



LEGAL POSITION

On 5 April 2011, the public sector equality duty came into force, created by the Equality Act [2010]. The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day to day business of public authorities. The equality duty covers nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- ethnic origin
- nationality

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to promote equal opportunities and equality to all who engage with the parish council, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). The council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The council is committed to providing and promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity in the community. The council aims to create or promote a culture that respects and values each other’s differences and which promotes dignity, equality and diversity.

Being subject to the duty, Binfield Parish Council must have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. The Act helpfully explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

SCOPE

- All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff,
- All contractors and volunteers
- All residents of the parish
- All users of parish facilities, equipment and open spaces

Reviewed: December 2023

Adopted: 09 January 2024

Next Review Date: January 2025



OUR COMMITMENT

Every person in contact with the council is entitled to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity. Every effort will be made to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation on any grounds.

Every effort will be made to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole. Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

In all areas of council work it will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between them.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the council's Grievance procedure. Residents, users and others affected by this policy can raise concerns via the Complaints Policy and Procedure

Any personal or other data gathered will only be retained and used in accordance with the consent given and for the purpose for which it was given in line with the following policies:-

- Information and Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention, Transfer and Disposal Policy
- ICO Model publication scheme

The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Uses of Policy – To encourage right treatment of all in contact with the Council. To promote inclusion and accessibility to all in using and accessing parish council equipment, land, facilities and activities. Induction of staff and Members, decisions relating to Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Promotion, Remuneration, Retirement, should be cross-referenced to the Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Health and Safety Policy.