

Equality and Diversity Policy (Draft)

1. Underlying Principles

Alveley and Romsley Parish Council respects and values differences, and as an employer and provider of services, recognises the importance of setting out a clear commitment to promoting fairness and tackling discrimination. The two main areas of focus are:-

1.1 Employment

No Council employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, trade union activity, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, social or economic status, political beliefs, or will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

1.2 Service delivery

The Parish Council will ensure that its services and activities, including those carried out in partnership with other agencies, are available to or impact on all equally and consistently, with no regard to race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, social or economic status or political beliefs. The Parish Council will also ensure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

2. Legislative Context

2.1 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to consolidate and strengthen previous anti-discrimination legislation. It covers the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

2.2 The Council recognises that discrimination can occur outside of the strict definitions in the Equality Act. In addition, Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

(the Public Sector Equality Duty) places a general duty on the Council and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 In procuring or providing services, the Parish Council will seek to put in place -

- a) Service arrangements that are appropriate, accessible and effective for the whole community.
- b) Clear and accessible information about services in a variety of formats and languages as appropriate.
- c) Monitoring arrangements to ensure that services do not unlawfully discriminate, and to identify where improvements can be made.
- d) Accessible consultation and engagement processes to enable the community to have a say on the way services are planned and delivered.
- e) Measures to ensure that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of the Parish Council's position on equality and diversity and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- f) Contract letting or monitoring processes that are inclusive of equality considerations.
- g) Relevant training and development for councillors and employees.

3.2 As an employer, the Parish Council will -

- a) Make reasonable adjustments to allow staff to fulfil their potential, where needed, to prevent inequality and promote diversity.
- b) Protect and promote the health, wellbeing and safety of staff, including taking appropriate action to safeguard staff from discrimination from third parties.
- c) Ensure recruitment and selection processes are fair and do not discriminate against anyone.
- d) Enable, encourage and support Councillors and staff to report discrimination or harassment.
- e) Maintains a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and bullying on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed in section 2.1 above.
- f) Make opportunities for training, development available to staff to enhance their skills and effectiveness.

4. Governance and Accountability

4.1 All councillors and staff have a responsibility to abide by this policy.

- 4.2 Individual councillors have a duty to lead the equality and diversity agenda, both in the Council and across the wider community.
- 4.3 The Staffing Committee is responsible for ongoing oversight of the equality and diversity agenda.
- 4.4 Staff have individual responsibility for promoting and delivering equality at work and in the wider community.

5. Grievances and complaints

- 5.1 The Council takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by councillors, employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others which arise from the work of the Parish Council. Such complaints will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the Parish Council's Complaints Policy, Approved Code of Conduct or Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure, as appropriate.

6. Monitoring and measuring progress

- 6.1 The Parish Council aspires to the standards set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government, and the Council's current objective is to achieve the 'Developing' Level of that Framework.
- 6.2 This Equality and Diversity Policy is approved and periodically reviewed by the full Parish Council.

This Policy was previously agreed by the Parish Council on 6th September 2011.

Revised Policy approved