



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

*Adopted 11 January 2024 – Full Council – Minute 2029*

### **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 Folkestone Town Council (FTC) is committed to providing the highest quality of service provision and recognises that the implementation of an effective Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is an integral part of such an approach.
- 1.2 FTC will treat all its employees, partners and customers with dignity and respect, free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment, whilst recognising, respecting and valuing differences.
- 1.3 FTC understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and is fully committed to its duty, imposed by section 149 of the 2010 Act.
- 1.4 FTC is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination, on the grounds of the protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.5 FTC is an Equal Opportunities employer and provider of services.
- 1.6 FTC is committed to the promotion, maintenance, and protection of the rights of individuals and to promoting human rights and freedom, based on the principles of dignity and respect.
- 1.7 All FTC policies will be designed to support the principles and practices of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion, to foster a fully integrated community and maintain harmony.

### **2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1. The Council, as a corporate body, has responsibility as an employer, a service provider, and a public authority.
- 2.2. Both Councillors and employees as individuals also have responsibilities, as well as rights.

### **3.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 The Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 3.2 The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our work.

- 3.3 All employees, volunteers and Councillors should ensure that they take the time to read and understand the policy. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Clerk.
- 3.4 Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Clerk.

#### **4.0 LEGAL POSITION**

- 4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- a) age
- b) disability
- c) gender reassignment
- d) marriage and civil partnership
- e) pregnancy and maternity
- f) race
- g) religion or belief
- h) sex
- i) sexual orientation

These are known as “protected characteristics” in section 4 of the 2010 Act.

- 4.2 Section 149 of the 2010 Act imposes a Duty on Town Councils to consider:

- a) The need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) To foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

#### **5.0 THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER**

- 5.1 The Purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees or prospective employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).
- 5.2 FTC oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, victimisation, or harassment on the grounds of any protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.3 All employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed contract, agency workers or temporary, and all Councillors, will be treated fairly and equitably.
- 5.4 Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability.

- 5.5 All employees and Councillors will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential; talents and resources will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.
- 5.6 Everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- 5.7 FTC will encourage and develop all employees and Councillors to support and carry out the requirements of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- 5.8 Breaches of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy by employees will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- 5.9 Breaches of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy by Councillors will be considered under the Code of Conduct and referred to the Monitoring Officer.
- 5.10 The commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion 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.
- 5.11 This policy is fully supported by all Members of the Council and adopts the model contract as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks).

## **6.0 THE COUNCIL AS A DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERER**

- 6.1 FTC's clients have the right to expect fair and non-discriminatory treatment whilst participating in or receiving any of the Council's services or activities.
- 6.2 FTC's clients should feel valued and have equal access to services irrespective of gender, race, age, or any other factor.
- 6.3 All aspects of the Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy impact on the way it directly delivers services to and for its residents.
- 6.4 The above requirements apply to all services and activities of FTC.

## **7.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

- 7.1 The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

———— **POLICY ENDS HERE** ————