



## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Andover Town Council, its Members and Officer(s) to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (amended April 2021) and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies, representation and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs; the promotion of equality and diversity in relation to Andover Town Council.

## THE AIM

Andover Town Council aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity. We aim to remove barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realizing their potential and contributing fully to the community to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

Andover Town Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All Town Council Members, its Officer(s) and members of the Public will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. All decisions will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Andover Town Council recognises that supporting Equality is of primary importance. This policy will help all those who are Council Members or work for the Council to develop sound and effective policies that impact on the villages, town, community and surrounding areas.

Andover Town Council will challenge discrimination. It aims to provide equality and fairness to all in the community and expects all Members and Officers to be aware and understand the Equality Act 2010.

## THE DEFINITION OF EQUALITY

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

## THE DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions, which is beneficial not only for the individual but for Andover Town Council.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to direct Town Council Members, its Members and Officer(s) and all job applicants regarding recruitment. Where the Town Council services are provided by external contractors or third parties on the specification set by the Town Council, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to the Town Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, whilst providing services on behalf of the Town Council.



This policy applies to sub-contractors. The Town Council will monitor the performance of contractors and/or third parties and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviour. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party, these will be taken very seriously by the Town Council and raised in the strongest possible terms with the contractor or third party.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Andover Town Council is committed to ensuring that existing members of the Andover Town Council staff, job applicants, or workers are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination, with regard to nine of the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010 which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Gender Identification
- Sexual orientation

In addition, existing members of staff, job applicants or workers are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to: caring responsibilities, part-time employment, membership or non-membership of a trade union or spent convictions.

- The Town Council has an ethical and legal responsibility to celebrate and champion equality and diversity. The Town Council will work to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to all.
- All users of the Town Council's services will be treated with dignity, fairness and respect, regardless of age, disability, gender identification, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Andover Town Council will treat all people, regardless of their background, with dignity and respect – this includes, our people, those with whom we interact (e.g. service users and customers) and other stakeholders.
- Premises of the Town Council will not be purchased or leased that do not meet accessibility standards or cannot be adapted to do so. Our existing building has a clear exit plan so that it can be replaced with a more accessible premises within a reasonable time-frame. Further details in our Disability Policy.
- All our written and digital communications will follow our Digital Accessibility guidelines and communication accessibility standards and be available in alternative formats upon request.
- Any new and reviewed policies, programmes, decisions that will affect our people, service users



and or customers, will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment. To ensure that any negative impact on those with protected characteristics is mitigated wherever possible at all levels of the organisation and in all our activities.

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY COMMITMENTS

Andover Town Council is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
- Promoting a good and harmonious environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
- Fulfilling our legal obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy, **this policy** and associated policies.
- Taking lawful affirmative and positive action where appropriate.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Town Clerk has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. To implement this policy, he or she shall:

- Communicate the policy to Town Council Members, Officers, and Members of the Public
- Incorporate equal opportunities into general practices.
- Ensure that other persons or organisations will comply with the policy in their dealings with the Council.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Andover Town Council will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equality and diversity policy.

The effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy will be reviewed annually, and action taken as necessary.

In addition to our internal procedures, any person has the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.