

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy



<b>Adopted by:</b>	Watton Town Council
<b>Date:</b>	April 2026
<b>Review date:</b>	April 2029

## 1. Purpose and Scope

**1.1** This policy explains Watton Town Council’s approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. Its purpose is to promote fair treatment, support an inclusive working environment and ensure that employment decisions are made lawfully, objectively and with respect for individual dignity.

**1.2** The Council recognises that people bring different backgrounds, experiences, skills and perspectives. Those differences are a positive asset and, when supported by an inclusive culture, help improve decision-making, wellbeing and service delivery.

**1.3** The Council uses the NJC Green Book (2024) and the NALC Model Contract of Employment (2023) as guidance when determining employment terms and conditions. Not all provisions apply automatically. Where this policy, an employee’s contract, or another adopted Council policy sets out a local arrangement, that local arrangement will apply.

**1.4** This policy applies to employees of Watton Town Council and to job applicants. It also applies to councillors where they are acting in a workplace, staffing, recruitment, hearing, appeal or governance capacity, and to others working for or on behalf of the Council where relevant to their conduct.

**1.5** This policy should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Employment and Staffing Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Flexible Working Policy, Capability Policy, Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice.

**1.6** This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Council from time to time, subject to any contractual rights that apply.

## 2. The Council’s Commitment

**2.1** The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and to creating a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect. It will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

**2.2** Employment decisions will be based on merit, skills, experience, the requirements of the role and any lawful adjustments or support that may be needed. The Council will seek to ensure that recruitment, selection, training, promotion, pay-related decisions within local arrangements and day-to-day management are handled fairly and consistently.

**2.3** As a public body, the Council will also have regard to its wider equality responsibilities when making decisions and shaping practices.

## 3. Protected Characteristics and Unlawful Conduct

**3.1** The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

**3.2** Unlawful conduct may include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, failure to make reasonable adjustments, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation. Unacceptable behaviour may also arise in ways that are not deliberate, including through assumptions, stereotypes or exclusionary practices.

## **4. Standards of Behaviour**

**4.1** Everyone working for or on behalf of the Council is expected to treat others fairly and with respect. This includes colleagues, councillors, applicants, contractors, volunteers, residents and other third parties.

**4.2** Behaviour that is discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, humiliating or offensive is not acceptable. This applies in person, in writing, online, during meetings, at work-related events and in any other setting connected with Council business.

**4.3** Anyone who breaches this policy may be subject to appropriate action. For employees, this may include action under the Disciplinary Procedure. Councillors remain subject to the standards and governance arrangements that apply to their role.

## **5. Disability Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments**

**5.1** The Council is committed to being an inclusive employer for disabled people and will consider reasonable adjustments at all stages of employment. This may include adjustments during recruitment, induction, training, day-to-day working arrangements, performance support, attendance management and formal procedures.

**5.2** Employees and applicants are not required to disclose a disability, but disclosure is encouraged where it may help the Council provide appropriate support. Requests for adjustments will be considered sensitively and, where appropriate, with medical or occupational health advice.

## **6. Recruitment and Employment Decisions**

**6.1** Recruitment and selection will be carried out fairly and in line with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy. Job descriptions, person specifications and selection criteria should be relevant to the role and should not create unnecessary barriers.

**6.2** Decisions about induction, training, development, acting-up arrangements, attendance support, capability, disciplinary matters and other employment issues should be made in a way that is consistent with this policy and with the Council's wider obligations under equality law.

## **7. Training and Awareness**

**7.1** Equality, diversity and inclusion awareness should form part of induction and ongoing management practice. Employees involved in recruitment, line management or employment decision-making should receive appropriate support and training for their role.

**7.2** The Council will take a practical and proportionate approach to training, reflecting its size and resources, but will seek to ensure that those exercising staffing responsibilities understand the standards expected of them.

## **8. Raising Concerns**

**8.1** Concerns about discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation should be raised as soon as reasonably possible. Depending on the circumstances, the matter may be raised informally, through the Grievance Procedure, under the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy, or under another appropriate Council procedure.

**8.2** No one should be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern or for supporting someone else who has done so.

## **9. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

**9.1** Information relating to equality issues, adjustments, complaints or related employment matters will be handled sensitively and in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

**10.1** The Council will keep this policy under review and may monitor equality-related information where this is lawful, proportionate and useful for assessing whether its practices are fair and effective.

**10.2** This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be amended where required by changes in law, guidance, Council decision or operational practice.