



# Single Equality Framework

**2020-24**

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# What is the Single Equality Framework?

The Single Equality Framework is a strategic tool used to assess how the Council promotes equality and fairness through the performance of its functions and the provision of services. The Framework is comprised of five objectives, six prisms and a data digest. The objectives and prisms are a mechanism through which we can assess the rationale and impact of our decisions before making them and ensure effective monitoring and outcome measurement thereafter. By applying this framework, the Council will also be able to determine what reasonable steps it might take to mitigate any negative impacts that might arise from the performance of its functions.

## **Equality objectives**

In total there are five equality objectives, which set out the aims and aspirations of the Council over the lifetime of this Framework. The expectation is that the objectives are reflected in the way in which the Council conducts its business, makes decisions and provides services.

## **Equality prisms**

The objectives are complemented by six equality prisms. The prisms are questions that should be considered when making judgements about equality implications. The questions are intended to help the Council to better understand the type and severity of equality risk, before making decisions.

## **Data digest**

A data digest will be published alongside this Framework. The data digest brings together available information that has been captured across each of the nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. The digest will be reviewed and updated annually with new information, as and when this becomes available.

“The Single Equality Framework is a strategic tool used to assess how the Council promotes equality and fairness through the performance of its functions and provision of services.”

**What is the context?**

# Why does equality matter?

## Why should we care?

As a public body, the Council's primary role is to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough. In doing so, the Council recognises that we serve a diverse population, where not everyone has access to the same opportunity and where many face significant disadvantage. As such it is essential that the Council stewards public resources and performs its functions in a way that is demonstrably fair, equitable and responsive to need. Fundamentally, therefore, equality matters because it is the right thing to do.

## What does this mean in practical terms?

In practical terms tackling inequality and promoting equality means that we have to understand how the Council's policies, strategies and decisions affect the borough's diverse communities. In some instances, based on information that we have available, we may need to do things differently; if by doing so we can help those facing the greatest disadvantage. However, at all times it means that we must remain sensitive to the changing needs of our residents and vigilant to any emerging risks.

## What are we trying to achieve?

We want to assure ourselves that the Council's decisions and actions continue to make a meaningful contribution towards improving life chances for our residents, particularly those facing the most challenging circumstances. We also want to ensure that every resident, irrespective of their background or life experience, is able to recognise themselves in the goal of equality for all. This is because you do not always need first hand experience of inequality to understand its negative impact on society. As such, we believe that tackling inequality is not just the responsibility of the Council— it is the responsibility of every single resident. We all have an important part to play.

“...our ambition is for every resident irrespective of their background or life experience to recognise themselves in the goal of equality for all.”

# It is the law: Equality Act 2010

## What is the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a provision in the Equality Act 2010. The PSED sets out that, when public authorities carry out their functions, the Equality Act says they must have **due regard** or think about the need to:

- eliminate **unlawful discrimination**
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic
- foster or **encourage good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic

Having due regard means public authorities must consciously consider or think about the need to do the three things set out in the public sector equality duty. As appropriate it is for the courts to decide if a public authority has done enough to comply with the duty.

## What are the protected characteristics?

The term 'protected characteristic' is used to describe the various groups that are afforded protection under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. These groups are set out below:



# It is integral to Lewisham's Corporate Strategy

The Single Equality Framework is a delivery vehicle for Lewisham's Corporate Strategy priorities and commitments. In particular it helps the Council to ensure that all of the various activities that are geared towards the delivery of the Corporate Strategy [eg: policy, strategy, planning, service design and resourcing decisions] are equality proofed. It also helps to ensure that, where there are gaps in the Council's knowledge, careful and thoughtful analysis can be undertaken, ahead of time, to identify risks and any mitigating action that needs to be taken.



Earn below the London Living Wage

**23%**

Gender Breakdown

Male  
**49%**

Female  
**51%**

Percentage of all children in low income households

**22.7%**

Ethnicity

White  
**54%**

BAME  
**46%**

Residents that are EU nationals

**8%**

Workless households

**11%**

Lone parent households with dependent children

**4.3%**

Population of Lewisham

**305,800**

Religion or belief

**64%**

Residents with no qualifications

**5%**

Identify as LGB

**4%**

Working age (16-64)

**70%**

Age breakdown

0-19  
**25%**

65 plus  
**10%**

Marriage/ Civil Partnership

**33%**

Living with disability

**15%**

Prevalence of obesity at Year 6

**24%**

Average life expectancy (years)

Male	Female
<b>79.0</b>	<b>83.7</b>

Total employee jobs

Full time	Part time
<b>62%</b>	<b>38%</b>

Gross weekly pay (place of residence)

Male	Female
<b>£724</b>	<b>£671</b>

Residents of other nationalities living in Lewisham

**70+**

Children Looked After

**470**

Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate

**64%**

Households with children in temporary accommodation

**2,308**

Schools population of BME heritage

**77%**

Languages spoken in the borough

**170**

Physically active adults

**72%**

Proportion of fuel poor households

**11%**

Children claiming Free School Meals

**12,566**

Emergency food parcels delivered by LA (October 2020)

**862**

English is not their main language

**20%**

# The English indices of multiple deprivation

Income deprivation

**Lewisham ranks 50<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Employment adults

**Lewisham ranks 99<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 80<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Education, skills and training

**Lewisham ranks 239<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 229<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Health and disability

**Lewisham ranks 120<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Overall Lewisham ranks **63<sup>rd</sup> out of 326**

local authority areas for relative deprivation nationally

ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Crime and disorder deprivation

**Lewisham ranks 57<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Barriers to housing and services

**Lewisham ranks 13<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Living environment

**Lewisham ranks 20<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

Income deprivation affecting children

**Lewisham ranks 37<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities nationally**

ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in 2015 [1 equals high deprivation]

**What are Lewisham's equality objectives?**

# Five equality objectives

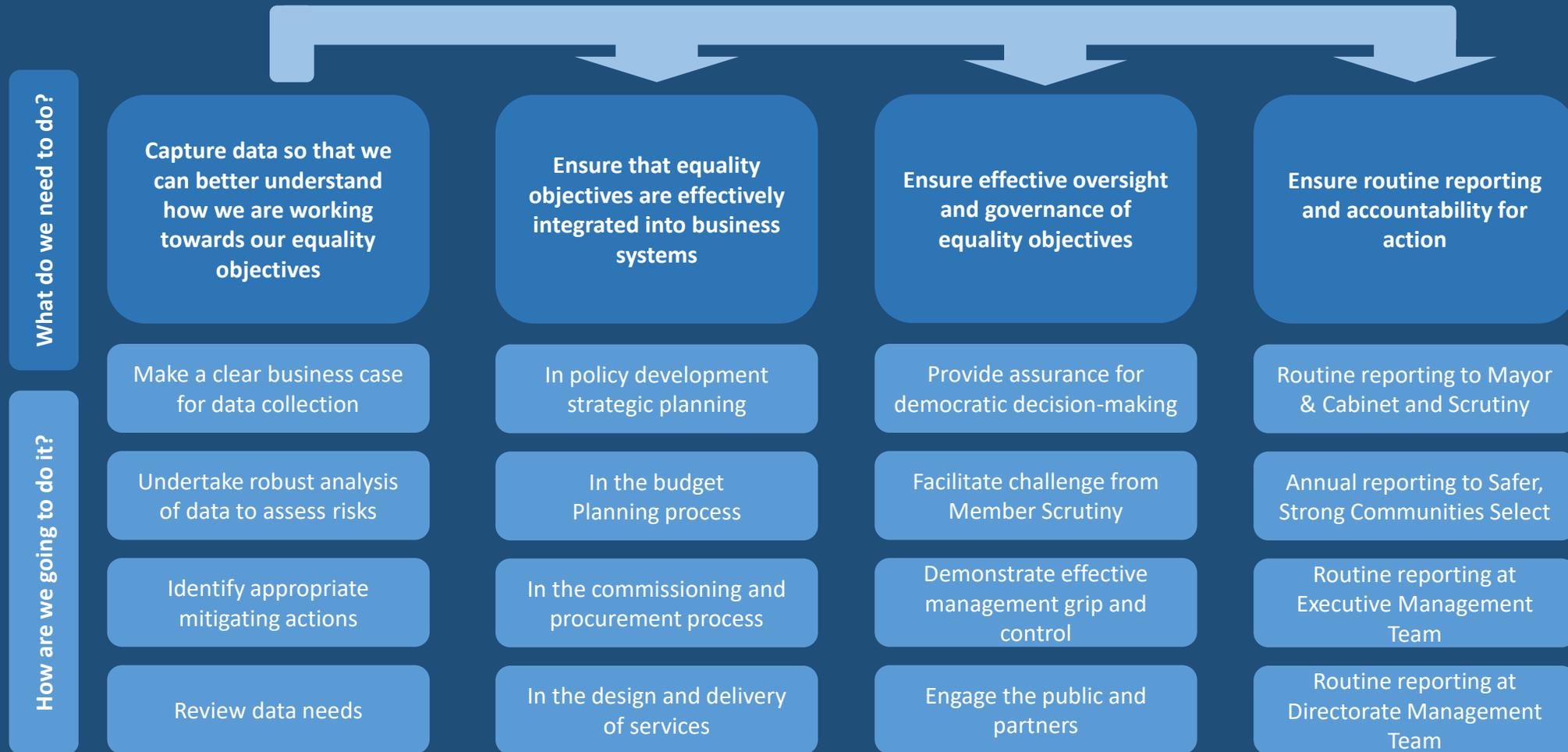
The Single Equality Framework is the vehicle used to promote the Council's equality objectives. The objectives themselves reflect the aspiration we have for a borough where all those who live, work and use services within it, are treated with dignity and respect. We believe that it is important that every resident, regardless of their background, is able to recognise themselves and others, in the objectives that we have set.

The Council's five equality objectives are set out below:

- To ensure equal opportunities for marginalised and seldom heard communities.
- To reduce the number of vulnerable people in the borough by tackling socio-economic inequality.
- To improve the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases.
- To ensure that services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of Lewisham's diverse population.
- To increase the number of people we support to become active citizens.

“Our aim is to ensure that every resident, regardless of their background, should be able to recognise themselves and others in the objectives that we have set.”

# How will we progress our equality objectives?



**What are the six equality prisms?**

# The six equality prisms

The equality prisms are a series of additional questions that are intended to help the Council to better assess equality impacts and determine whether there is a specific dimension of inequality that it needs to focus on. The six equality prisms are set out below.

## **Has consideration been given to the ‘due regard’ duty?**

The Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, sets out that in the discharge of their duties, public bodies must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations and promote opportunities for advancement for and between protected characteristics.

## **Is disproportionality a factor?**

Consideration should be given to whether particular groups or communities may be over-represented or under-represented compared to others as well as compared to their cohorts in the wider population as a whole.

## **Is intersectionality a factor?**

Consideration should be given to the extent to which the combination of characteristics represented by an individual increases their vulnerability or exposure to risk and whether or not this is reflected in the way in which assessments are made and decisions are reached.

## **Is unconscious bias a factor?**

Consideration should be given to whether assessments made and decisions reached are based largely on assumptions about particular groups or communities of interest.

## **Is the risk of unfairness a factor?**

Consideration should be given to whether assessments made or decisions reached are not sufficiently informed by an understanding of all those in need – in particular those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

## **Is marginalisation a factor?**

Consideration should be given to whether the needs, wants and aspirations of particular individuals or groups may have been treated as insignificant or peripheral. This could be due to a lack of awareness or a failure to actively engage.

## Equality Prisms

Can you demonstrate how you have shown 'due regard'?

Have you considered intersectionality?

Have you considered the impact on marginalised groups?

Are you able to identify those facing the greatest disadvantage?

Should the needs of those who are over or under-represented need to be given special consideration?

Are any of the judgements being made based on assumptions?

## Product

Impact assessment

Options appraisal

Needs analysis

Budget decision/ allocation

Survey design

Strategy development

Service design

Service planning

Commissioning decision

Committee report

Business case /proposals paper

## Assurance

Demonstrate 'due regard' by tackling discrimination, fostering good relations and advancing opportunity

Tackle unconscious bias

Reach the seldom heard

Ensure equity in performance of functions and delivery of services

**When should this framework be applied?**

# When to apply the single equality framework

Lewisham's Single Equality Framework should be applied across all aspects of the Council's business system. The intention is to ensure that it is embedded and integrated in the performance of functions and provision of services. Some examples of when the Framework should be applied and how it can be beneficial are set out below:

## **Policy and strategic planning**

Application of this Framework will help inform the development of policy and strategic objectives and help you to better understand the likely outcomes that changes to your strategy or policy will have for particular groups and communities. As part of this, through the application of this framework you will also be better able to plan and target your consultation in a way that helps you to hear from all relevant local stakeholders.

## **Equality analysis assessment**

Application of this Framework will help you to demonstrate the robustness of evidence being relied upon to support your proposal or recommendation for Member scrutiny of Mayor & Cabinet decisions. This kind of equality proofing is essential as it demonstrates a commitment to due diligence.

## **Budget planning decisions**

Application of this Framework will help you to better understand the likely impact of budget planning decisions on protected characteristics particularly where such an impact suggests evidence of intersectionality or disproportionality. This type of information is essential as it helps the Council to decide whether its decisions are reasonable and fair.

## **Report and bid writing**

Application of this Framework will help you to more clearly demonstrate, for Member scrutiny and Mayor & Cabinet decision, the likely equality implications of recommendations and proposals that are contained within your reports. Application of this Framework will also enable you to demonstrate how funding bids will contribute to delivering equality outcomes for local residents such as tackling disproportionality or closing the gap in outcomes between different groups.

## **Service design and commissioning**

Application of this Framework will help you to nuance your commissioning objectives and more clearly define the equality impacts of and outcomes from externally commissioned services. It will also help you to demonstrate to providers what is expected of them and set a clear context within which performance can be measured.

**How should this framework be applied?**

# How you should apply the single equality framework?

Lewisham's Single Equality Framework is designed to give assurance to management action and democratic decision making, by evidencing how equality issues have been considered. The five key steps in applying this framework are set out below:

## **1. Consider what evidence is available**

Data is the evidence that will help to establish your baseline, measure outcomes and support your conclusions. Examples of available data sources that you may want to consider include: service monitoring statistics, responses to consultation, public data, complaints, case work from voluntary and community organisations. In some cases however, data may also be anecdotal.

## **2. Consider which of the five equality objectives apply**

Once you have analysed your data, you should know which of Council's five equality objectives apply to the piece of work that you are undertaking? If you choose to discount some objectives, be sure that you know why they do not or should not apply.

## **3. Consider which of the nine protected characteristics will be impacted**

Once you have decided which objectives apply, you need to consider which protected characteristics that they apply to. For example, if you are developing a strategy to tackle hate crime, your data would likely point to the protected characteristics of disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment as those most likely to be impacted by the strategy that you are developing.

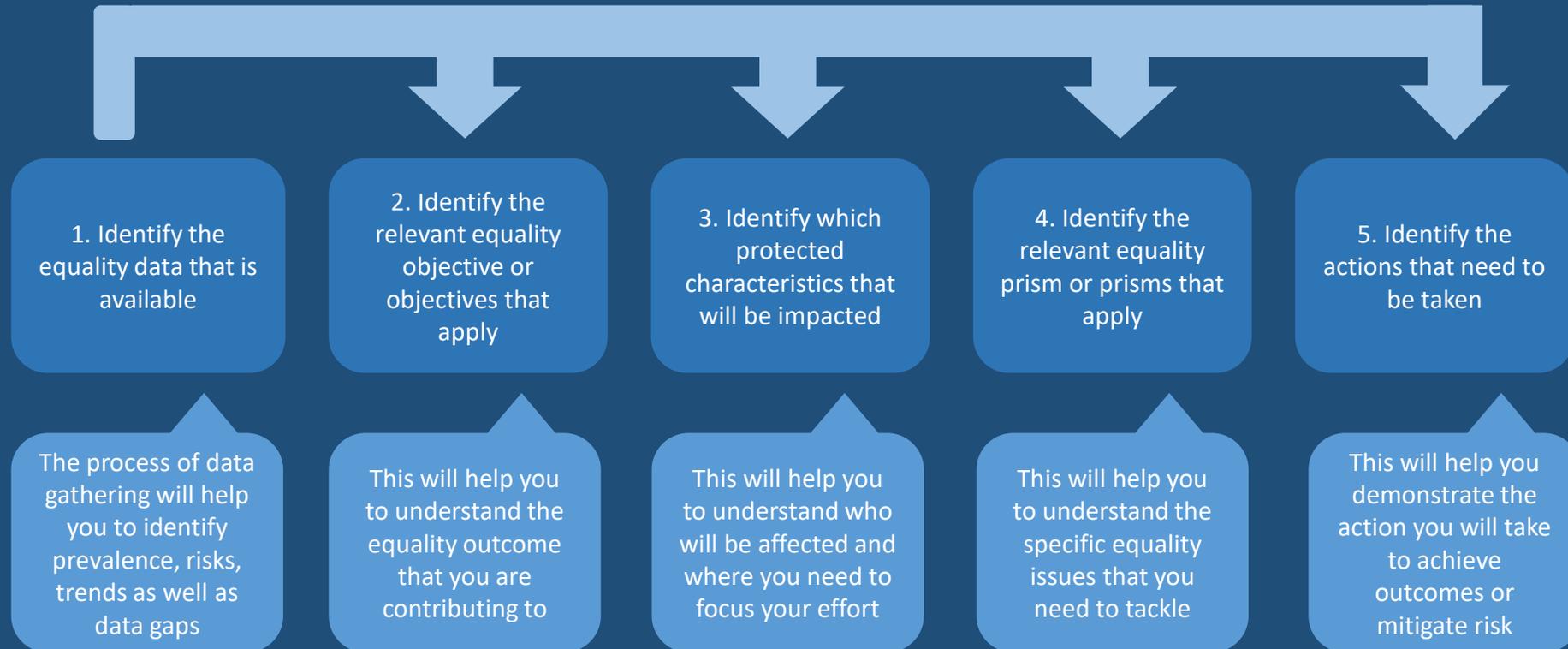
## **4. Consider which of the six equality prisms apply**

Use the six equality prisms to demonstrate the kinds of equality issues that you are trying to address (this should be evident from the data that you have considered). For example, is there an issue of disproportionality? Is there a significant gap in life outcomes between groups? Application of the six equality prisms will also help you to challenge any assumptions that you have made and satisfy yourself that any such assumptions are not based on an unconscious bias.

## **5. Consider the action that is needed to address the issue**

Having understood the dimensions of the equality issue that you are looking to address, you should be able to identify the actions and mitigation needed to address the issue. These actions and measures should be reflected in the piece of work that you are undertaking.

# Applying the framework



**What difference are we trying to make?**

# What do we mean by equality in Lewisham?

Meeting the needs of seldom heard communities

Supporting all residents, but particularly those in greatest need

Tackling health inequalities to improve quality of life

Being a place of sanctuary for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

Helping older residents to live independently in their own homes

Creating a culture of aspiration for our school population

Reducing the gap in life outcomes between the most affluent and most deprived

Mitigating the harm caused by climate change, on future generations

Increasing ways in which residents can participate and be involved in decision making

Creating a pathway to the labour market for parents with dependent children

Promoting inclusion through the design and delivery of services

Creating communities where people from diverse backgrounds respect each other

Celebrating the diversity of our population

# To ensure equal opportunities for marginalised and seldom heard communities

We recognise that equality is about enabling and empowering residents from all sections of our community to express their views - especially those who do not normally engage with us because of language barriers, lack of knowledge, a previous negative experience or other reasons. The aim is to make it easier for everyone to be able to engage, not just those who have access and opportunity. Set out below are some of the areas where we expect this equality objective to make a difference:

- Increased public trust
- Increased opportunities for participation and engagement for seldom heard communities
- Greater confidence that decisions affecting Lewisham residents are fair, particularly for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable
- Increased access and choice for groups such as refugees and migrants, who face a significant risk of exploitation and exclusion
- Better local engagement with groups in regular contact with seldom heard communities

# To reduce the number of vulnerable people in the borough by tackling socio-economic inequality

We recognise that social mobility is one of the most effective ways to tackle inequality. However, whilst socio-economic status is not a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010, it is none-the-less part of the lived experience of many communities and groups irrespective of their characteristic. Set out below are some of the areas where we expect this equality objective to make a difference:

- Increased provision of affordable housing
- Reduction in child poverty in absolute and relative terms
- Reduction in rogue landlord activity
- Reduction in fuel poverty and the excess winter deaths that arise from it
- Reduction in the attainment gap between the best performing pupils and those who perform least well
- A higher number of businesses in Lewisham paying the London Living Wage to their employees
- Increased access to employment for those (eg: lone parents and older people) who are often furthest from the labour market

# To improve the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases

We recognise that one of the most effective contributions that can be made to equality isn't just to increase the life expectancy of Lewisham residents, but more importantly, the quality of life that our residents are able to enjoy. We will therefore continue to take active steps to promote healthier lifestyles for our residents so that they can experience both improved life chances and better life outcomes. Set out below are some of the areas where we expect this equality objective to make a difference:

- Improved mental health and well being
- Reduction in preventable illnesses such as obesity and diabetes
- Reduction in incidence of sexually transmitted infections
- Reduced alcohol and substance dependency

# To ensure that services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of Lewisham's diverse population

We recognise that part of the experience of equality is how our residents feel about living in the borough and whether they choose to stay. Therefore we want to ensure that their experience is a positive one that speaks to Lewisham as a place that is welcoming of all people, irrespective of their background. Set out below are some of the areas where we expect this equality objective to make a difference:

- Increased social cohesion and sense of belonging
- Greater feeling of safety in the borough
- Openness to new communities including those fleeing war and persecution
- Celebration of the borough's rich cultural diversity as a strength
- A Council workforce that is representative of the borough's diverse population

# To increase the number of people we support to become active citizens

We recognise that one of the most effective ways to promote equality is through active citizenship and social responsibility. Residents and service users have a key role to play in creating a borough, where there is mutual respect for the rights of others including those of future generations. This means that everyone has to do their fair share. Set out below are some of the areas where we expect this equality objective to make a difference:

- Sustainable use of resources for the benefit of current and future generations
- Reduced carbon emissions
- Increased social capital and community engagement
- Increased civic participation

**How will the Single Equality Framework be overseen?**

# Governance and oversight

We understand that the most effective way to ensure the effective application of the Single Equality Framework is to ensure that it is part and parcel of the way the Council conducts business. Set out below are examples of how arrangements for the governance and oversight of the Single Equality Framework will be managed.

## **Mayor and Cabinet**

Mayor and Cabinet approves the Single Equality Framework on a four yearly cycle. However, on an ongoing basis, Mayor and Cabinet will hold officers to account to ensure that equality issues and implications are reflected in the suite of information needed to inform democratic-decision making.

## **Member Scrutiny Committees**

Each of the Council's Select Committees will oversee the application of the Framework through their ongoing scrutiny role. As part of this, Select Committee Members will be able to challenge officers to demonstrate how the objectives of the Framework have been applied in the presentation of information to their respective Committees. In addition, each year the Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee will receive an annual review of the Single Equality Framework.

## **Executive Management Team**

The Council's Executive Management Team will ensure application of the Framework through its broader oversight role for policy development, strategic and financial planning, service design, management action and decision-making. Through this role, the Executive Management Team, will be able to provide assurance that management grip and control is effective.

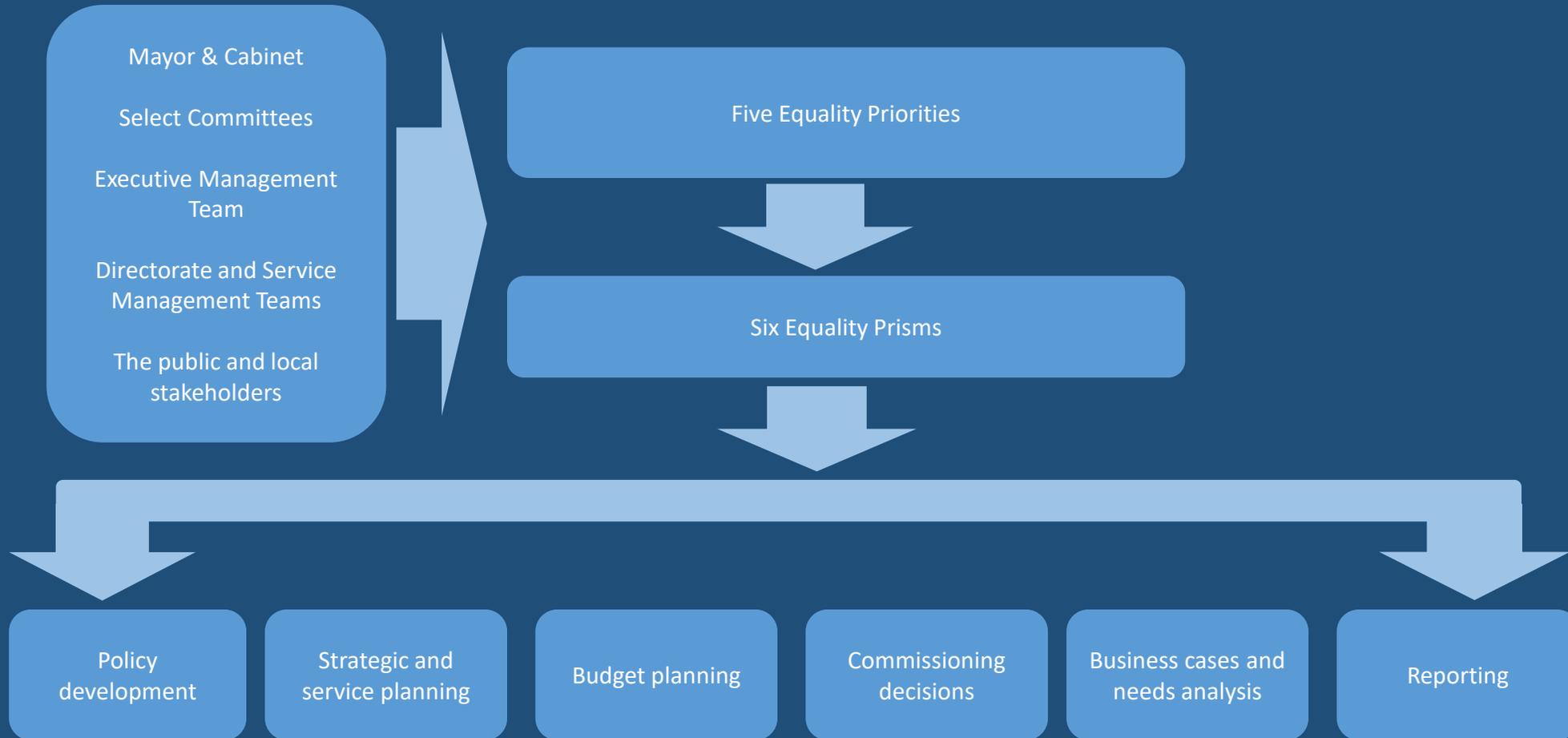
## **Directorate and Service Management Teams**

Directorate and Service Management Teams will oversee the application of this Framework across the functions performed and services delivered within their areas of responsibility. In addition, Directorate and Service Management Teams will provide assurance to the Executive Management Team, that equality issues and risks are being considered and effectively managed.

## **The public and local stakeholders**

The Council will actively seek feedback and learning opportunities from local stakeholders in an effort to better understand how this framework is being applied locally. This information will be used to shape the ongoing development of the Framework.

# How the governance structure fits together



# Data sources

- Earnings below the London Living Wage (Annual Survey of House and Earnings, Office for National Statistics, November 2018)
- Gross weekly earnings [place of residence ] (Annual Survey of House and Earnings, Office for national Statistics, November 2018)
- Children in low income households (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, January 2019)
- Lewisham's population/ gender breakdown/ working age population/ age breakdown (Mid-year Population Estimates 2018, Office for National Statistics)
- Estimate of Lewisham's Lesbian Gay and Bisexual population (Lewisham Residents Survey, 2015)
- Adults classified as overweight or obese/ Year 6 prevalence of obesity/ diabetes detection/ physically active adults (Public Health England, 2019)
- All data on religion or belief/ marriage/ race/ lone parent households with dependent children/ living with disability/ English is not their main language (2011 Census)
- English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, September 2019)
- Residents that are European Union Nationals in Lewisham and residents of other nationalities living in Lewisham (Lewisham Electoral Roll, January 2020)
- Workless households (Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics)
- Fuel poor households (Department of Business, Industrial Strategy, June 2019)
- Children Looked After (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)
- Emergency food parcels supplied (The Trussell Trust)
- Average life expectancy male and female (Office for National Statistics, December 2018)
- Schools population of BAME heritage and languages spoken in the borough (Spring School Census 2019, Department for Education)
- Households with children in temporary accommodation April 2018-March 2019 (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, September 2019)
- Pupils entitled to Free School Meals (Autumn Schools Census 2019, Department for Education)