



BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL: EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

1. THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITY STATEMENT

The Council aspires to be an Equal Opportunities employer, community leader and service provider. Our aim is to ensure that all employees and service users are not subject to any form of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation on the basis of age, gender, gender reassignment, ethnic origin, colour, disability, illness (such as HIV or AIDS), marital or civil partnership status, nationality, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, maternity and paternity leave or social background.

2. POSITIVE ABOUT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council is committed to providing the highest quality of governance and service and recognises that the implementation of an effective Equality Policy is an integral part of this. It is not a coincidence that an organisation that is able to provide services to meet the diverse needs of its users, strives to carry out its core business efficiently. Equally a workforce that has a supportive environment is more productive. The Council as a corporate body has responsibilities as an employer, a service provider and a public authority, but both Members and Employees as individuals also have responsibilities as well as rights.

We are committed to ensuring that our services and employment practices are fair, accessible, responsive and appropriate for all Residents, clients & service users, voluntary and business organisations and visitors in the community we serve, as well as staff we employ and volunteers and partners who work with us.

To achieve this, we are continually working on eliminating all forms of discrimination in accordance with our Equality Statement and ensure that human rights (dignity and respect) are central to the way in which we operate.

We will strive to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic set out in our Statement above as well as those who do not and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We will engage with people we believe to have an interest in our approach to Equality. We will undertake periodic Equality Assessments to help us in deciding whether an existing or proposed policy, procedure, practice or service does (or may) affect people differently and in an adverse way. If so, we will look what we can do to change it.

Adherence to the principles and practices contained within the policy will be monitored on a regular basis.

3. POSITIVE AS AN EMPLOYER

The Council is committed to making full use of the talents and resources of employees. It will recruit, reward, develop, promote and transfer employees on the basis of the skills, relevant qualifications, experience, aptitude and ability they can bring to the job.

All employees will be treated equitably with respect to pay and other conditions in their contracts of employment.

The Council will encourage and develop all employees to support and carry out the requirements of this Equality policy. All employees will be encouraged to identify and disseminate good practice.

The Council will not tolerate or accept any form of harassment or bullying of its employees. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and any contravention of this right may be subject to the appropriate grievance or disciplinary procedure.

The Council will make reasonable changes to the physical features of its premises or to its method of undertaking business where this can enable an employee to properly undertake their job role. We will think positively about disabled staff as we do with disabled customers.

The Council will ensure that no employee is treated less favourably than other people because, for example they have brought proceedings, given evidence, or complained about the behaviour of someone who has been harassing or discriminating against them.

4. POSITIVE ABOUT SERVICE DELIVERY

The Council's clients have the right to expect fair and non-discriminatory treatment whilst participating in or receiving any of the Council's services. It will ensure that all recipients of the services delivered directly by the Council are guaranteed the same opportunity. All aspects of the Council's Equalities Policy impact on the manner in which it directly delivers services to and for its customers.

The Council will look for ways that it can make its services accessible to all.

Breaches of this Policy by staff will be subject to the Grievance and Discipline Procedures.

Where any service is delivered indirectly by contractors, partners or volunteers, the Council will ensure that they understand its Equality Policy and adhere to it.

5. POSITIVE ABOUT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The Council has a local governance and community leadership role. Local residents, members of local organisations, businesses and visitors have the right to expect fair and non-discriminatory treatment when engaging with the Council.

The Council recognises the diversity within the community and seeks to reflect this in the work it undertakes within that community. All aspects of the Council's Equalities Policy, impact on the manner in which it engages with the community.

The Council will look for ways that it can make it easier for everyone to engage with it.

6. POSITIVE ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Where councillors are to be elected, the Council will make information available as widely as possible about the election, and help people who are interesting in standing for election, with the objective of reflecting the diversity of the Parish.

When the Council seeks a co-opted member, it will advertise widely and will ensure that every applicant has an equal opportunity. Selection will be made against objective criteria.

The Council will always promote democracy, encourage all people to engage with it and vote at elections. It will make special efforts to identify and engage with Hard to Reach groups.