



Warsop Parish Council

Creating a Parish where People can Succeed

Warsop Parish Council Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy

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Introduction

Welcome to The Parish Council of Warsop's Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy.

1. Our Commitment

1.1 Equality Statement

The Parish Council of Warsop is committed to implementing and upholding equality and diversity in everything it does. The Council strives to be an effective service provider, community leader and corporate body and, in doing so, recognises the importance of meeting the needs of the diverse mix of the community represented amongst its residents, service users and workforce.

In meeting those needs the Council will develop and harness a safe and sustainable community inclusive to all.

The Parish Council of Warsop is committed to eliminating inequality on the basis of the protected characteristics and recognises that there are equality differences in the life chances available to people within the community with the services they gain access to and the job and careers they are able to pursue.

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated according to their diverse needs, this does not mean treating everyone the same, but recognising the difference in life situations and experiences and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all people taking into account their individual needs.

1.2 Our Equality Journey

To affirm its commitment and to ensure continuous improvement, the Council uses the Equality Framework for Local Government and the improvement framework against which to assess its performance and development in equality and diversity.

In the future the Council will measure its ongoing progress against the Local Government Association Equality Framework for Local Government 2012 edition which concentrates on the following areas of performance:

- Knowing you community
- Leadership. Partnership and organisational commitment;
- Community engagement and satisfaction;
- Responsive services and customer care;
- A skilled and committed workforce.

The Council continues to work to improve services and meet the needs of its community especially those individuals and groups who are representative of the Protected Characteristics.

2. Equality of Opportunity

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Parish to the promotion of equality of opportunity to all irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief
- Race (including colour, nationality or ethnics origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Maternity

We encourage a diverse workforce and aim to provide a working environment where all staff at all levels are valued and respected and where discrimination, bullying, promotion of negative stereotyping and harassment are not tolerated.

Assessment for recruitment, selection, appraisal, training and career progression purposes is based both on the individual's ability and suitability for the work. We are committed to providing all staff with opportunities to maximise their skills and achieve their potential, offering flexible working arrangements wherever possible. Our recruitment policy will be reviewed should the statistics collected highlight areas for improvement.

Our key polies in relation to equality are available to staff by requesting copies from their manager, these policies are:

- Flexible working
- Flexible retirement
- Grievance
- Bully & Harassment (revised version to be circulated)
- Learning and Development Policy

The Authority has statutory duties placed upon it that require it to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. All employees are expected to assist the organisation in the meeting these obligations by having due regard for the need to promote good relations between individuals from different groups and work towards achieving equality of opportunity for all.

3. Our Vision, Values and Priorities.

3.1 Our Vision

The vision of The Parish Council of Warsop is to 'create a more positive image of the Warsop Parish which supports people, businesses and investment in the area and improve confidence, pride and dignity so that everyone can enjoy a good quality of life in their neighbourhoods'.

3.2 Our Values

Our vision defines our priorities and what we are trying to achieve. How we will do this is defined by our three broad values of Quality, Respect and Openness:

Quality

- Excellent quality and value for money services that meet the needs of all our community and are accessible to everyone.
- Develop new opportunities for partnership working to improve, expand and build upon the services we provide.
- Manage and help support employees; members, partners and communities through change, efficiently and effectively.

Respect

- Consult listen to and understand the views of our community, partners and employees.
- Meet the needs of our community, partners and employees through consideration and empathy for their emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Encourage good employment practice, effective employee development and a positive and enthusiastic workforce.

Openness

- Strive to be open, honest, transparent and accountable.
- Promote a culture of effective and consistent communication with and between employees, members, partners and community.

3.3 Our Priorities

The Corporate Priorities are reviewed each year to ensure they remain relevant to current circumstances and opportunities, and are informed by local people's views and evidence about local needs.

To achieve the Council's vision, we have made a commitment to focus on addressing the following five priorities:

- **Regeneration and Employment** - Revitalising our district, town centres and neighbourhoods, encouraging inward investment and creating a climate for job creation and growth.

- **Reducing crime and disorder** – Making the Parish a safer place to live, work and visit by working with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.
- **Vulnerable people** – Supporting the most vulnerable people in the Parish to help them live independent and fulfilled lives.
- **Housing** – Ensuring there is an adequate supply of good quality, well managed housing which is accessible and affordable to those who need it.
- **Protecting the Environment** – delivering a local plan for the provision of housing, parks, green spaces and commercial and retail development and ensuring a high quality and sustainable environment.

The Council's commitment to address equality and diversity issues is expressed within the priority to support Vulnerable People.

Underpinning our values and everything that we do is our commitment to equality. As an employer, service provider, corporate body and community leader, we aim to treat everyone fairly and strive to achieve equality for our diverse mix of community.

3.4 The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 puts all of the equality laws into one place and sets our duty to give people from different groups, identified as Protected Characteristics, consistent rights and protection.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is made up of a General Equality duty which is supported by Specific Duties. The General Duty requires public authorities to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually, and
- Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

The information published must evidence that the parish has considered the following three aims of the duty and that due regard has been given to the need to:

- **To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**
- **To Advance Equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **To foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.**

4. Setting our Equality Objectives

The specific duty requires public bodies to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective which will help to further the three aims of the duty. This information must be published by 6th April 2012 and subsequent objectives to be published at least every four years.

Our Equality objectives for the Parish Council of Warsop are as follows:

- **To develop a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and whose staff feel valued and treated fairly.**
- **To carry out effective and meaningful consultation and engagement activities to better understand the needs of our diverse community and to build stronger relations with the community that will enable them to participate within council services and influence the decision made.**
- **To ensure that vulnerable people have access to the services and the support they need.**
- **To improve customer contact and access**
- **To help make Warsop a parish where visitors and residents from all backgrounds feel safe and secure.**

The Parish has aimed to set objectives that are stretching and focus on the bigger equality challenges facing the Parish that will have the greatest impact on promoting and improving the three aims of the duty.

In setting these objectives we have considered what evidence we have from both internal and external sources and what types of equality issues are raised by staff and customers. We have also identified how we will measure progress against these objectives.

5. Achieving Our Objectives

To achieve our objectives and embed a corporate approach to addressing equality and diversity issues a variety of activity is required to identify need, take action and measure the Council's performance. The following corporate initiatives are therefore undertaken in all service areas across the Council:

5.1 Framework for Local Government

The Council uses the Equality Framework for Local Government (formerly Equality standard for Local Government) to benchmark progress and ensure its continuous development. Since adopting the standard in 2004 the Council made significant progress and in 2007 was externally assessed as having achieved Level 3 of the standard which now equates to the 'Achieving' level of the Framework. This made the Council the first borough or district council in the country to be externally assessed as having achieved this level. The Council will continue to challenge itself against the framework to develop and improve.

5.2 Training

All Councillors and staff are provided with equality and diversity training as part of their personal development programme. Different training courses have been designed to meet the specific and individual need of officers in non-supervisory roles, managers and Councillors. Training is delivered through a number of different methods including: MEL (electronic learning), briefing notes, focus groups specialist external providers, lunchtime awareness sessions, extended learning sessions, extended leadership team meeting.

This training seeks to equip participants with the awareness, knowledge, skills and information necessary to manage and respond to equality and diversity issues experienced in the workplace. It also focuses on legislation and the Council's own policies and procedures for equality.

6. Resources and Responsibilities

The Council will provide adequate capacity and assign specific responsibilities to ensure that officers and Member are equipped with the skills necessary to effectively deliver and support the corporate equality objectives.

Every member of staff within the Council has the individual responsibility to lead by example and uphold the equality objectives. In addition, a number of individuals or groups have been given specific roles and responsibilities as follows:

6.1 Councillors

- Provide leadership and support for improving equality practice.
- Consider and apply equality in all work with the local community.
- Ensure that resources are made available to support the delivery of equality objectives.
- Ensure that the Council meets all its legal obligations according to current equality legislation.

6.2 The Clerk

- Provide leaderships and support for improving equality practice.
- Lead by example and challenge activity or behaviour that falls below expected standards or fails to uphold the corporate values and equality objectives.
- Ensure that the Council meets all its legal obligations according to current legislation under the Equality Act 2010.
- Work with the community and partners to develop a shared approach to equality.
- Provide effective communication and equality information.

6.3 Employees

- Develop an understanding and awareness of the corporate values and equality objectives.
- Uphold and promote the corporate values and equality objectives.
- Treat colleagues and service users with respect and according to their individual needs.
- Challenge activity or behaviour that is discriminatory, falls below expected standards or fails to uphold the corporate values and equality objectives.
- Report any hate crime or discriminatory and prejudicial activity or behaviour observed.
- Be receptive and open training.
- Share equality data, correspondence and good practice in team meetings.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed in every 4 year period and will demonstrate progress made towards the Equality Objectives. The policy will be reviewed if required to reflect any changes in legislation that will impact upon the Parish.