportunity and acknowledges the need to sometimes move beyond "equal treatment" towards providing intensive support for particularly disadvantaged individuals or groups. As one of the largest employers in the borough, Enfield Council will ensure its recruitment processes supports the objectives of this policy to ensure that disadvantaged groups are getting support to gain employment at the Council by ensuring that opportunities are promoted to disadvantaged and minority groups. Programs such as the apprenticeship scheme can be vital in providing extra support to groups who are further away from employment. The Council will continue to refine and review its recruitment processes to ensure we encourage applications from all sectors of our community. We will continue to proactively support local recruitment and the development of existing staff utilising programmes such as the apprenticeship scheme.
57. Two of the proposed objectives have an implication on HR. HR to continue to support the internship programme including working with the Equals Service and West Lea School to create roles and carve job placements within council services for residents with learning difficulties or disabilities. Council services can also play a vital role in creating an offer to provide work experience

opportunities for young people with disabilities and encouraging managers to take on supported interns.

58. The Council should also work to reduce the ethnicity pay gap and HR can play a vital role in monitoring workforce data and promoting opportunities to wide reaching audiences. The work of the staff network groups such as the Ethnic Minority Network will also play a vital role in supporting these objectives and should be supported by the Council.

59. Recruitment activity, particularly for senior roles, should target groups from a diverse range of backgrounds to encourage them to apply to work at the Council. Increased training around equalities, diversity and inclusion should be provided to managers and staff to address issues such as unconscious bias, will also help to achieve this target.

### **Property Implications**

60. Not applicable

### **Other Implications**

61. None

### **Options Considered**

62. No other options have been considered. The risks associated with **not** publishing and implementing the new policy, as outlined in paragraph 47 and 48.

### **Conclusions**

63. The report is commended to Enfield Council for agreement and adoption.

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### **Appendices**

Fairer Enfield: Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy  
Fairer Enfield Engagement Report  
Fairer Enfield Policy Equality Impact Assessment  
Fairer Enfield Background Report