LOGGERHEADS PARISH COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Approved by Council: November 2022
Date of Review: May 2026

1. Purpose

1.1 Loggerheads Parish Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment and this Policy demonstrates that it will seek to ensure that every member of the public has equal access to its employment and development opportunities, to its services and to all its activities.

1.2 The Policy will act as a guide and frame of reference for the Council's employees so that they can implement its equal opportunity objectives. As a result, managers and employees will know what their responsibilities are and also those too will be treated fairly.

1.3 The Policy will help the Council to meet its legal and moral responsibilities to be fair, and members of the public will, through publicity of this Policy, have confidence in the Council's objectives in terms of both employment and service provisions.

2. Objectives

2.1 This Policy is designed to ensure that equal opportunities exist in all Council activities, defined as follows:-

2.1.1 Employment

To ensure that no member of the public suffers discrimination and that everyone has equal access to employment within the Council.

2.1.2 Services

To ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made available to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination.

2.1.3 Contracts

To ensure that, within the limits of the law, all individuals, companies or organisations undertaking work, or providing goods or services for the Council do not follow discriminatory practices. Service Sections involved in drawing up specifications for competitive tendering should take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged groups in service provision and ensure that, where the Council is already offering services to meet such needs, they are included in the specifications.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Loggerheads Parish Council is committed to a Policy of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment. It aims to ensure that in its recruitment, employment, business practice and service delivery, no employee or member of the public will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of:-

a. Gender
b. Gender Reassignment
c. Marital status or being in civil partnership
d. Domestic circumstances
e. Race
f. Nationality
g. Ethnic Origin
h. Colour
i. Religion or belief
j. Creed
k. Politics
l. Age
m. Disability
n. Illness
o. Pregnancy
p. Maternity or paternity
q. Sexual orientation
r. Social background
s. Or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements without justifiable cause

4. Responsibilities

4.1 To ensure that Equal Opportunities Policies are developed, implemented, effective, monitored and updated. The Council has delegated overall responsibility to the Parish Clerk.

4.2 The Parish Clerk will have specific responsibility for Equal Opportunities Policies as they relate to employment and will have responsibility for ensuring that these Policies are implemented within the Parish Council.

4.3 The Parish Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that monitoring takes place with regard to applications for employment and employment trends within the Council (e.g. promotion, re-grading and training) and for organising any equal opportunities training.

4.4 The Parish Clerk will be responsible for developing Equal Opportunities Policies with regard to service delivery and for reviewing them on a regular basis and will also be responsible for ensuring the monitoring of service provision.

4.5 Employees have responsibilities to ensure that:-

4.5.1 They understand and comply with the letter and spirit of any such Policy and actively participate in measures introduced by the Council to ensure that there is equality of opportunities and non-discrimination.

4.5.2 They do not discriminate as a decision-maker, or encourage others to discriminate, in matters of recruitment and selection, promotion and training and service provision.

4.5.3 Council services are provided to members of the public fairly and equitably.

4.5.4 They report to management any discriminatory practices.

4.5.5 They support the proper investigation of complaints.

5. Employment

5.1 Good employment practices are essential to ensure the elimination of discrimination, not only as they relate to the employment of employees, but also to the way those employees deliver services.

5.2 The Council requires that:-

a. Unless there is a valid reason for not doing so, all recruitment advertisements will be publicly advertised in media readily available to everybody, and are circulated to job centres. All advertisements will make it clear that the Council is an "Equal Opportunities Employer".

b. In terms of the skills, knowledge and experience required for job performance, no criteria will be classed as "essential" unless this can be justified. Specifications will be produced for all vacancies.

c. All vacant posts will be processed under the Council's agreed recruitment procedures.

d. No member or employee uses their position and influence to ensure that relatives, friends or colleagues are given jobs. The Council may treat any such action as a disciplinary matter.

e. Any practical or psychometric tests used in the selection process are justifiable and would not lead to indirect discrimination.

f. All employees involved in the recruitment and selection process are competent and able to perform the task and should receive training in the provisions of appropriate legislation and non-discriminatory selection techniques.

6. Services and Facilities

6.1 The Council recognises its duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010 as the provider of services and facilities and as far as reasonably possible will ensure that there is:-

a. Equality in the allocation of resources.

b. Equality of access to services and facilities.

c. Equality of treatment in service delivery.

d. Equality of use of services and facilities.

6.2 While services will be delivered to individuals, the Council will ensure that the design of those services will be responsive to the needs of particular groups within society.

6.3 Each Service Section should review equal opportunities issues and best practice on an annual basis and produce a report for the Parish Clerk.

7. Communication and Information

7.1 This policy must be made available to members of the public on request and employees should be proactive in making it available.

7.2 All employees must be made aware of the contents of this Policy and any other Policy which affects their area of work.

7.3 Any information produced should be clear, understandable and in non-offensive language. Information should also show positive images of all groups which include for example women, ethnic minorities and disabled people. Where possible, information will also be translated into other languages, British Sign Language, audio tapes or Braille, on request.

8. Training, Development and Positive Action

8.1 The Council recognises that training and development are crucial to ensure that employees have the skills, knowledge and appropriate behaviour to implement its Equal Opportunities Policies.

8.2 General guidance will be issued to employees to increase awareness of how discrimination operates at both individual and institutional levels and to ensure awareness of the Council's moral and legal obligations and practices and procedures.

8.3 In terms of employment, managers will be given training in recruitment and selection, discipline and grievance, so that they are able to interview effectively and objectively and deal with disciplinary and grievance issues such as harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

8.4 All employees will have equal access to training (subject to the availability of resources), career development and promotion opportunities. All reasonable effort will be made, as allowed under all relevant legislation, to equip people from disadvantaged groups with the necessary skills to enable them to compete effectively for jobs within the Council. Positive action will also be taken to retain and/or redeploy existing employees who become disabled.

9. Complaints

9.1 Employees who feel they are the victims of discrimination through, for example:-

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Victimisation

- Harassment

May make a complaint under the Council's grievance procedure.

9.2 Members of the public who feel that they have suffered from discrimination should make a complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

9.3 The Council requires that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and will not accept any form of discrimination. It will take seriously any complaints made by either employees or members of the public and will thoroughly investigate these complaints. If complaints are substantiated, appropriate action will be taken in respect of employees and this may include disciplinary action.

10. Monitoring

10.1 The Council will ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policies are formally monitored through the performance review process so that the success of the Council's aims and objectives can be measured and continual improvements made. The results of monitoring will be made publicly available, through an annual report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

10.2 The Parish Clerk will monitor all applications for employment and employment trends within the Council to Ensure compliance with this Policy.

We will:-

- Develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity
- Achieve, wherever possible, a membership, committee membership and workforce that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate and is representative of all sections of society
- Ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their employment with Loggerheads Parish Council
- Make it clear that intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action
- Ensure that all our services are provided in a way which promotes awareness of the rights and needs of the people who face discrimination and enables all people to have access to them
- Encourage the development of skills and knowledge through training
- Ensure that premises used in relation to our work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community
- Challenge any discrimination or oppressive behaviour from and towards any members, volunteers, clients or agencies we work with
- Work in a way that recognises peoples' individual needs
- Regularly evaluate this policy and seek feedback from those who are affected by it