

**West Suffolk Joint Diversity Working Party**

**Terms of Reference**

**Section A**

The West Suffolk Joint Diversity Working Party will involve and represent both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

**Aims**

The Diversity Working Party will aim to:

1. Act as a coordination body to ensure that diversity and equality is embedded in all aspects of the two Councils' work.
2. Ensure that the Councils' policies in respect of diversity issues are coordinated and appropriate for the Councils' needs, compliant with legal or national policy and performance requirements and regularly reviewed.
3. Ensure that the Councils' policies, procedures, services and contracted services address legal or national policy requirements in respect of diversity issues.
4. Coordinate action to promote awareness of diversity issues at all levels of the organisation and develop a corporate culture in which all people are respected, encouraged to fulfil their full potential and where inappropriate behaviour is challenged.
5. Coordinate diversity and equality training for staff, members and partners as appropriate.
6. Develop and coordinate the Councils' work with partners to promote equality of opportunity for all people and eliminate illegal discrimination and harassment within the community.
7. Encourage the sharing of best practice in respect of diversity issues within the councils and with partners.
8. Ensure that the Councils have contacts and work with all sections of their communities in developing policies and delivering services.
9. Develop a joint work plan to deliver its aims and monitor, evaluate and report on progress.

**Section B**

**Membership**

1. The Diversity Group's constitution will reflect the new shared staffing structure of the two councils, as follows:

Lead Officer	-	Head of Policy, Communications and Customers
Elected Members	-	Four councillors consisting of:  Two councillors from each Council one of whom may be a Cabinet member.
Staff	-	One officer from each main service area - Lead policy officer for diversity - Community Development representative - Human Resources/Learning & Development representative - Other staff by invitation
External Partners	-	By invitation.

**Section C**

**Working arrangements**

1. The group will meet at least twice a year.
2. The Meeting will be chaired by Member, alternating between authorities on an annual basis and administered by the Policy Team.
3. The primary reporting lines for the group will be to the Joint Leadership Team and to the respective Cabinets.
4. Reports to other Committees will be made as appropriate.
5. Ad hoc task and finish groups will be formed as appropriate to focus on particular initiatives and strands of work.

**Section D**

**Definitions**

1. No legal or universally agreed definition of 'diversity' exists. For the purpose of this group diversity means:  
  
"The differences between people. These might be visible or invisible."
2. The work of this group is to ensure provision of services to the community and a working environment where diversity is acknowledged, respected and does not hinder work, development or opportunity or service delivery.