

NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAFT DIVERSITY & EQUALITY POLICY

Our Commitment to Diversity & Equality

North Norfolk District Council values diversity and believes that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We aim to promote equality of opportunity in our role as a service provider and policy maker, employer, purchaser of goods and services and elected leader in the local community.

In promoting equality of opportunity, we will challenge all forms of discrimination, whether on grounds of disability, gender, race, sexuality, age, marital status, religion, national origin or any other condition or requirement which may place a person or group at a disadvantage.

In order to demonstrate the Council has discharged its commitments, we have adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government as our framework. In so doing, the Council is committed to improve equality practice at both corporate and service levels.

Legal requirements

The Council recognises its statutory obligations and will comply with all relevant equality based legislation and codes of practice, including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (and Amendment Regulations 2003)
- Race Relations Act 1976 (and Amendment Act 2000 and Regulations 2003)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (including the Gender (Reassignment) Regulations 1999)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Religion or Belief Regulations 2003
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Various Equal Opportunities Directives and Amendments to UK legislation as they come on stream.

Specific Diversity & Equality Aims

As a provider of services we will:

- Continuously improve services to ensure that they are accessible and provided fairly to everyone in our community.
- Take action to identify groups in North Norfolk whose needs and requirements in accessing our services are less well met by Council services than other groups, through needs/requirements and impact assessments.
- Integrate equality considerations into everything we do, through the development of service specific equality action plans and targets.
- Monitor the effectiveness of our services in promoting equality of opportunity and address any particular obstacles or difficulties identified.
- Ensure that our complaints procedure is accessible to all service users, and that complaints about unfairness and discrimination are treated in a way that does not promote fear of victimisation and/or re-creation.

As an employer, we will:

- Ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, sexuality, age, marital status, religion and national origin.
- Ensure that advertising and recruitment processes are accessible to all sections of society, as part of our commitment to developing a workforce that reflects the community we serve.
- Ensure that objective job-related criteria apply to all of our employment policies and practices to ensure they are fair. Appointments and promotions to Council posts will be based on merit, qualification and experience.
- Create and maintain a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity and respect, and where the need to achieve a balance between work and personal/home responsibilities is recognised
- In recruitment of employees, seek to eliminate any assumptions, preferences or judgements that do not relate to the potential abilities of individuals to perform the required job. This principle will apply to every stage of the recruitment process.
- Ensure equality of opportunity for promotion and advancement. A vital element in this is ensuring equal access to training.
- Ensure that all employees understand and receive training as appropriate to promote and encourage equal opportunities.

APPENDIX B

- Monitor recruitment, promotion and training opportunities and take up, staff absence, harassment, pay, grievances and exit from employment.

As a purchaser of goods and services we will:

- Communicate our Diversity & Equality Policy to contractors delivering services on our behalf, and include equality factors in the awarding and monitoring of contracts.

As an elected leader in the community we will:

- Promote good relations within the community and seek to eliminate discrimination, harassment and abuse of any group or individual.
- Raise awareness and promote the Council's equality commitments among staff, members, partner agencies and the wider community.
- Develop robust methods to ensure that consultation exercises carried out by the Council are systematic and accessible to all groups within our community.

Implementing the Diversity & Equality Policy

To support the implementation of this Policy, the Council will:

- Develop a detailed Corporate Equality Plan (CEP), which translates commitments into specific actions for all services, with targets and timescales for moving through the five levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The CEP will also include procedures for self-assessment, audit and scrutiny using national and local performance indicators.
- Undertake community and workforce profiling and monitor service usage.
- Monitor progress and revise targets in all areas of action – reporting on a regular basis to elected members and senior management.
- Deliver and keep under regular review the Council's statutory Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and other equality related strategies and plans.
- Allocate specific resources to improve equality practice as appropriate.

Responsibility for the Diversity & Equality Policy

The Council has made a commitment to ensure that diversity and equality is integrated in all that we do. Specifically, a Board has been set up to ensure that our diversity and equality commitments are delivered. The Chief Executive acts as the diversity and equalities 'champion', working with senior management and Members to ensure that active steps are taken across all services to implement this Policy. Most importantly, all employees have a role in implementing and supporting all aspects of this policy.

At elected member level, specific responsibility for overseeing this Policy rests with the Cabinet and the Portfolio holder with responsibility for Sports and Leisure. However, all Members have a responsibility to support the commitments and specific aims of this Policy.

Complaints

As part of the Council's commitment to monitoring the impact of its Diversity & Equality Policy, we encourage comments and complaints to be submitted where it appears we have fallen short of the standards we have set or where it appears we have failed to comply with legislation or our policy. Complaints should be made to the Chief Executive, the Cabinet Portfolio holder with responsibility for Sport and Leisure or to the relevant service manager.

27th February 2006