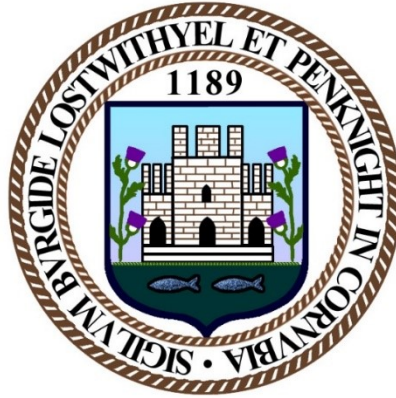




Lostwithiel Town Council

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Approved	07/07/26
Minute ref:	091/26
Review:	Annually
Next Review:	July-27

1. Introduction

Lostwithiel Town Council is committed to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering an inclusive environment for all. The Council values every individual, recognises their different needs, situations and goals, and seeks to remove barriers that limit what people can do and be.

This policy applies to:

- Town Councillors
- Employees (full-time, part-time, temporary or casual)
- Volunteers
- Contractors and agency workers
- Service users and members of the public engaging with the Council

The policy underpins all aspects of Council governance, decision-making, employment practices and service delivery.

2. Definitions

Equal Opportunities

The Council ensures that its policies, procedures and practices do not unfairly disadvantage anyone. People will be treated fairly and equitably regardless of background, identity or circumstances.

Diversity

The Council values the unique contribution of every individual. Different experiences and perspectives enhance creativity, efficiency and innovation.

Inclusion

The Council aims to ensure that everyone feels respected, valued and able to contribute fully and that their individuality is recognised.

3. Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Council also recognises the wider spectrum of identities within the LGBTQ+ community, including those who identify as queer, questioning, non-binary or pansexual.

4. Policy Statements

Lostwithiel Town Council will not use any protected characteristic as a basis for unfair treatment. The Council is committed to:

- providing equality of opportunity for all;
- using gender-neutral language in published materials;
- ensuring fair access to services, facilities and opportunities;
- making services accessible for all who live, work in or visit the town;
- seeking a workforce that reflects the community and draws on the widest pool of talent;
- ensuring equal pay for equal work;
- offering access to training and development;
- ensuring employment practices and service provision take account of individual needs;
- providing a working environment that promotes dignity, fairness, respect and tolerance;
- recognising and valuing individual differences and contributions;
- ensuring no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated;
- adopting a zero-tolerance approach to transphobic abuse, harassment and bullying.

Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be based on aptitude and ability. All employees will be supported to develop their full potential.

The Council will use its resources effectively to contribute to a fair and inclusive society and will make reasonable adjustments for individuals with protected characteristics.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

The Council will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce disadvantage for individuals with disabilities or other protected characteristics. Adjustments may relate to:

- recruitment and selection processes;
- working arrangements;
- physical access to buildings;
- provision of information in accessible formats;
- access to services.

Requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered promptly, sensitively and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

6. Responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors must uphold this policy in all Council activities, decision-making and public engagement.

Employees

Employees must treat colleagues, councillors, contractors and service users with dignity and respect, and comply with this policy in their daily work.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers must ensure fair and inclusive employment practices, respond promptly to concerns, and support staff to meet their responsibilities under this policy.

Contractors and Volunteers

Contractors and volunteers must adhere to this policy when representing or working on behalf of the Council.

7. Discrimination, Victimisation and Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following unlawful behaviours:

- Direct Discrimination
- Discrimination by Association
- Discrimination by Perception
- Indirect Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

Note: Although the specific statutory provision on *third-party harassment* was repealed in 2013, the Council will not tolerate harassment by or against third parties and will take appropriate action where such behaviour occurs. The Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent such behaviours and respond robustly where they occur.

8. Public Sector Equality Duty

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Council will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These duties will be considered in all decision-making, policy development and service delivery.

9. Compliance and Data Protection

The Council will embed equality, diversity and inclusion considerations into governance, decision-making and employment practices.

Appropriate training will be provided for councillors, employees and contractors. Workforce and service-user data will be monitored to identify inequalities. All data will be collected, stored and processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Council's Data Protection Policy.

Policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fair, accessible and non-discriminatory. Complaints or concerns relating to discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be addressed promptly and confidentially.

10. Monitoring and Reporting

The Council will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through regular review of:

- workforce composition and recruitment outcomes;
- training participation;
- complaints relating to discrimination or harassment;
- service accessibility and user experience.

Findings will be reported to the appropriate committee and used to inform training, policy development and service improvements.

11. Complaints and Enforcement

The Council is committed to ensuring that any concerns or complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or breaches of this policy are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially, and no person will be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

Any councillor, employee, contractor or volunteer found to have breached this policy may be subject to appropriate action. Where necessary, disciplinary procedures may be invoked, up to and including dismissal.

Lessons learned from complaints will inform future improvements.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, best practice or organisational need.