

Westerham Town Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Westerham Town Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all aspects of its work. The Council aims to provide services and activities which are accessible to as many people as possible whilst recognising the diversity of local need.

The Town Council's leadership role includes working to tackle direct and indirect discrimination, to promote social inclusion and to actively encourage greater participation of under-represented groups. This also includes fostering good relationships between different individuals and groups within the parish.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council complies with current legislation and with its own commitment to promote diversity and equality and to tackle discrimination in all its activities and services.

Scope

This policy applies to Council decision-making, services and activities (including participation in the democratic processes) community consultation and engagement, procurement and employment. (This list is not exhaustive).

Legal Position

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

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

Through the Public Sector Equality Duty the Act also requires public bodies including parish councils to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conducted prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Policy

1 Westerham Town 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 the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities in the workplace and in the delivery of services and all other activities undertaken by the Council and will have due regard to the three aims of the public sector Equality Duty in all its decision making.

2 The Council will publish and promote its equality policy so that all councillors, employees, contractors, service users and members of the public are aware of its commitment to equality.

3 The Council will strive for equality of access to all its services and activities and will consider the equality policy when commissioning, designing, delivering or evaluating services.

4 The Council will challenge any discrimination it recognises within the Council and the wider community. It is the responsibility of each individual member of council and each individual member of staff to challenge discrimination when it is encountered.

5 The Council strives to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the council and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief.

6 The Council will create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

7 The Council will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, councillors, customers, visitors, the public and any others.

8 The Council will apply equality principles to work undertaken for the council by external contractors or with partners. Decisions to make grant funding and/or to support other organisations and events or work in partnership with any third party will be informed by the equality policy and practice of the organisations concerned.

9 The Council will acknowledge and, where possible, celebrate the variety of lifestyles and cultures within the parish and will support the development of communities and assist them in challenging discrimination.

10 The Council will raise awareness and build capacity within the council about the equality considerations by including equality and diversity training in its training plans for staff and members.

AH 24.02.20

To be reviewed Four Yearly

Reviewed by F&GP 02.03.20

Approved by Council 16th March 2020