



EQUALITIES POLICY

1. STONE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

The Town Council recognises and acknowledges that levels of discrimination and inequality continue to exist in society. In seeking to redress these inequalities, the Town Council is committed to civil liberties and human rights.

The Council welcomes and celebrates diversity, accepting that the majority view is not always right and will strive to build equality of opportunity into the work of the Council.

The Council will develop a shared understanding of the essence of equality, which is to value and treat all human beings humanely, with respect and dignity.

The Council is committed to ensuring that all service users have equal and independent access to Council services and to creating an environment that is accessible to all.

The Council will encourage user groups and local residents to participate in the development and shaping of services.

The Council, through its policies, services, employment contracting and funding practices will ensure that no service user, employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, colour, impairment, marital status, lifestyle, culture, nationality, race, gender or sexuality, or on the grounds of economic or social status, or is disadvantaged by condition or requirements which cannot be shown as justifiable.

The Council will take all possible steps to eliminate any unfair and unlawful discrimination and take positive action to redress and remedy the effects of past discrimination on these groups and individuals.

2. STRATEGIC APPROACH AND PRINCIPLES

The aim of the Council is for the ethos of equalities to be integrated into mainstream policy development and service delivery.

The Council has legal and moral obligations specified in Equal Opportunities legislation in the Equal Opportunities Act 2010, Sex Discrimination Acts, the 1970 Equal Pay Act, the Race Relations Acts of 1976 and 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Equality is inseparable from quality service provision. It represents good management practice.

The Council recognises that diverse groups and individuals within the community have a right to have their specific needs recognised and addressed with the resources available.

The Council expects each individual employee to promote the spirit of its Equality Policy. Each employee has a duty, both morally and legally, not to discriminate against other employees.

3. PRINCIPLES

Equality principles and practices are integral to policy development, decision-making and resource allocation.

Celebrating diversity by responding to the specific needs of diverse groups and individuals is a key element in the provision of quality services.

The Council recognises that disability is caused by a failure of society to meet the needs of disabled people.

The Council pledges to:

- Encourage mutual respect for all of our residents;
- Recognise and work with every diverse group;
- Give high quality inclusive services and facilities;
- Make sure our employment policies and practices are fair;
- Challenge harassment and discrimination.

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

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

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

Types of discrimination are shown on the attached appendix 1.

4. EQUALITIES OBJECTIVES

The Town Council’s overall objectives will be to:

- a) Ensure employment policies and practices are fair and equitable;
- b) Ensure equitable access to the Town Council;
- c) Develop and support an effective consultation and participation process to enable groups at risk of discrimination and disadvantage to influence the Council’s policies and practices;

- d) Integrate equalities into mainstream policy, planning and service delivery and monitor and evaluate progress.

5. EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The Town Council is committed to ensuring that:

- a) Job applicants or existing employees will receive no less favourable treatment on grounds of age, colour, impairment, marital status, nationality, lifestyle and culture, race, religion, gender or sexuality or be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable;
- b) All posts will be advertised and applications will be welcomed from under-represented groups;
- c) All individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their ability;
- d) Employees will be protected from harassment and the Council will provide an effective response to deal with perpetrators and support from complainants;
- e) Recruitment and selection will be carried out based on equalities principles;
- f) Develop employment practices which reflect the responsibilities of parents and carers.

The Town Council is committed to ensuring that:

- g) Job applicants or existing employees will receive no less favourable treatment on grounds of protected characteristics;
- h) All posts will be advertised and applications will be welcomed from under-represented groups;
- i) All individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their ability;
- j) Employees will be protected from harassment and discrimination and the Council will provide an effective response to deal with perpetrators and support from complainants;
- k) Recruitment and selection will be carried out based on equalities principles;
- l) Develop employment practices which reflect the responsibilities of parents and carers.

6. SERVICE USERS ACCESS TO THE COUNCIL

The Council is committed to ensuring that all service users have equal and independent access to Council Services and to creating an environment which is accessible to all. The Council will:

- a) Collaborate closely with user groups and endeavour to eliminate policies and practices which inhibit equal access to council services;
- b) Whenever practical, monitor the use of services to identify the reasons for the lack of use and to take action to remedy the situation within the resources available;
- c) Ensure that Town Council buildings are accessible and seek effective solutions to the improvements of access in existing buildings working in partnership with service users;
- d) Ensure that its publications are non-discriminatory and present a positive image for all sections of the community, welcoming and encouraging diversity.

7. CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

The Council will encourage and support equality interest groups to express their views as service users on ways in which services can be adapted to meet specific needs.

8. INTEGRATING EQUALITY INTO POLICY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The Town Council will aim to produce a culture which enables equality to be put into action. The achievement of equality objectives will be integral to the plans of the Town Council.

Signed

Reviewed 2014