

EARNLEY PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 took effect on 1st October 2010 and replaces the previous anti-discrimination legislation.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a key measure in the Act which came into force on 5 April 2011. All public bodies and organisations carrying out public functions have a duty to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work, in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. The Public Sector Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities for everyone who comes into contact with Earnley Parish Council, irrespective of their characteristics (unless it can be shown that the treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim)

2. Legal Position

To discriminate against someone means to treat them less favourably, to harass or victimise them, or to subject them to a provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a disadvantage. This is unlawful if it is on certain grounds, known as "protected characteristics" as defined by the Act:

- Age
- Race (including segregation)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Disability

3. COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Earnley Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. Earnley Parish Council is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities in the work place and in the delivery of services.

In all its activities, Earnley Parish Council will have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share them

4. EMPLOYEES

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the Council.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents of the local community, representing the Society as a whole.

Breaches of the Council's Equality Policy will be regarded as a serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination, harassment, victimisation through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

The Council adopts the model employment contract as devised by the employees' professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks).

A review of the policy shall be undertaken bi-annually (or as appropriate) and necessary amendments will be undertaken by the Clerk and reported to the Full Council for approval. Other policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this Policy to ensure that the Council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities employer.

5. SERVICE DELIVERY

In exercising its functions and delivering services, the Parish Council will have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty and will take a proportionate approach when complying with it. Equality issues will be an influence on its policies and decisions and the Council will consider the needs of all individuals in its day to day work.

The Council will undertake to ensure that its members and employees are trained in the processes required by this policy as deemed appropriate.

Adopted on: _____

Minute No: _____

Review: _____