

Hurworth Parish Council Procedure P29

Equality Policy 2013 December 2014

- **Introduction**

The Equality Act 2010 applies to local authorities, which includes Hurworth Parish Council. The policy statement, to which the council must abide states:-

‘An authority to which this section applies must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage’.

This guidance helps people to put the Council’s commitment on equality into practice.

A common sense approach should be taken at all times. The Council advises

Elected Members (including co-opted councillors) and employees to assess a situation and act in the most appropriate way to help individuals and groups to access the Council’s services.

The **Equality Policy** embraces many factions, including:-

- Parish Councillors, elected or co-opted.
- The Council employees
- Subcontractors and contractors
- The electorate within the Parish

2.0 The Council reserves the right not to engage with people, groups and political parties whose views and actions conflict with this or related equality policies.

3.0 Councillors' Responsibility

3.1 Councillors are responsible for ensuring that they understand this policy and set a good example through their own behaviour.

3.2 Councillors should be proactive and leading by example through their own behaviour

4.0 Employees' Responsibility

4.1 All employees have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to ensure that their behaviour is in line with this policy (in terms of how they relate to other employees and deliver council services).

4.2 Employees should understand the council's policies and those that

relate to their own area of work, and carry them out in a non-discriminatory manner.

5.0 Definitions

5.1 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of sex (which may include change of sex), pregnancy, colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins when you provide goods, facilities or services to customers. Because of this, the Council must work to stop any direct

and/or indirect discrimination against members of the community, people who apply for jobs and employees.

5.2 It is also unlawful to discriminate, without justification, on grounds of

disability or to fail to make 'reasonable adjustments' to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services.

5.3 In terms of recruitment and selection or employment, it is also unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of sexual orientation or religion or belief, or because someone is married.

6.0 Direct Discrimination means treating one person less favourably than others without justifiable reasons due to any of the reasons covered by legislation. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman purely because she is pregnant.

7.0 Indirect Discrimination means applying a provision, criterion or practice that cannot be justified and which, in practice, prevents people from certain groups from gaining employment / receiving a service. An example of indirect race discrimination could be a recruitment exercise to fill a senior management post that is only communicated to a pool of internal senior and middle managers, most of whom are white.

8.0 Future Legislation

The Council must also comply with any legislation that is introduced in the future.

9.0 Harassment is unwanted conduct / attention that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to age, gender, race, disability,

religion or belief, nationality or any personal characteristic of an individual.

10.0 Possible Exceptions

Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and the

Employment Equality Regulations 2003 concerning religion, belief and sexual orientation, any job may be restricted to people of a particular gender, race, national or ethnic origin or sexuality if one of the characteristics of a post is a 'Genuine Occupational Requirement'