



## **Equality and Diversity**

Tidworth Town Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) values the diversity of the community it serves. It strives to ensure that its services reflect the needs of all people within the community. All individuals can expect to receive equal access to employment and services.

The Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in employment by treating the diverse range of employees in a fair and equitable manner and it does not unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or existing employee.

### **1. Purpose**

**1.1** Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

**1.2** Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

**1.3** Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

### **2. Commitments**

The Council commits to:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace, as not only is this lawful, it is respectful, and good practice, and it also makes good business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training all employees and Councillors to know their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the Council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand that they, as well as the Council as the employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, local residents/the public, volunteers, Councillors, community stakeholders and suppliers.



- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, local residents, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Council's work activities.
- Deal with such as misconduct under the Council's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- Deal with any sexual harassment which may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council, for the benefit of local residents.
- Review employment practices, policies and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them to take into account any changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality and diversity policy.

### **Compliance**

The Council will aim to ensure that due regard is given to the aims of this policy by considering all of its functions in order to determine compliance.

**Councillors** – All Councillors are bound to adhere to equal opportunities principles by the Code of Conduct. The Council's staff will make every effort to accommodate any Councillors with particular needs.

**Employees** – All employees will be equally encouraged to apply for suitable training and employment opportunities appropriate to their respective roles. Whenever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups, for example, considering job-sharing and part-time working.

**Vacancies** – Vacancies, where appropriate, will be advertised widely across all sections of the community to ensure knowledge of the positions reaches under-represented groups. The selection criteria will be kept under constant review, to ensure they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

**Positive Action** – If two candidates for a role were both as qualified to be recruited or promoted, the Council would be allowed to take into consideration perceived disadvantages



or under-representation in the workforce, when deciding who to recruit. This means the Council would be able to favour the candidate from the under-represented or disadvantaged group.

**Premises** – The Council premises is compliant with (or will be practicably adapted to comply with) the Equality Act 2010 wherever possible. The Council will do all that is reasonably possible to ensure that service users are able to access facilities. All staff will respect and be sympathetic to the needs of minority groups and ensure that they receive the same level of service as other members of the community.

**The Council has a formal Complaints Procedure Policy to be followed if a person(s) or group wish to make an allegation of the Council being non-compliant.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Print Name)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Chair, Tidworth Town Council**