

MEOPHAM PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Meopham Parish Council has committed itself to a policy of equality of opportunity, not only in its employments and human resource practices, but also in all the services for which it is responsible.

Although the overall responsibility for achieving, promoting and providing equality of opportunity rests with the employer (the Council) employees at every level have a responsibility to own and promote the policy. The active cooperation of Elected Members and all employees is therefore essential for the success of the Council's Equalities Policy.

This document therefore outlines the Council's Equalities Policy, the Council's obligations under existing legislation and its intention to abide by and comply.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY STATEMENT

1. Meopham Parish Council (the Council) positively supports the principle of equal opportunities in the provision of services and employment. It opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.
2. Equality of opportunity means that service users, job seekers, contractors, suppliers and employees will be treated equally and fairly regardless of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, or any other unjustifiable criterion.
3. The Council welcomes and values the diversity of its workforce, the people and the communities in the parish and the people who use our services. The Council is seeking to ensure that through its policies, service delivery, employment, contracting and funding practices, we achieve the highest possible equality standards.

Meopham Parish Council's Equalities Policy has been developed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and protects individuals from discrimination in respect of:-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- sex (gender)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief

- sexual orientation

Our commitment to diversity

Meopham Parish Council, in the delivery of its services and in its employment of staff, will be proactive in eliminating discrimination on grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability age or any other unjustifiable criterion.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN DELIVERY OF ITS SERVICE

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

Policy in practice

- 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 services and facilities and where necessary making them available in a variety of formats;
- Ensuring that 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;
- Ensuring that all employees understand what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to equality in service provision.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The following sections outline the steps which the Council will take to develop and implement good employment and human resource practices in pursuit of its Equalities Policy

Recruitment, Selection and Progression

All job advertisements will include the following statement: 'We are an Equal Opportunities Employer'.

The Council will take steps to ensure that:

- All sections of the community and the Council's workforce are fully informed of job opportunities within the Council and are encouraged to apply
- The criteria for selection and progression are determined solely on the basis of the requirements of the job.

- People are selected and appointed solely on the basis of their relevant, assessable experience and abilities.
- All job descriptions and person specifications will make reference to the Equalities policies.

Training and Development

The Council will:

- Ensure that all employees will have equal and direct access to appropriate training and development opportunities regardless of gender, race, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, religion, belief, trade union activity and age.
- Provide training provision, both internal and external, that complies with the Council's Equalities Policy.

Retention and re-training

- The Council will endeavour to retain and re-train as necessary, employees who become disabled or whose disability deteriorates. These employees will be counselled to ensure that alternative job or retraining opportunities offered are in accordance with their wishes and the necessary procedures will be developed.
- Retirement or dismissal on the grounds of ill health will only be considered in the last resort.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

- Observance of the Council's Equalities Policy is a condition of employment.
- The Council will review existing locally determined terms and conditions of service to ensure that they do not discriminate and will amend and develop where necessary to bring them into line with its Equalities Policy.
- The Council will take whatever action is open to it, in the consultative and negotiating process, to ensure that nationally determined terms and conditions of service do not discriminate and are in line with its own Equality Policy.

Dismissal and Redundancies

The Council will ensure that:

- Dismissal and redundancy decisions are not made on the basis of gender, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, religion, trade union activity or age.

Discipline

- Acts of discrimination, victimisation and harassment as defined in this document, perpetrated by an employee of the Council against other

employees, clients or members if the public will result in disciplinary action. This will also apply to employees who attempt to induce other employees to discriminate, victimise or harass.

- Failure to comply with or adhere to the Council's Equalities Policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Grievance

- The Council will treat seriously and take prompt action on any employees grievance concerning discrimination, victimisation or harassment.
- The Council will encourage the development of appropriate support systems and procedures for employees who wish to pursue such grievances.
- In addition to the grounds covered by the existing grievance procedure, an employee who considers that he/she has been subjected to discrimination, victimisation or harassment by another employee will have recourse to the grievance procedure.

MANAGEMENT OF THIS POLICY

The Council will ensure that its Equalities Policy is implemented at all levels and locations within the Council.

Overall responsibility for implementation of the policy resides with the Council (the employer). The responsibility for day to day operation of the policy rests with the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Clerk must ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and understand their role in its implementation.

Monitoring

Monitoring is an essential and integral element of the Council's Equalities Policy. The Council will develop an effective monitoring system in order to examine the effective implementation of its policy and to assess whether it is achieving its aims and objectives, and to plan future priorities and strategies.

The responsibility for monitoring the Council's Policy will rest with the Parish Clerk.

Reviewing this policy

No policy document is static and must be subject to changes. It is the Council's intention to keep this policy and its existing codes of practice, management guidelines, instructions, procedures, etc. under review, to ensure that the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity as set out in its policy statement is adopted and implemented.

Implications of the policy

The Policy applies to all those who are employed by the Council. Elected Members will be expected to act in accordance with the Council's Equalities Policy.

In addition, the Council will seek to ensure that individuals, voluntary organisations, firms and institutions, acting on behalf of or as agents of the Council do not practice unlawful and unfair acts of discrimination.

Meopham Parish Council
Equality Policy
Adopted by Full Council on 19th July 2016

(based on NALC LTN 78, Equality Act 2010)