

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. **POLICY STATEMENT** Dereham Town Council is committed to pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff and in every aspect of Council activity and recognises its statutory duties under legislation in terms of service provision and employment and is committed to meet them by complying with this policy.

2. **LEGAL POSITION** It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds: • age • disability • gender reassignment • marriage and civil partnership • pregnancy and maternity • race • religion or belief • sex • sexual orientation Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”. It is unfair to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:- • political views • Family or caring responsibilities • Chronic illness or HIV/ Aids status • Socio Economic Status.

3. **PURPOSE** The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken) and an equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to Dereham Town Council facilities. The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 or the identified additional unfair grounds. The Equality Policy underpins all policies, procedures and strategies, therefore providing a strong foundation for equality in the Council and the services it provides.

4. **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT** All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council. Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the council. The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole. Breaches of the Parish Council’s equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the council’s Grievance procedure. Prospective candidates wishing to raise a complaint should do so, in writing, to the Clerk within 15 working days, at the latest, of the alleged incident. An investigation will then be conducted by the Clerk, or an independent person appointed for the purpose, who will report to the Council.

5. **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY.** Dereham Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity in the provision of services and access to its facilities. The Council will deliver services that are relevant, of the highest quality possible and accessible. Training in relation to the roles and responsibilities of employees and the Council in delivering services will be sought and undertaken.

6. **COMMITMENT** The Parish Council will comply with all current and future legislation referring to equality and diversity and will aim to promote good practice in all aspects of the organisation. Dereham Town Council will publicise this policy on its website and will highlight it in recruitment and relevant official documentation.

