



Beaminster Town Council

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

BEAMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Members of Beaminster Town Council are committed to equality of opportunity for all in our service delivery, employment and in the way we operate as an organisation. This commitment is expressed through the principle of “mainstreaming”, which aims to integrate equality as a core value into everything we do.

We recognise that groups of people within the community could be disadvantaged, because of their age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class or religious beliefs, or for other reasons listed in **Appendix A**. Individuals could potentially be disadvantaged or discriminated against by the way our services are structured and delivered, by decisions which we take in our various functions, or by actions as an employer. As a result people may be denied access to the services or consideration to which they are entitled.

The disadvantage which people experience may be due to direct, indirect or institutional discrimination.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

The Town Council recognise that discrimination is unacceptable on any grounds and seek to create a climate which is underpinned by an understanding of discrimination and oppression that can take many forms.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITES

The co-operation of all members, employees and volunteers is essential for the success of this policy statement, however, the overall development, implementation and responsibility of the policy is placed with the members of the Town Council.

Employees referred to in this document includes officers employed on full-time, part-time, job-share, casual or temporary basis, and all other persons who are acting on behalf of the Town Council, including elected members and contractors.

Council Responsibility

The Town Council has a responsibility to the community and should act as a role model as a responsible employer of the Town. In undertaking this we will endeavour to ensure that:

- All services, facilities and resources are accessible and useful to every citizen regardless of individual circumstances
- No tolerance will be given to discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, religious belief, disability, martial status, sexual orientation or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Town Clerk Responsibility

It is the Town Clerk's responsibility to ensure that the promotion and continuation of equality in both employment and access to service provision are met, in addition the Town Clerk is expected to:

- Ensure that the Town Council's services are, as far as practicable, responsive to different community and individual needs
- Meet particular, reasonable needs of individuals in our community who wish to access the Town Council's services
- Be responsible for communicating this policy to all employees and ensuring that all employees are fully aware of their individual responsibilities and of the Council's legal responsibilities with regard to equal opportunities and make the Town Council's services available to everyone in the community.

Individually Responsibility

All employees have a general responsibility to comply with equality legislative codes of practice, and with the equality policies of the Town Council. They should also observe the Town Council's guidelines to ensure non-discriminatory conduct at work and in their relations with the Town Council's customers.

If an employee undertaking duties and responsibilities on the Town Council's behalf witness a discriminatory incident, they have the duty of care to other employees and members of the public to challenge discriminatory behaviour and practice.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE LAW

The Town Council will endeavour to eliminate all discrimination, both direct and indirect, against everyone regardless of individual circumstances, in the promotion of our services and in the employment of our local community.

This policy has been developed within a framework of existing legislation and codes of practice.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

The Town Council will endeavour to ensure that our services are equally accessible to all people, free from prejudice and unfair discrimination and sensitive to the needs of all local communities. The Town Council will ensure that:

- The Town Council deliver services which are flexible and responsive, target appropriate needs and, wherever possible, remove barriers which may deny access
- Decision making is open and visible to members of the community (always respecting the confidentiality of individual cases and any legal restrictions)
- Where we enter into contracts or tender for the provision of goods or services we require compliance with equalities legislation and good practice, as far as the law allows us to.

Partnership

Where the Town Council enter into partnership with other organisations we will ensure that they have an equal opportunities policy and that we work together to ensure that services provided in partnership comply with this policy.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The Town Council are committed to eliminating unfair discrimination from all aspects of our employment practice and will seek to:

- Provide equality of employment opportunity to all applicants and prospective applicants by eliminating unfair discrimination from recruitment and selection procedures

- Eliminate unfair discriminations from the employment opportunities offered to existing employees, by ensuring that all employees are treated for promotion on the basis of their merits, abilities and skill and are given equal opportunities to progress within the Authority
- Eliminate unfair discrimination in the provision of training and development opportunities, so that all individuals can realise their full potential and contribute to the aims and objectives of the organisation
- Recognise that certain groups may experience discrimination in employment and will seek to take positive action when inequality becomes apparent
- Take positive action with a view to ensuring that our workforce at all levels reflects the communities it serves
- Educate all employees of their right to protection from discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Treat failure to comply with this Policy as a disciplinary offence.

Training and Development Opportunities

The Town Council acknowledge that responsibility for the successful implementation of equality and opportunity in employment and service delivery lies with members and employees. The Town Council will therefore, promote enhanced awareness of unfair discrimination or potentially discriminatory practice, attitudes and behaviour so that they can be identified and eliminated.

The Town Council will attempt to encourage all employees to undertake training relevant to their appointment, also undertake relevant training in equal opportunities issues to raise the awareness, understanding and importance of equal opportunities in the work place and in service delivery.

We will also ensure that the content of all training courses reflects the Town Council's commitment to equality of opportunity. External training providers will be asked to provide a synopsis of the training material for evaluation and assessment to ensure that the course material and the delivery of information complies with details outlined in this Policy.

Equal Pay and Job Evaluation

The Town Council recognises the principles of the Equal Pay Acts of 1975 and 1984 and applies them to pay and other contractual matters and prohibits discrimination where men and women are doing:

- like work
- work which has been rated as equivalent
- work which is of equal value

In applying the principles of the Equal Pay Acts, the Town Council are committed to promoting equal pay across all our jobs to both existing employees and to new employment opportunities. In the promotion of equal pay the Town Council will ensure that:

- where an existing job changes or additional duties become a requirement of the post, an evaluation of the post will be undertaken to ensure that the salary and grade awarded is correct, fair and non discriminatory to other posts
- where a new position is created, the line manager will produce a job description and the post will be evaluated prior to advertisement and approval. The evaluation will be based on the duties and responsibilities defined in the job description to ensure that a fair and accurate grade is applied
- where a postholder is appointed to a newly created post, the jobholder will undertake a job evaluation interview six months from the start date to ensure that the post has been evaluated correctly as the post develops.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

It is acknowledged that this policy is not a static document and that it will require ongoing review. The responsibility for the success of the policy will lie with members of the Town Council who will and monitor and update as appropriate.

MAKING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPLAINT

An employee or service user who feels they have not been fairly treated within the scope of this policy, should raise the matter through the Town Council's approved Grievance Procedure (for employees)

Christine Bright
Town Clerk

Adopted by Beaminster Town Council at a meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2019

Possible Reasons for Discrimination

Services, facilities & resources should be accessible to everyone regardless of;

- Age
- Class
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Unrelated criminal convictions
- Colour
- Race
- Ethnic origins
- Nationality
- Employment status
- HIV status
- Marital status
- Religious beliefs
- Political beliefs
- Trade union activities
- Commitments as a carer
- Responsibilities for dependants