



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

# EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

## Equal Opportunities Policy

Adopted by Council February 2017

(Policies are reviewed periodically, and presented at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council)

### Introduction

This Equal Opportunities Policy confirms the commitment this council has to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Personnel Handbook sets out the employment Equal Opportunities and Bullying and Harassment Policy. The Handbook is reviewed by Personnel Committee periodically.

### 1. General

Edenbridge Town Council recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and aims to ensure that no organisation or individual involved with our organisation will be discriminated against on the grounds of

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### 2. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of the policy is to provide equal opportunities for everyone who comes into contact with Edenbridge Town Council, irrespective of their characteristics. (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reason for a different approach to be taken). We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it is direct or indirect discrimination, victimization or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

### 3. Council's Commitment

The Council aims to ensure that our services meet the varied needs and expectations of the local people and that everyone has equal access to all services regardless of age,

gender, sex and sexual orientation, disability, marital status, ethnicity, religious belief or any other individual characteristics which may limit a person's opportunity in life.

#### **4. Employment**

It is the policy of Edenbridge Town Council to afford equal treatment to all its employees and prospective employees and has adopted and published an equal opportunities policy in the Employee Handbook to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, physical or other handicap.

Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimization through the council's grievance procedure.

#### **5. Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of every Councillor to develop the Council's services in order that they are provided in fair and equitable manner. The Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council places a positive duty on all Councillors to promote equality by not discriminating against others. Councillors are essential to the successful implementation of equalities which they can achieve by:

- Providing leadership and support
- Ensuring resources are available
- Engaging with the local community
- Scrutinising equality of the Council's services and action; and delivery of this Equalities policy

Whilst the main responsibility for providing equal opportunity rests with the Council, individual employees also have responsibilities. The elimination of discriminatory practices depends upon the co-operation of all employees.

#### **6. Monitoring**

The Council's Personnel Committee will monitor and review this policy annually against the values stated within it to ensure that Edenbridge Town Council is compliant with it.