

# **EAST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

East Bergholt Parish Council is committed to ensuring that at all times equality and diversity is reflected in everything it does including policy and decision making, employment, service delivery and working with others and that no-one is disadvantaged by the Council's actions.

Members of the Council, employees, partners, volunteers, residents and customers will be treated fairly and equally and no groups or individuals will be discriminated against on the grounds which are identified as protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

2. East Bergholt Parish Council opposes and will seek to avoid all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.

### **The Protected Characteristics**

It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy
- Maternity and paternity leave
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Discrimination at end of employment, i.e refusing to give a reference due to a reason that comes under the protected characteristics.

### **3. Public Sector Equality Duty**

Pursuant to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council, in the exercise of its duties will take into account:

- The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- To foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
- To seek to influence partner organisations in a collective commitment to equality of opportunity;

- To encourage voluntary organisations to provide evidence of their commitment to equality in terms of their employment policies and delivery of their services, as a criterion in determining the award of grant aid from the Council;
- To ensure that the Council has policies that result in services sensitive to the needs of all sections of the community;
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policy and practice on a regular basis;
- To develop a well-defined complaints procedure for dealing with alleged contraventions.

#### Types of unlawful discrimination

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

#### **4. Policy and decision-making**

The Council will ensure that it gives due consideration to the equality implications of its policies and of the decisions it makes. In reviewing its policies it will have regard to the requirements of this policy.

#### **5. Employment**

The Council will provide a non-discriminatory working environment where discrimination, harassment or bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees will be treated fairly and equally and may submit a formal grievance if they do not regard those standards as being upheld. Selection for employment, promotion, training (including diversity training), remuneration or any other benefit will be based solely on objective and job-related requirements. Reasonable workplace adjustments will be made to prevent employees or job applicants with a disability from being placed at a disadvantage compared to people without such disability.

East Bergholt Parish Council will treat any unacceptable behaviour seriously, including challenging any discrimination or oppressive behaviour towards our employees, councillors or volunteers by members of the public;

## **6. Service Delivery and working with others**

The Council provides services to the community directly often via contractors and also in partnership with other organisations. Publicly accessible information will be provided about the services available and how these are provided and accessed. When working for the Council, contractors will be required to adhere to the equality and diversity requirements of this policy. The Council will promote equality of opportunity and value diversity when working with its partners.

The Council will also ensure that the premises used for council meetings and events are accessible for all members of the community as well as ensuring accessibility of all fixed assets and facilities.

Every employee is required to assist the Council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

## **7. Implementation**

This policy underpins all decisions taken by the Council and all actions taken on its behalf by Members and employees and all other associated individuals who are subject to Council policies and procedures.

***AGREED AND ADOPTED BY EAST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL: June 2023***

***NEXT REVIEW: June 2024***