HELLESDON PARISH COUNCIL

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Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of Commitment

Hellesdon Parish Council is committed to the values of equality and diversity in its approach to cover the whole range from failure of good manners to direct discrimination. It believes that equal opportunities are essential to the values that lie at the heart of the Parish council and, as such should extend to the employment of its staff and its work with all individuals and organisations.
All employees and job applicants will be fairly treated regardless of sex, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, pregnancy and maternity status (known collectively as 'protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act), offending background, responsibilities for dependants or political affiliations, marital or civil partnership status and social class. Recruitment and promotion processes, training opportunities, remuneration and any other benefit will be job-related and objective.
The council recognises its duty under the Equality Act (2010) to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, to help them overcome disadvantages resulting from impairment.
The council is equally committed to equality of service provision to all sections of the community. This is reflected in the requirements of all reports to Council and committees to consider the Equality Act implication of any decisions taken.

The Legal Position

This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:-
- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999)
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- BDS Disclosure information in accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010

Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

It is the Council's policy not to discriminate against its workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our workers and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be

justified as necessary for operational purposes. The Council shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice. The Council's long-term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the local community and that all workers should be offered equal opportunities to achieve their full potential. This policy, and the measures the Council takes to implement it, has been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant governmental and professional bodies. We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all workers. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-employees.
The following paragraphs deal with the specific categories of workers and areas of work which we have identified as potentially giving rise to equal opportunities issues and provides more specific guidance on the parameters of our policy and approach to equal opportunities.
This policy is for guidance only and shall be provided to all workers, but does not form part of the contract of employment.

1 To whom does this policy apply?

1.1 This policy applies to the Council's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at the Council (collectively workers).
1.2 All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, the Council may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.
1.3 The policy statement in paragraph 1.2 applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients customers and suppliers by our workers and the treatment of our workers by these third parties.

2 Personnel responsible for implementation of policy review?

2.1 The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of its equal opportunities policy (EOP) and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Council has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Parish Clerk.
2.2 All members of staff are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Parish Clerk to request training or an information pack.

3 Scope and purpose of policy

3.1 The Council will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy, trade union membership, or part-time or fixed-term status.
3.2 This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy.
3.3 The Council will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of workers' religions,

cultures, and domestic responsibilities in accordance with its statutory obligations.

4 Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out in paragraph 3.1. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex. Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment.

5 Disability discrimination

5.1 If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible. You may also wish to advise the Parish Clerk of any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties. The Parish Clerk may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.

5.2 The Council will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other workers. Where possible and proportionate, the Council will take steps to improve access for disabled workers and service users.

6 Fixed-term employees and agency and temporary workers

We will monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress within the Council to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

7 Part-time workers & seasonal workers

The Council will monitor the conditions of service of part-time and seasonal employees and their progression within the Council to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with in accordance with its statutory obligations.

8 Breaches of the policy

8.1 If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged or harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed at paragraph 3.1, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Council's grievance procedure. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

8.2 If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Council will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

8.3 As this policy applies equally to the Council workers' relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

9 Monitoring and revision of policy

This policy is reviewed by the Council annually, as well as revision in the light of changes in legislation and guidance, to regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the EOP statement, by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of its workers.

The Council is committed to providing relevant training for all staff on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.