



## Equal opportunities

<b>Version number:</b>	2	<b>Author:</b>	Margaret Gould, Clerk
<b>Date adopted:</b>	09/07/2012	<b>Signatory:</b>	Sandra Larkins, Chair
<b>Date this version approved by Council:</b>	13/03/2017	<b>Review due:</b>	Annually from date version approved by SPC – to left

### 1. Introduction

Speen Parish Council (SPC) is committed to equal opportunities in all dealings with the community of Speen Parish and in the workplace. The council seeks to use the skills, experience and talents available from within the parish community. This is not only lawful and good practice but makes for a stronger and more sustainable council which truly represents the whole parish community.

At all times Speen Parish Councillors will promote equality and ensure issues regarding equality are given due consideration within their area of responsibility, both in their decision-making and in their monitoring of parish council services.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- confirm the council's commitment to promoting equality and diversity in all its operations
- ensure equal opportunities for everyone coming into contact with SPC, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).

### 3. Regulatory framework:

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone. It helps tackle discrimination and inequality. The Act applies to all organisations that provide a service to the public or section of the public.

Under the Act, it is not necessary to prove that someone intended to discriminate: it is sufficient only to show that the outcome of an action was less favourable treatment. Less favourable treatment can take many forms - words, actions or failure to provide opportunities or services and can be perpetuated by individuals, groups or institutions.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds, known as 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### 4. Scope & responsibility

4.1 SPC recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The scope of this policy is the operation of SPC.



- 4.2 This Policy will be brought to the attention of all councillors by way of meeting papers at a full SPC council meeting. It is fully supported by council and will be reviewed annually.
- 4.3 This policy applies to every employee and councillor in their dealings with anyone who comes into contact with the council.
- 4.4 Through this policy, all SPC employees and councillors are made aware of their legal obligations and responsibilities under existing legislation and that unlawful acts of discrimination could render the Council and employees liable to legal proceedings.
- 4.5 Overall responsibility for implementation of the policy resides with the Council (the employer).
- 4.6 The Clerk is responsible for monitoring the Council's Equal Opportunity policy, and other Human Resources policies, such as those for employment matters, to ensure that they remain lawful and fit for purpose. The Clerk will seek to ensure that all councillors and employees comply with these policies and principles.
- 4.7 SPC will encourage everyone with whom it works to act in a manner which is supportive of the council principles. External organisations, volunteers, contractors, firms and institutions acting on behalf of or as agents of the Council are responsible for their own conduct regarding equal opportunities. Whilst the council cannot be reasonably held directly responsible for their actions, nevertheless the council expects those named in 4.6 above to operate within the equal opportunities legal framework at all times and not practice unlawful and unfair acts of discrimination.

## 5. Statement

- 5.1 The council opposes 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.
- 5.2 It is the duty of all councillors and employees to accept their personal responsibility for acting within the principles of equal opportunity. All are individually and equally responsible. Employees & councillors may be held solely liable in civil proceedings for unlawful acts of discrimination.
- 5.3 Every employee, councillor, parishioner or anyone else who comes into contact with SPC is entitled to be treated with equality, dignity & respect.
- 5.4 Every employee, councillor, parishioner or anyone else who comes into contact with SPC are entitled to complain about breaches of the Equality Act 2010 through the council's grievance procedure.
- 5.5 All employees, councillors, parishioners or anyone else who comes into contact with SPC are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Clerk any act of discrimination they observe in their dealings with the council.
- 5.6 SPC is open to comment, criticism or feedback on the application of this policy. It will welcome and consider fully any constructive criticism or suggestion from any group or individual as to how this policy may be improved or more effectively implemented.
- 5.7 All employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude, potential, skills, experience and ability.



- 5.8 SPC will work with due concern for vulnerable groups and take advice whenever appropriate to ensure equal opportunities wherever feasible within constraints of resource.
- 5.9 SPC will take all reasonable action to ensure those with disabilities have access to council services and to job opportunities that arise within the Council. In the event that a councillor or staff member becomes disabled, then due consideration will be made to the needs of their disability and reasonable adjustments taken to minimise any potential disadvantage.
- 5.10 Members of the public, contractors, volunteers and suppliers will be treated equally and fairly regardless of protected characteristics.
- 5.11 All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential. Skills and resources of the workforce, whether paid or voluntary, will be used to maximize the efficiency of the council.
- 5.12 SPC will respect the right of people to have a private and family life.
- 5.13 SPC recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place.
- 5.14 Council activities which breach the Equality Act 2010, and therefore this policy, will not be tolerated. Once proven, such breaches will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Summary dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy. Councillors will be dealt with under the Councillor Code of Conduct procedures.
- 5.15 Other Personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this main Equal Opportunities policy to ensure that SPC strives to remain an Equal Opportunities operator and employer.

**5. Authorisation of Policy on behalf of Full Council:**

The undersigned approves this policy on behalf of Speen Parish Council.

Signature:	
Name (print):	
Position:	: ____/____/____