WILLINGALE PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Reviewed and readopted 9th May 2023
Reviewed 11th March 2025
Next Review March 2027

POLICY STATEMENT

Willingale Parish Council is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, and actively promotes equality of opportunity for everyone in its employment and service delivery.

The Parish Council agrees wholeheartedly with the principle of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination. The Council recognises it is the duty of all councillors and any employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community, at work, by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony in the provision of dedicated services to people on equitable terms.

This policy sets out how the Parish Council intends to meet its commitments by working alongside everyone, irrespective of their race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex or sexual orientation.

Willingale Parish Council is aware that the above list is not exhaustive and that there are other forms of discrimination that should not be tolerated.

BACKGROUND

The 2005 amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) places a duty on all public authorities to actively promote disability equality, and to produce a scheme showing how this will be achieved. The DDA defines a disabled person as 'someone with a physical or mental impairment, which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (Section 71) places a general obligation on local authorities to promote good race relations, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 amended and strengthened this by making it unlawful for public authorities to discriminate on racial grounds in carrying out any of their functions. The Act also places a general statutory duty on public authorities to promote racial equality, prevent racial discrimination.

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and to show how Gender Equality will be achieved. It also incorporates the duty to prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, belief or lack of belief.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, placements, contractors and elected and co-opted members of Willingale Parish Council. In this document they will all be referred to as "employees".
It is accepted that elected/co-opted members of the Parish Council are not employees, but they do share a responsibility with employees when representing the Parish Council or carrying out the functions of their elected office. Therefore, all aspects of this policy apply equally to elected/co-opted members.

POLICY GUIDELINES

The policy aims to achieve the five core values, which embrace and provide a framework within which all members, employees and trade unions can work:

Equality recognition that everyone is of equal value and should be respected according to individual needs and abilities.

Equity to be fair, reasonable and just in all council activities.

Empowerment helping individuals take on responsibility so that they can influence and participate in the decision making process.

Accessibility equal access for all in employment and service delivery.

Quality obtaining the highest standards in service delivery.

The aims of the policy are to:

- Work towards the elimination of discrimination, either direct or indirect, and all forms of harassment:
- Ensure that individuals are treated equally with respect to their specific needs and that there is consistency in the Parish Council's approach to working practices and conditions:
- Be a role model and influence others through good practice in service delivery and employment:
- Provide public information, as far as possible, in a way that best meets the needs of the person requesting it.
- Be accountable to its parishioners and encourage active participation of communities and groups in the development and application of the Parish Council's policies and practices:
- For employees to attend any relevant training programmes There is no single way that equal opportunities can be achieved. Progress will be through a diverse number of factors, which are outlined below. These factors are fundamental in the implementation and incorporation of the core values that embrace equal opportunities and its practice

    - CONSULTATION
    - PUBLICITY/COMMUNICATION
    - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
    - TRAINING
    - CONTRACTS
    - EMPLOYMENT MONITORING
    - SERVICE DELIVERY AND MONITORING
    - POLICY REVIEW

RESOURCES

Willingale Parish Council will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of its policies, which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities.

In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of any job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be taken where a disabled person is put in a detrimental position and such reasonable adjustments remove the detriment. The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

Willingale Parish Council recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause and is committed to ensuring that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes

(but is not limited to) unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment but could also form derogatory treatment and language based on racial grounds.

All employees are expected to comply with the policy and to ensure that such conduct does not occur.

THE LAW

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation and Codes of Practice, which include:

Equal Pay Act 1970
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
Equality Act 2010