

# BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL (BPC)



## Equality and Diversity Policy

This Policy was reviewed by the Full Council at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

### **1. Introduction**

This Policy expresses our commitment to ensuring that we meet our equality obligations to users of our services and facilities. It links to other elements of the strategic framework, including our commitment to meeting the requirements of the various levels of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

### **2. Statement of Policy**

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, that they have equal opportunities to access appropriate services and facilities and have the right to achieve equal outcomes. We want our resources and services to be available and accessible to everyone, irrespective of individual background or needs. These aims are summed up in our equality policy statement: “Bredgar Parish Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity. The Council will aim to provide opportunities that meet the diverse needs of different people and groups of people by ensuring that services and facilities are accessible to all. Everyone will be treated fairly and with respect.” The Council also appreciates that, as a public authority for the purpose of the Human Rights Act 1998, it has statutory responsibilities and will conduct itself as far as possible and at all times in accordance with the spirit of the Act, respecting the appropriate fundamental human rights of all employees, customers and members of the public.

### **3. The Equality Act 2010**

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment and in service delivery. The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and in some cases extends existing equality and anti-discriminatory legislation. The Act protects people from being treated less favourably because they have a ‘protected characteristic.’ Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have. Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a particular protected characteristic. Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular protected characteristic. The Equality Act 2010 contains a public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty has three aims, requiring public bodies, including the Council, to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act. The

public sector Equality Duty means that we should consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work, in developing policy, and in designing and delivering services.

#### **4. Equal Opportunities in Employment**

The Council does not currently have any employees. The Council is committed to achieving equality and fairness and in the workplace and in the event of anyone being employed by the Council, it will ensure that all of its employment policies and procedures are fair and non-discriminatory. As an employer, we will ensure that all employees are recruited and promoted on the basis of ability and other objective criteria.

#### **5. Equal Opportunities in Service Provision**

The Council believes that all those who use our facilities or benefit from the services we provide have a right to expect and receive high quality services that are appropriate and meet their needs. In order to ensure that services are independently accessible, the Council will work to tackle and eliminate whatever barriers may exist. As a service provider, we will (i) engage with and involve communities and individuals in the design and development of policies and services; (ii) ensure our facilities to which the public want or need access are as accessible as possible by making reasonable adjustments; (iii) make information on services available in a variety of formats; (iv) develop and support community-based projects and events that will help promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity within the Parish.

#### **6. Suppliers and Contractors**

We expect all of our suppliers and contractors to comply with their statutory duties under existing law including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Council will encourage contractors and potential contractors to demonstrate that they provide equality of opportunity in their employment practices.

#### **7. Responsibilities for Implementation of the Policy**

The effective delivery of the Council's equalities commitments, as outlined in this Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of everyone connected with the Council. However, specific responsibilities lie with the different roles within the Council. Our Elected Members will provide leadership by promoting equality and diversity through their approval of this policy, designed to ensure equality and fairness.

#### **8. Bullying and Harassment**

Everyone who either works with the Council or represents the Council as a member is entitled to a fair and reasonable working environment, free from bullying and harassment. Equally, members have a responsibility to ensure that their own behaviour and the Council's working environment is free of harassment and bullying and that they are sensitive to other people's perceptions of their behaviour. Everyone should ensure that they do not harass, bully or intimidate their colleagues on any grounds, which includes harassment in respect of a person's gender, race, disability, religion, sexuality, age, or marital status; and discourage such behaviour in others.

#### **9. Monitoring and Review**

The Council will review this policy from time to time.

## **10. Reporting Mechanism -Complaints against the Council**

The Council is committed to providing efficient and effective services for the benefit of everyone. We are happy to receive compliments if you like what we have done or to listen to comments or suggestions about a service. However, if you feel you have been unfairly treated, or have experienced difficulty in accessing or using the services and facilities we provide, then let us know. We are always pleased to receive feedback, which helps us to improve our services to the community.

Last reviewed - April 2015, February 2020.