



Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Statement

Aldingbourne Parish Council is committed to pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff and the way in which services are provided for the public.

The Council recognises its statutory duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.

The Council is committed to promoting equal access to services and facilities and equal treatment for all employees or job applicants irrespective of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- race;
- religion/belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- marriage/civil partnership; and
- pregnancy/maternity; which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and that this is managed in such a way that Aldingbourne Parish Council complies with relevant legislation and codes of practise.

Service Delivery

Aldingbourne Parish Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to its facilities.

The Council will achieve this by:

- recognising and accepting that particular individuals or groups are denied equality through direct or indirect discrimination either intentional or unintentional;
- providing regular training for all Councillors and employees, so that they have a good understanding of the diverse needs of different people;
- delivering services which are relevant, of the highest possible quality and accessible;
- providing clear information about our services and facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats;
- ensuring that our complaints and feedback procedures are accessible and effective;
- assessing the impact of and monitoring its services to ensure that they do not discriminate and identify where improvements can be made; and
- ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.

Employment

Aldingbourne Parish Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity. All employees will have a part to play in achieving this and the Council will ensure that individuals are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support the Equal Opportunities Policy. No employee or prospective employee should receive unfair or unlawful treatment due to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, and pregnancy/maternity.

The Council will seek to identify and act upon all unlawful discrimination which denies individual opportunity on any of the criteria mentioned above.

Employees and applicants have the right to complain about unfair discrimination through the appropriate procedures.

The Council will achieve this by:

- ensuring that its recruitment and selection policies and procedures are equitable and fair so that the best people are appointed to deliver its services;
- only considering applicants for jobs on the basis of their relevant experience, skills and abilities unless a genuine occupational qualification exists for specific posts;
- ensuring that all employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are part-time, full-time, or employed on a temporary basis;
- ensuring that employment policies and opportunities are of the highest possible quality, therefore equality, equity and consistency are embedded in practices, pay and conditions;
- making sure that equal consideration is given to people's needs and develop flexible and responsive employment opportunities to tackle those needs;
- encouraging and supporting employees to reach their full potential within the

resources the Council has available to it;

- taking appropriate action against incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination and offering support and advice to victims or witnesses to incidents; and
- taking disciplinary action against employees who discriminate against people who work for the Council or who seek employment with the Council.

Responsibilities Council and Committees

Strong leadership is essential to ensure that this policy is embedded at strategic and service delivery levels of the Council. Whilst the Full Council will be ultimately responsible for implementation and review of this policy, day to day implementation and monitoring will be the responsibility of the Staffing Committee in respect of staffing and performance management issues and the Finance & General Purposes Committee in terms of Council facilities.

Councillors

Councillors, by way of the corporate body, have overall responsibility for the direction and scrutiny of this policy and will ensure that the principles of fairness and equality guide the decision making process.

Employees

All employees must:

- (i) co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity;
- (ii) report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- (iii) not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- (iv) not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence on discrimination;
- (v) not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, gender etc;
- (vi) not pressurise job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post.

Breaches of Policy

Any breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the relevant legislation or appropriate disciplinary procedure. Serious offences, such as harassment and victimisation, may be treated as gross misconduct.

Complaints Employees

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should make use of the Council's grievance procedure.

Members of the public

Any member of the public, including prospective employees, wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the Clerk within 15 working days, at the latest, of the alleged incident.

Adopted on:.....

At:.....

Review date:.....