

TOVIL PARISH COUNCIL

14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

REVIEWED: 20.4.2023

MINUTE REF: 183/22



1. POLICY

1.1 This policy is committed to promoting equality, diversity and providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. It is based on the principle that, as far as possible, individuals will be accorded the same equality of treatment, dignity and respect as all other individuals. In the implementation of this policy the Parish Council will;

- Ensure that individuals are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity/paternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other inappropriate distinction;
- Promote diversity and equality for all staff and Councillors, value the contributions made by all individuals.
- Promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive environment which affirms the equal and fair treatment of individuals in fulfilling their potential and does not afford unfair privilege to any individual or group;
- Challenge inequality and less favourable treatment wherever practicable;
- Promote an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds in relation to all individuals;
- Listen to, and consider, any solutions that could resolve issues of constraints to the service that the Parish Council provides.

1.2 To achieve these aims we need to ensure Tovil Parish Council has an open culture built on trust and mutual respect. We must value each other and treat each other with dignity, irrespective of protected characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010; these characteristics being age, disability, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. Different views and ideas will be encouraged.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The Parish Council has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed at least annually, to ensure it remains commensurate with the law and best practice. The Parish Clerk will oversee the implementation of this policy.

2.2 The Human Resources (HR) Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all equal opportunities policies and procedures and reporting on

the progress made in complying with equality legislation¹ to the Full Council. The Parish Clerk has overall delegated responsibility for coordinating the day to day operation of the policies and procedures.

3. RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

- 3.1 All members of staff remain personally responsible for ensuring that they act according to the law. The Parish Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all staff perform their duties in a lawful manner and that proper training and support is provided accordingly. In certain circumstances the Parish Council could be vicariously liable for actions carried out by staff purportedly in the Parish Council's name. Any member of staff may be personally liable if, whilst on Council business and despite guidance and training from the Council, they behave illegally.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- 4.1 All Parish Council policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they comply with this policy.
- 4.2 Annual monitoring and action plans will be developed and maintained as appropriate in relation to areas such as race, disability, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and work-life balance. Appropriate objectives will be set. Diversity and diversity awareness will be built into all planning and review.
- 4.3 All related policies, procedures and action plans will be implemented with the co-operation of and consultation with staff.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Clerk will monitor the implementation of the policy and all associated equality action plans, reporting annually to the Council.

6. ACTION PLANNING – STAFF ISSUES

- 6.1 Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed and updated in the light of emerging equalities legislation and guidance offered to all relevant staff on drafting job descriptions and person specifications. Annual data monitoring will be undertaken in relation to recruitment selection, appraisal, promotion, pay, grading, disciplinary cases, grievances and harassment in respect of protected characteristics.
- 6.2 The Parish Council undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- 6.3 Where a disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, the Parish Council encourages all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. The Parish Council requests that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the Council, usually the Clerk, and it guarantees that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. Unless the

¹ The Equality Act 2010

nature of the position allows the Parish Council to ask questions about the entire criminal record, only questions about unspent convictions, as defined in The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, will be asked.

- 6.4 The Parish Council ensures that all those involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and access the relevance and circumstances of offences. It also ensures that appropriate guidance and training has been received in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders.
- 6.5 At interview, or in a separate discussion, the Parish Council ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offence or other matter that might be relevant to the position sought which could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. The Parish Council undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- 6.6 **HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY BAR A PERSON FROM WORKING WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL** – employment will depend on the nature of the position and any offer will be conditional on a successful DBS check due to the proximity of the Parish Office in the YMCA Community Centre to the pre-school.
- 6.7 All employees and Councillors undertaking recruitment and selection will be trained in equality issues. Line Managers with responsibility for staff will receive training in equality and diversity matters, including the relevant law and their duties.

7. COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 Any member of staff may pursue a grievance relating to their employment via the Grievance Procedure. Staff who experience bullying or harassment should follow the procedure outlined in the Dignity at Work policy.
- 7.2 The Dignity at Work Policy is available from the website or the Parish Office.

8. EQUALITY AIMS

- 8.1 The Parish Council will promote a positive work life balance environment and develop family friendly policies.
- 8.2 The Parish Council will eliminate unlawful age discrimination and will review policies (including retirement) to ensure that they comply with age discrimination legislation. Monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.
- 8.3 The Parish Council will eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Policies will be reviewed to ensure that they comply fully with legislation.
- 8.4 Tovil Parish Council will work to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to enable any member of staff with a disability to enjoy a satisfactory and fulfilling work life balance.

- 8.5 The Parish Council will remove barriers to participation by disabled people, wherever possible. Staff who become disabled whilst working with the Council will be offered reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue working. Monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.
- 8.6 The Parish Council will encourage participation of minority ethnic groups in all activities. All policies will be reviewed and amended as appropriate in line with the Equality Act 2010, monitoring will be undertaken to identify any areas of inequality.
- 8.7 The Parish Council includes people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds and will respect the needs and requirements of people who adhere to a range of cultural and religious beliefs. This will include staff needs in relation to dietary requirements, and requests for leave and facilities for religious observance.

9. COMMUNICATION

Tovil Parish Council will take action to communicate this policy to all its employees, Councillors and volunteers. The policy will be available on the Parish Councils website www.tovilparishcouncil.co.uk and a hard copy will be kept in the policy file in the Parish Office.

10. TRAINING

Tovil Parish Council will continue to develop and implement programmes to ensure that all staff and Councillors have received appropriate training or briefing to enable them to fulfil their requirements under this policy. This will include training programmes to support, where appropriate, the range of policies that link with the overarching policy.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....