

Stanion Parish Council

Equal Opportunities Policy

Document Number: 008

Version Number: 1.0

Document Information

Master Document: The electronic version of this document is the master. Printed copies may not contain the latest changes and should not be relied upon. The master document is published on the Stanion Parish Council (SPC) website.

Purpose: The purpose of this Policy is to provide an understanding of the requirements of and duty placed on Members of the Parish Council and its employee(s) with regard to the Equality Act 2010.

Distribution: this Policy will be made available to all SPC councillors and SPC staff via the SPC website.

Implementation: This Policy will be implemented following consideration and adoption by the full Council.

Review: This document will be reviewed three years after its adoption, unless there are changes in legislation, or recommended best practice guidelines, in which case, it will be reviewed earlier, to comply with the statutory or recommended changes.

EIA Requirement: An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and no adverse impact has been identified.

Financial Implications: This Policy has no financial implications for SPC.

Policy Statement

This Policy is a formal, strategic level document, which provides a statement of intent explaining how SPC will comply with the legislation and any related directives of its subject matter. This is a mandatory document and does not allow for variations of practice. It is relevant to all members of SPC, staff employed by SPC. Non-compliance with this procedure may result in formal complaints being registered and/or disciplinary action.

This Policy provides a corporate framework designed to enable the Parish Council to meet its Public Sector Duty under the Equality Act 2010. It will be reviewed by a nominated councillor every three years unless there are changes in the legislation, directives, or

recommended best practice guidelines that warrant earlier review and amendment. All amendments require the agreement of the full council and for agreement to be formally recorded.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this Policy.

Duty to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment

Public sector organisations have a legal duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. Due regard comprises proportionality and relevance.

The EIA Tool

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to ensure that we don't unwittingly exclude anybody from accessing the services we provide. Undertaking an EIA involves assessing the likely effects of our policies on people according to their 'protected characteristics'.

These are:

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

An EIA should be applied to a Policy, Strategy, Plan, Function, Project, Service and Event. EIAs help to identify any inequalities in the provision of services, employment, or procedural practices, and minimise the risk of exposure to claims of discrimination.

Principles

All Councillors, and staff are required to comply with this policy in its entirety.

Introduction

Stanion Parish Council is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity in the Community.

The Parish Council will endeavour to ensure that working practices and policies enable development of a culture that respects and values each other's differences and which promotes dignity, equality and diversity.

Aim

The aim of this Policy is to provide a framework to assist councillors and employee(s) of the Parish Council in developing lawful, sound and effective working practices and policies, which promote equality and diversity across the span of work and services delivered by the Parish Council.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Members of the Parish Council, its employee(s), contractors, service providers and volunteers.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people may be affected by the activities, policies and the services provided by the public body.

The Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Duty on the Parish Council to work to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic, and persons who do not share that protected characteristic. And, to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic.

No individual will be discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to the following characteristics, which are known as “protected characteristics” under the Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Marital status and civil partnerships
- Race
- Religion and beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic origin
- Nationality

Equality Impact Assessment

The Parish Council will ensure that all policies will have regard to the compliance requirements of the Act, and that all policies under development will be subject to an EIA and, that if modifications are required to be made to the draft policy or procedure, such modifications are made before the final draft document is placed before the Council for its consideration.

Recruitment, Promotion, Training & Remuneration

Selection for employment, promotion, training and remuneration, or any other benefit, will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

Employee(s) of Stanion Parish Council will be supported in developing their full potential and their talents will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Parish Council.

Equality in the Workplace

Stanion Parish Council supports the principles and practices of the Equality Act 2010 and recognises that it is the duty of all members of the Parish Council and its employee(s) to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work, by respecting and adhering to the principles of equality for all.

The Parish Council will actively promote equality throughout the Parish Council, through the application of its employment policies and practices, designed to ensure that all individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experience and abilities.

Stanion Parish Council is committed to:

- Promoting equal opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a harmonious environment in which all people are respected and valued
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, and
- Fulfilling its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010

The Parish Council will ensure that all Members of the Council and its employee(s) are made aware of their rights and responsibilities towards each other and the local community regarding equal opportunities. All Members of the Parish Council and its employee(s) will receive training in Equal Opportunities Awareness.

Any form of unacceptable behaviour by a Member of the Parish Council or its employee(s) will be treated seriously, and such behaviour, if proven, will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Complaints or Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures, Code of Conduct for Councillors, or depending on the nature of the complaint, may also be reported as a criminal matter.

Acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct under the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures and particularly serious complaints may amount to gross misconduct.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct and a criminal matter, such as in allegations of sexual assault. 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.

The use of the Parish Council's grievance and Disciplinary Procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an Employment Tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

In the Performance of Duties

Stanion Parish Council reserves the right to take any necessary reasonable steps to protect Members of the Parish Council and its employee(s) from unreasonable and distressing behaviour. It will treat seriously any form of intimidation, harassment or bullying of Members of the Parish Council or its employee(s) by any member of the public and will take such action as deemed necessary and appropriate to deal with the problem and to prevent further occurrences.

Delivering our Services

The Parish Council will endeavour to ensure that no member of the public is disadvantaged or treated less favourably than others in terms of the services that we deliver.

The Parish Council will strive to ensure that all services provided by the Parish Council are made accessible to all individuals or groups equally and without discrimination. And, all service users will be treated with respect.

If a practice, policy or procedure is found to adversely impact on, or make access to a service impossible or unreasonably difficult, the Parish Council will take steps as are reasonable in the circumstances, to change or modify the practice, policy or procedure, to reduce or eliminate the adverse impact and restore equity in the delivery of our services.

The Parish Council recognises the importance of communication in promoting our services, and will, on request, make its (hard copy) printed information available in large print, to ensure that any visually-impaired individual is not disadvantaged.

Monitoring

This Policy will be routinely monitored to assess how the aims and commitments are working in practice, and the findings reported to the Parish Council to enable consideration of modifications or action needed, to address issues identified through the monitoring process.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years by a nominated Member of the Parish Council.

Signed: Signed on original Date: 11.3.19