

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The council is committed to supporting activity intended to develop the village as a sustainable, cohesive community.
- 1.2. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
- 1.3. Coaley Parish Council ('The Council') is a public body committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoid unlawful discrimination by council officers and those employed by the council.
- 1.4. The Council believes that harassment, bullying and discrimination in any form is unacceptable behaviour and therefore expects that everyone, including employees and service users will be treated with dignity and respect.

## 2. Aims of the Equality and Diversity Policy

- 2.1 Application of the policy will ensure the Council meets its legal obligations.
- 2.2 In addition, the policy is intended to support the Council to make good decisions as we believe that by considering how different people will be affected the Council will deliver policies, representation and services which are efficient, effective, and accessible thereby better meeting different people's needs.

## 3. The Law

- 3.1 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of:
  - age,
  - disability,
  - sex,
  - gender reassignment,
  - pregnancy,
  - maternity,
  - race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins),
  - sexual orientation,
  - religion or belief, or
  - marital status including civil partnership.

These are known as "*protected characteristics*".

- 3.2 Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.
- 3.3 The Council is a public authority and therefore required to follow the Public Sector Equality Duty and is therefore required to have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, including indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected character
  - Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- 3.4 This applies to how the Council recruits and selects staff, develops and applies policies, delivers and commissions services from others.
- 3.5 The Council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods.
- 3.6 It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

#### **4. Equal Opportunities in Employment**

- 4.1. The Council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- 4.2. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements for the effective performance of the job. Candidates

will be assessed objectively against those requirements, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

- 4.3. The Council will comply with its obligation in relation to statutory requests for employment contract variations and will only refuse if there are good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers that may be experienced by disabled employees.

## **5. People not employed by the council**

- 5.1 The Council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council.
- 5.2 Any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others in relation to the services supplied by the council should be reported to the council using the council's complaints procedure

## **6. Training**

- 6.1 The Council will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.
- 6.2 The Council will raise awareness of all staff and councillors engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

## **7. Employee responsibilities**

- 7.1 Every employee and councillor is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

- 7.2 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

## 8. Grievances and Complaints

- 8.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's complaints procedure to make a complaint.
- 8.2 The Council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if your complaint is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

## 9. Monitoring and review

- 9.1 This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. [In particular, the council will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and council, and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the council will implement them.
- 9.2 Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.]
- 9.3 This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Date of policy: 04/11/2024

Date of committee meeting: 04/11/2024

Policy version reference: 1

Policy effective from: 04/11/2024

Date for next review: 04/11/2025

Supersedes: N/A