1. **Summary**

1.1 The Autism Act 2009 is the first and only act of legislation in UK which is condition specific. The original Adult Autism Strategy “Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives” was published in 2010 and updated in April 2014 by “Think Autism”.

1.2 The London Borough of Sutton has the “Autism Strategy Framework” which was agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2013. The Sutton Autism Strategy Steering Group was established in February 2014 to provide oversight and steer in the implementation of the Sutton Autism Action plan.

1.3 On the 27th March 2015, a new statutory guidance was issued under section 2 of the Autism Act which builds on, support and replaces the 2010 guidance. This statutory guidance also uses guidance issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (LASS Act). It means that local authorities “must follow the path charted by the guidance”. Deviation may result in judicial review or action by the Secretary of State.

1.4 This paper informs the executive management teams and committees of their statutory obligations and makes recommendation to Sutton Council and Sutton CCG.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 Executive and Strategic Management teams across the local authority, Sutton CCG and other local NHS bodies are made aware of the statutory duty to implement the Autism Statutory Guidance.

2.2 To review the local Sutton Autism Strategy Framework and revise current Autism Master Action Plan in line with new requirements from the new statutory guidance.
2.3 Following this review, the local authority and Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a commissioning intention paper for consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Board by December 2015.

2.4 Meanwhile, to conduct a review of the Sutton Autism Strategy Steering Group and its current governance arrangement.

3. Background

3.1 The Autism Act 2009 and the statutory guidance that accompanied the Act and the strategy set key duties for local authorities and the NHS to improve outcomes for adults with autism. In December 2010, "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives" was published, giving statutory guidance for local authorities and the NHS to deliver on the Autism Strategy. In 2011, an attempt was made to develop a local Sutton Autism Strategy, however no further action was taken to progress the strategy to a delivery plan.

3.2 The statutory guidance of "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives" included a governance structure requiring local Health and Wellbeing Boards to play a key part in the planning, commissioning and reviewing of services for people with autism. In 2013, the Department of Health requested for Directors of Social Services to report on the 2nd Autism Self Assessment. In Sutton, this exercise reported a number of red rag ratings, which resulted in the need to conduct a local review of services. Two independent agencies, the National Development Team for Inclusion and Ambitious Autism were commissioned to complete this review, taking into consideration the outcomes of the 2013 Autism Self Assessment exercise. As part of this review, in Sept 2013, a consultation event took place with local stakeholders and concluded in a report referred to as the “Sutton Autism Strategy Framework” (see Appendix 1).

3.3 The Sutton Autism Strategy Framework report was submitted to the Sutton Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2013 and the recommendations were noted.

3.4 In February 2014, the Sutton Autism Strategy Steering Group was established, and recommendations from the Sutton Autism Strategy Framework were debated and a local action and delivery plan was formulated. Since then ongoing work has been carried out by lead officers, appointed to deliver on the implementation of the Autism action plan.

3.5 The new statutory guidance is for local authorities and NHS organisations to support the implementation of adult autism strategy. A detailed list of “Must do’s and “Should do’s” is referred to in Appendix 2.

4. Issues

4.1 Since August 2013, in light of capacity issues, ASS&H provided manpower support to the Autism Strategy Steering Group in formulation and coordination of a local delivery plan. Officers
from other local agencies were co-opted to lead on specific areas and work is ongoing. The Autism Strategy Steering group continues to provide steer and management oversight.

4.2 In light of recent changes across the council and local NHS organisations, and together with requirements of the new statutory guidance, it is the right opportunity to conduct a review the governance arrangement of the Autism Strategy Steering Group.

5. Impacts and Implications

Financial

5.1 There are no specific financial implications at this stage, however it is expected that additional resources will be required to programme manage a local implementation and delivery plan.

Legal

5.2 London Borough of Sutton and local NHS bodies have statutory responsibility to implement the Autism Act.

5.3 Equalities Impact Assessment - Community

People with autism are in receipt of services and the community at large which acknowledge, respect and meet their needs. People have equal access to services that are reasonably adjusted, their assessed needs are met and they are protected from the risk of abuse and enjoy quality of lives like everyone else.

5.4 Implementation

The review of Sutton’s autism action plan will be monitored through One Sutton Collaborative Committee and Health and Well Being Board.

6. Appendices and Background Documents

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<thead>
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<th>Appendix Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sutton Autism Strategy Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detailed list of “Must Do’s and Should Do’s”</td>
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Background Documents

NA

Audit Trail

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Consultation with other officers

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