

Elliot Colburn MP
Conservative Member of Parliament for
Carshalton and Wallington
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Emily Nice
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Date: 9th October 2020

Dear Elliott,

Re: Workplace Diversity and Inclusivity

Thank you for your letter of 25 September to Helen Bailey, our Chief Executive. Helen asked me to reply on her behalf.

Sutton Council is committed to diversity and inclusivity and works towards greater equality in the workforce profile year on year. Our aim is to develop a workforce profile that broadly reflects the community we serve, at all levels in the council. We have made progress in this area, but we are continuing to focus on the areas which need improvement.

I am including a link to our [annual workforce report](#) and the [data](#) which sits behind it, which will be presented to Strategy and Resources Committee on Monday 12 October. These provide a significant degree of detail, which reflects the attention that we pay to equalities diversity and inclusivity.

As an overview of some of our activity:

- The Council has six equality staff network groups across the council, each with a senior manager sponsor, who are helping build awareness of the needs of all, ensuring fair and respectful treatment. These include BAME+Allies, LGBTQ+Allies, Youth Group+Allies, Women's+Allies, Family & Carers+Allies, Disability+Allies who all meet regularly.

- In response to Black Lives Matters, the Leader and Chief Executive held listening webinars with staff and as a result, and the Chief Executive commissioned the BAME network and senior managers to set up a working group focused over three areas: improving management capacity and confidence in supporting a diverse workforce; reviewing systems and structures for recruiting and supporting colleagues; and listening to and celebrating Sutton's diverse communities.
- With the help and engagement of the Women's +allies and carers staff networks, a Carers policy has been developed, including premature baby additional leave. In addition the 'Menopause guide' was launched on International Women's Day, and a Reproductive policy which covers all aspects of this broad subject has been developed in order to help support our staff.
- The Council has achieved 'Disability Confident Committed' status which helps us recruit, retain and develop disabled colleagues and recognise the value they bring to the council and will work to achieve level 2 of the standard.
- The Chief Executive hears regularly from our staff networks and trade unions and makes personal commitments to oversee any issues that may be raised. We are currently running council-wide staff 'pulse' surveys every three months and use this feedback from our staff to understand the effectiveness of our work, alongside organisational health indicators such as absence, grievance, disciplinary and recruitment statistics.

Our HR and Organisational Development Strategy for the next 3 years is being presented to the Strategy and Resources committee in October 2020. Diversity and Inclusion is a strategic theme of the strategy, with a series of measures that we have discussed and agreed with our Strategic Directors, staff networks and trade unions.

The Council supports the work of the [Sutton Fairness Commission](#) which aims to improve equalities across the public sector. In addition to this the Council's approach to Equalities is set out in the [Sutton Equality and Diversity Framework 2019/20 - 2023/24](#). The principle tool the Council uses to ensure that service users are treated equally and fairly are Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). EIAs are completed for new or changed services and ensure officers think about proposed policy and service changes and how they will disproportionately, positively or negatively impact anyone in the protected groups. It is the mechanism through which the council demonstrates compliance with the Equality Act 2010, Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and Localism Act 2011. EIAs may be informed by consultation, national and local data and are reviewed at key decision points by elected members. They will also be published as part of committee papers. The Council also conducts Cumulative Impact Assessments to ensure that the overall impact of decision making does not have a disproportionate impact on protected groups.

I hope that provides a helpful overview of our approach, do let me know if you would like any further information.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Emily Nice
Assistant Director HR OD (Sutton)