

NEW WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Policy Statement

New Waltham Parish Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities and creating a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

The Council believes that everyone should be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect, and we aim to ensure that all individuals have equal access to employment, services, and opportunities, regardless of their race, gender, disability, age, religion, belief, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, or any other characteristic.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Equal Opportunities Policy is to establish and promote a framework for ensuring that equal treatment is provided to all employees, members of the public, and service users in accordance with current equality legislation. The policy will help prevent and address any form of discrimination or unfair treatment within the Parish Council's activities and operations.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and service users of New Waltham Parish Council. It covers all areas of the Parish Council's operations, including:

- Recruitment and employment
- Training and development
- Promotion and career progression
- Access to services and facilities
- Interaction with members of the public

4. Principles of Equal Opportunities

The key principles of the Equal Opportunities Policy are:

- **Non-Discrimination:** No one will be discriminated against on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion, belief, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, or any other characteristic.

- **Inclusive Environment:** We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all individuals are valued and treated with respect.
- **Fair Treatment:** Decisions relating to recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and service delivery will be made on the basis of merit, suitability, and need, without bias.

- **Accessibility:** The Council will take reasonable steps to ensure that services, employment, and facilities are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

5. Responsibilities

- **Parish Council Members and Staff:** All members and staff are responsible for promoting equal opportunities and treating everyone with respect. They must not engage in any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

- **Council Leadership:** The Parish Council leadership will ensure that this policy is implemented effectively and will support any necessary actions to resolve complaints or breaches of this policy.

6. Recruitment Opportunities

The Parish Council will ensure that:

- Job opportunities are advertised fairly (as and when relevant) and widely to encourage applications from a diverse range of candidates.

- Recruitment decisions are based on the skills, qualifications, and experience necessary for the role.

- All employees are given equal access to training, development, and career advancement opportunities.

- We will make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities to ensure they have equal opportunities within the workplace.

7. Harassment and Victimisation

New Waltham Parish Council will not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation in the workplace or in the provision of services. Harassment, which includes bullying or any unwelcome behaviour related to an individual's protected characteristics, will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

The Parish Council will regularly monitor its practices and procedures to ensure compliance with this Equal Opportunities Policy. Employees, volunteers, or service users who feel they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against are encouraged to raise concerns with a

designated individual or through the formal complaints procedure. All complaints will be treated confidentially and investigated thoroughly.

9. Review of Policy

This Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and to make any necessary updates in line with changes to relevant laws and regulations. Any amendments to the policy will be communicated to all staff, members, and relevant stakeholders.

10. Conclusion

New Waltham Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its operations. We will continue to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to contribute, develop, and succeed in a supportive and non-discriminatory environment.

To be reviewed date: