



MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The objective of this policy is to promote equality of opportunity for all, and to ensure that no individual is discriminated against in the planning and delivery of any of our activities. Malvern Town Council (hereafter known as ‘the Council’) therefore aims to ensure that the values of equality, diversity and respect for all are embedded into everything that it does.
- 1.2. The Council encourages all employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors to give their best and treat each other and members of the public with respect.

2. Aims of this policy

- 2.1. This policy is intended to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to eliminating discrimination and encouraging and valuing diversity among employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors.
- 2.2. This policy provides a framework for providing equality, fairness and respect for all in delivering the Council’s services, events and activities, and in its governance and employment practices.
- 2.3. The Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to meeting them in full. The Council believes that a culture that embraces equality and values diversity will help to ensure that everyone feels involved and included in its plans, programmes and activities.
- 2.4. The Council aims to create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated by anyone towards anyone. This particularly applies in relation to the protected characteristics¹ named in the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.5. The Council aims to oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination, in the delivery of its services to the public, in its governance, employment conditions, recruitment practices, in training or other developmental opportunities.

¹ Age; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race, including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

3. The Council's commitments

- 3.1. The Council understands that for equality to be achieved this policy needs to be made understandable to, and embraced by employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors.
- 3.2. The Council's employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors all have a responsibility to ensure that their own language and actions are consistent with the spirit, as well as the contents of this policy.
- 3.3. Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Town Clerk.
- 3.4. The Council encourages equality and diversity in the delivery of its services and within its governance and employment practices and gender neutrality in its language use, as this is good and proper practice and helps to make the most of skills available and efficient delivery of Council services.
- 3.5. The Council aims to create a service-delivery and working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training employees and councillors about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include employees and councillors conducting themselves to help the Council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- 3.6. All Council employees should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors, customers, suppliers and members of the public.
- 3.7. The Council will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors, customers, suppliers and members of the public and any others in the course of the Council's work activities.
- 3.8. The Council will make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees and councillors, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.
- 3.9. The Council will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and to update them and will review the policy to take account of changes in the law. Policies will be reviewed at least once every four-year council term.

- 3.10. The Council will monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- 3.11. The Council recognises that an Equality and Diversity Policy alone is not enough to ensure that equality and diversity are central to everything that the Council does.
- 3.12. The Council will seek to create an environment in which diversity and the contributions of all employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors are recognised and valued in all that the Council does. In this way the Council hopes to provide an example of good equality practice and promote community cohesion within its community.
- 3.13. The Council recognises that many people are unfamiliar with the ways in which discrimination and disadvantage affect people's health, their well-being and quality of life. The Council will therefore support people to develop equalities awareness and understanding.
- 3.14. In conjunction with 3.9 above, the Council will ensure it is meeting the aims and the spirit of this policy by:
- discussing and reviewing how well the Council is implementing this policy, and adjusting its practices, developing a rolling action plan where necessary;
 - assessing any significant new or revised policies and procedures for their impact on equality;
 - embedding equality and diversity into its development plans;
 - ensuring its employment practices and procedures are consistent with the aims of this policy.
- 3.15. The Council is committed to:
- using accessible venues for events and meetings;
 - using plain English, and offering accessible communications, for example emails, letters, reports and publicity materials in suitable format as far as it is within its means to do so.

4. Misconduct

- 4.1. Acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct under the Council's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, or by way of the

Code of Conduct complaint as appropriate, in relevant circumstances and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice in the case of employees. The Council reserves the right to take steps to protect employees in cases of inappropriate behaviour to them, including by councillors and members of the public. In the case of councillor misconduct in this respect, complaints may be made to the District Council Monitoring Officer, under the Council's Code of Conduct.

- 4.2. Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- 4.3. Use of the Council's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

5. Review and action

- 5.1. The Council recognises that it is important to review this policy regularly to ensure that it reflects up to date equality legislation and best practice.
- 5.2. A review of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be carried out at least once every council term as a minimum and any necessary actions taken.