



STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY and DIVERSITY POLICY

Adopted: 18th June 2014

Reviewed: 29th May 2024

Next Review: May 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

Stratton 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 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 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.

Stratton 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

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces and consolidates all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, The Equal Pay Act 1970, and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Act aims to reform streamline and harmonise the current anti-discrimination legislation in order to support and promote equality.

The Equality Act 2010 covers 9 protected characteristics, making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (no longer required to be under medical supervision)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

Public Sector duty

On 5 April 2011, the public sector equality duty (the equality duty) came into force in England, Scotland and Wales. This duty replaces the existing race, disability, and gender equality duties. Those subject to the equality duty 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.

In addition to the 9 protected characteristics which are specified under the Equality Act 2010, we have made a commitment to also protect those who have caring responsibilities and Armed Forces and Ex -Armed Forces personnel.

We'll update our policy as and when necessary to meet new legislation and to follow codes of practice.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, placements, contractors, and elected members of Stratton Parish Council. In this document they will all be referred to as "employees".

It is accepted that elected members of the Council are not employees, but they do share a responsibility with employees when representing the Council or carrying out the functions of their elected office. Therefore, all aspects of this policy apply equally to elected members.

POLICY GUIDELINES

The policy aims to achieve the five core values, which embrace and provide a framework within which all members and employees 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.

Stratton 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, equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities.

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 affected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

Stratton 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.