

General Information for Applicants

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A GUIDE TO COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

This Guide is about helping you complete your Application Form. Shortlisting for interview depends on the information you give us. We need a clear account of your past experience and abilities.

- Make sure that your form is completed in **BLACK INK**.
- C.V's to support or replace the completion of an Application Form shall not be accepted.
- Complete **ALL** sections. On the first page, include a daytime telephone number if possible.
- Tell us about any training courses that you feel will help your application. List your employment history, starting with your present or most recent job on page two. If you have not had a job before, include any work placements you have had whilst at School or College.
- Make sure you detail your medical history and if you have any disabilities, let us know if you have any special needs or requirements so that we can try to accommodate these, should you be invited to interview.
- Refer to the Job Profile which outlines the abilities you should have to be able to do the job. Show clearly how you match each item. You should also include details of your present or most recent employment. Additional information, for example any voluntary work or special interests, you have, can be given here.
- If you would like your application to be considered on a Job Share Basis, please indicate clearly on your Application Form the hours/days you would like to work. Please note that a Job Share will only be considered if a suitable Job Share partner applies and is successful in their application.
- If you are a School or College leaver, you may find the form difficult to complete, **BUT IT IS IMPORTANT** not to leave it blank. Your hobbies, work experience or subjects that you particularly enjoyed at School are all useful additional information.
- If you need to supply additional facts, you can include separate sheets
- We would like you to complete the Recruitment Monitoring Form outlining your personal circumstances. **THESE ARE NOT USED AS PART OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS**, but help us monitor our Equal Opportunities Policy.

If you have any queries at all, please contact a member of the HR Team, at any time during normal office hours. We will be pleased to help you.

The Council's retirement age is 65 and it is not usual practice to engage new employees who are within 6 months of retirement on the date of their application, neither is there any legal obligation to do so.

OUTLINE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The following is an outline of the main terms and conditions of service and benefits attached to the post. More detailed information can be provided on request or discussed at the interview stage. With the exception of the salary range, the general conditions of service are those determined by the NJC for Local Government Services.

MEDICAL The appointment is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory medical report from the Council's Occupational Health Physician. Candidates invited to attend for interview will be asked to complete a confidential medical questionnaire. The medical questionnaire of the successful candidate will then be sent to the OHP for assessment. The candidate may be required to provide further information to the Doctor, or undergo a medical examination if this is considered necessary.

REFERENCES The appointment is subject to references that satisfy us. One must be from your current or most recent employer and the other from someone who is not a relative.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD The appointment is subject to a six month probationary period.

SALARY Salary is paid by direct credit into your bank account on the 20th of each month.

ANNUAL LEAVE Annual leave amounts to 20 days per year (April – March), plus 2 extra statutory days. Upon completion of 5 years continuous Local Government Service, this will rise to 25 days per year.

PENSION New employees will automatically join the Local Government Superannuation Scheme. The employee's contribution is 6% of salary. New employees choosing to provide themselves with alternative pension cover must inform the Payroll Section. Further details will be provided to the successful candidate.

NOTICE PERIOD The period of notice is one month on either side. Senior Management posts are a minimum of two/three months notice.

CAR ALLOWANCE (if applicable) The car allowance provides payment in accordance with National Conditions of Service (details available upon employment), for expenditure incurred by using private cars for authorised Council purpose.

LEASE CARS (if applicable) If the post attracts a lease car, further information will be provided to the successful candidate.

CHILDCARE	A Childcare Allowance for pre-school children may be payable where both parents are at work. 50% of the fees may be reclaimed up to a maximum amount of £25 per week (further details available upon employment).
APPRAISALS	Employees are subject to the Council's Appraisal Scheme. Employees will be appraised annually by their Line Manager.
SICKNESS	All staff receive sick pay when absent due to illness. The period of sick pay depends on length of service and rises to a maximum of 6 months full pay and six months half pay after 5 years' service.
HEALTHWATCH	Eligible staff are entitled to reduced membership at Council gyms and swimming pools.
EYE CARE	Eligible staff are entitled to eye care vouchers if they use a VDU.
FLEXIBLE WORKING	BDC promotes worklife balance and eligible staff are entitled to join the flexi scheme. (Further details will be provided to the successful candidate).
SOCIAL CLUB	BDC has a Social Club where staff enjoy discounts on trips and shows.
STAFF RESTAURANT	The staff restaurant is based at Causeway House where staff can buy food and refreshments.
HEALTH SCHEMES	The option is available to join health schemes offered to BDC staff at reduced contributions.
PARKING	Free parking is available at Causeway House and Millennium Tower.
UNIFORMS	Uniforms and safety equipment will be provided.
TRAINING -	New employees will be invited to attend a personal induction program. A comprehensive in-service training prospectus is offered by the Organisational Learning and Development Section and staff are encouraged to participate on courses. In addition, there is provision for post-entry training to allow staff to pursue or complete professional qualifications in approved cases.

SMOKING PREVENTION POLICY – The aim of Braintree District Council's Smoking Policy is to provide a healthy environment in which to work. Smoking is only permitted in designated rooms. However the smoking rooms will close by 1st July 2007 in accordance with new Legislation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY – It is Council Policy to oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, marital status, colour, disability, race, gender, trades union membership, religion or belief, responsibility to dependants, nationality or sexual orientation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

To be read in conjunction with the Recruitment and Selection, Harassment, Employment of People with Disabilities, HIV/Aids Policies, Retirement and Age Diversity Policies

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1. INTRODUCTION

Braintree District Council recognises the value of a diverse workforce in which people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities, can bring new ideas to enable us to deliver high quality services accessible to all.

1.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is Council policy to oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of (colour, race, gender, nationality, marital status, disability, age, trade union memberships, religion or belief, responsibility to dependants or sexual orientation) and will continue to keep under review all its procedures and practices to ensure that no individual or group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly by applying unjustified conditions or requirements.

This policy applies to the delivery of services by the Council, and in particular, it will require its employees to be aware of the different and special needs of particular groups when they are seeking and using the Council's services. It will also ensure that suppliers of goods and services on behalf of the Council comply with the Council's policy. We are committed to fairness and equality of access in all our activities. Under the Best Value reviews we will ensure that relevant consideration is given to Equality issues.

The Council's policy applies to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training and retraining, the operation of grievance, disciplinary and redundancy procedures, the provision of employee benefits and generally to the application of all terms and conditions of employment.

The Council is committed to making this policy effective and will regularly review and comprehensively monitor the results of this commitment which will be demonstrated through its programme of action.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- We value the diversity of the communities we serve and will help to develop strong, secure, self reliant, self confident communities, free from unlawful discrimination. We acknowledge the desirability of reflecting this diversity in our workforce.
- We recognise that every member of staff can influence how equality is achieved, both in the workplace and through the services we provide. We will ensure that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in respect of this.
- We recognise the importance of effective two-way communication. We will provide a comprehensive range of information, including direct information about Braintree District Council and our services for individuals and communities, in a variety of appropriate forms. We will also consult and listen to the views of the local communities.

1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES/COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

Each individual employee has a duty both morally and legally not to discriminate against other employees or service users. Specific responsibilities for Members and Council employees under this policy are as follows:

Council Members – responsibility for:

- promoting equalities;
- ensuring adequate resources are made available to enable the Council to meet its legal responsibilities

Head of Business Support – responsibility for:

- developing and supporting the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy;
- ensuring that inclusive consultation is undertaken on any review of the policy;
- ensuring that employment policies are consistent with the Equal Opportunities Policy;
- providing advice to services on equal opportunities matters, including best personnel and management practices;
- ensuring that recruitment and selection initiatives and documentation are consistent with non-discriminatory objectives;
- collating and analysing equal opportunity monitoring information, initiating corporate/service responses to the outcomes, where necessary.

Assistant Chief Executive – responsibility for:

- ensuring that the Council's corporate image, media and communications activities support and further the Equal Opportunities Policy;

Head of Corporate Services – responsibility for:

- ensuring that corporate procurement standards and monitoring arrangements reflect the Council's commitment to equality and fairness.

All Directors/Heads of Services – responsibility for:

- ensuring that the policy is communicated to all their employees;
- ensuring its implementation into all personnel and management practices;
- ensuring that service plans address equal opportunities issues;
- ensuring that complaints are investigated and dealt with effectively.

Managers and Supervisors – responsibility for:

- ensuring managers comply with the policy at a practical level through their actions in recruitment and selection, service delivery, contract procurement, training and development and general management;
- encouraging good practice by their staff and colleagues and dealing where appropriate with breaches of this policy.

All Employees – responsibility for:

- ensuring all employees act within the law of equal opportunities in the areas summarised in this policy.
- ensuring all employees comply with the contractual duty to comply with this policy as a whole and thereby ensure its consistent application on a day to day basis.

1.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK (See Appendix 1: Summary of Equalities Legislation)

Braintree District Council has a responsibility to comply with both the letter and spirit of all legislation against discrimination and appropriate codes of practice specifically:

- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Code of Practice
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the National Disability Council's Codes of Practice
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995(Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Childrens Act 1989
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Data Protection Act 1998

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

In law discrimination can be;

Direct discrimination

Treating a person less favourably than another because of gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, marital status, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin and creed.

Indirect discrimination

Application of a requirement or condition, which adversely affects one group more than another and cannot be justified.

1.4 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The implementation of this policy will be monitored and kept under regular review. Any review will take into account the views of national advisory bodies, the Council's employees, trade unions and elected members.

1.5 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

• Service Delivery

Each service will deal with any complaint under their complaints procedure and will ensure they are dealt with speedily and effectively.

• Employment

Council employees who feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against in respect of their employment should raise it in the first instance with their Line Manager or Personnel Services. Such complaints will be handled in a positive and sensitive manner and if appropriate, will be dealt with formally under the Council's Grievance Procedure and/or the Harassment Policy.

2. EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Braintree District Council recognises the value of a diverse workforce in which people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities can bring new ideas to enable us to deliver high quality services.

In addition to its moral responsibilities putting equal opportunities into action makes business sense because it is about ensuring the best people are appointed. Our Equal Opportunities policy will help us to:

- provide equality of opportunity for everyone
- attract and retain skilled staff

- make the best use of the skills and knowledge of all of the workforce
- strengthen and improve our reputation as a good employer
- ensure that our employment and business practices are in accordance with the law
- provide staff with information in accessible formats.

2.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Council has in place a recruitment and selection policy which all those involved in the recruitment and selection process have a duty to follow. This policy, along with the document Recruitment Guidance for Managers, assist in ensuring a non-discriminatory selection process. A continuing training and development programme is in place to ensure that all those involved in the recruitment/selection process are appropriately trained. Also see 2.3 on equal opportunity awareness training.

The Council seeks to ensure vacancies are advertised as widely as possible to assist in attracting a range of applicants and that recruitment is based on clearly defined essential criteria. Council vacancies are advertised internally which enables equality of access to vacancy details to all staff and opportunities are accessible at job centres and via the council's website.

2.3 DEVELOPING AND RETAINING STAFF

The Council places a high priority on the personal development of all its employees. The Council's performance appraisal scheme provides the necessary focus for both managers and staff on discussing and agreeing training and development needs on an ongoing basis. This scheme assists in ensuring that resources are allocated in a fair and objective way and that training plans are devised to incorporate the principles of equality.

All managers and employees shall have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities under both the law and the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Equal Opportunity awareness training is provided to all new and existing staff as part of the induction process together with details of relevant support groups available. Equalities training is also provided to managers via the management development training programme.

2.4 POSITIVE ACTION

Subject to appointment being made on merit, we will take action to achieve and maintain at all levels a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community. We will use, where appropriate, the powers available under the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 to take positive action. This will include:

- The development of strategies to ensure that positive messages of encouragement to apply for posts are given to underrepresented groups

- Action to ensure that all employees have equal opportunities to training, development and career opportunities
- The incorporation of equality awareness into all management development programmes.

2.5 HARASSMENT POLICY

Braintree District Council is committed to the fair treatment of all staff and job applicants. The Council believes that bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination in any form is unacceptable. The Council policy on harassment provides further detailed guidance. Such behaviour by any member of staff constitutes gross misconduct under the Council's disciplinary procedure. In addition any employee committing such an offence may be personally liable for their behaviour under equal opportunities legislation.

Victimisation may occur when a person is treated less favourably than another person because they have made a complaint of Harassment/discrimination/bullying and/or given evidence about such a complaint. The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986, Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 provide protection from victimisation.

2.6 MONITORING

We recognise that genuine equality of opportunity can only be assessed by monitoring what is actually happening and then using this information to modify and improve our future action plans and policies and procedures.

The Council monitors by age, ethnicity, disability and gender the following:

- recruitment and selection
- existing workforce

Specifically we will monitor:

- the percentage of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition as a percentage of the total workforce;
- the percentage of staff from ethnic minorities as a percentage of the total workforce;
- the percentage of senior management posts filled by women;
- voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff in post;
- ill health retirements as a percentage of total workforce;

- early retirements as a percentage of the total workforce

The Council publishes quarterly statistics to assist in informing future management decisions and monitoring is reported to management through the Corporate Management Group.

2.7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ACTION

The Council will ensure that when all Council employment policies and terms and conditions of employment are reviewed continued consideration is given to the principals of equal opportunities.

We are committed to developing our 'family friendly' policies and work-life balance initiatives to assist in attracting and retaining the best staff.

Personnel Policies which relate to Equal Opportunities currently include:

- Time Off For Dependants
- Guidelines On the Employment of Disabled People
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Recruitment Guidance for Managers
- HIV/Aids
- Harassment
- Flexible Working Hours
- Childcare Scheme
- Maternity/Paternity/Parental Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Flexible Working
- Job Share
- Age Diversity

2.8 CONSULTATION – EMPLOYMENT

- The Council is committed to improving its many external links with other organisations that provide specialist advice, support, regulating or partnership opportunities on equality issues.
- Trade Unions and management are regularly consulted when all major employment policy is reviewed and developed.
- Consultation with staff on major policy work/new initiatives.

2.9 DISCIPLINARY/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Under the Council's disciplinary procedure breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy, including serious acts of harassment, victimisation, discrimination or verbal abuse against employees, clients or members of the public on grounds of race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other grounds will normally be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

3. EQUALITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We are committed to providing quality services equitably to all people with differing needs because of gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, marital status, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin and creed. We will take action to ensure our services are equally accessible to all people in the District.

To assist with this aim the Council will work actively and positively with the community, other agencies and the voluntary sector.

We are committed to fairness in all our activities and to the principle under Best Value of addressing equality considerations in each review. This will include the way in which policies and services impact on all sections of the community (including minority groups) and the setting of targets to redress disparities in the provision of services to those that are socially, environmentally or geographically disadvantaged.

3.2 AIMS

We seek to provide our services equitably to the diverse community at large, irrespective of gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, marital status, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin and creed.

- We will seek to develop a strong, secure, self-reliant, self-confident community. We will reflect diversity in our Corporate image and media/communications activities.
- We will treat all customers and clients of the Council with dignity and respect and we will provide services free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- We expect each employee to promote the spirit of equality in Service Delivery, and therefore each employee has a duty not to discriminate against customers and clients. This is legally enforced by the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986, the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- Whilst the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 legally apply to employees and

job seekers only, it is expected that customers and clients are not discriminated against on these grounds.

- We have a responsibility to ensure any person concerned with the provision of goods, facilities or services to the public or a section of the public does not unlawfully discriminate against a person who seeks to obtain or use those goods, facilities or services:
 - by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide them with goods, facilities or services; or
 - by refusing or deliberately omitting to provide him/her with goods, facilities or services of the same quality, in the same manner and on the same terms as would normally be provided to other members of the public in the same circumstances.
- We will not tolerate acts which breach this duty and all instances of such behaviour, or alleged behaviour, will be taken seriously and if appropriate be fully investigated under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
- Each service will develop, monitor and review appropriate service delivery practices which will help to avoid direct and indirect discrimination where these are not already in place.
- Our corporate procurement standards and monitoring will reflect the Council's commitments to equality and fairness. Services will need to monitor provisions made by contractors who provide services on behalf of the Council.

3.3 QUALITY

We will provide services that:

- meet the needs of the customers;
- are delivered consistently to comply with clearly stated performance standards;
- are delivered by effective, well trained and motivated staff or contractors;
- are supported by effective management systems;
- are clearly explained to customers so they know what is available;
- are continuously reviewed and monitored to ensure that they meet agreed customer needs and
- are delivered following consultation with customers

3.4 COMMUNICATION

The Council welcomes comments, suggestions and improvements from our customers about the diversity and flexibility of our services. To ensure customers are aware of the range of services available the Council will:

- work to communicate effectively with the widest number of people in the community possible. We will where appropriate, use publicity material supplied in different languages and more accessible media for people with disabilities, for example those with sensory impairment.
- identify mechanisms that already exist to consult customers on the introduction of new services or changes to existing services. We will re-evaluate these services and ensure attention is paid to gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, marital status, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin and creed.
- Make customers aware of our Complaints Procedure where a problem has been identified with a service.

3.5 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We will:

- equip employees with the skills knowledge and competencies to provide services in a flexible and sensitive manner encouraging good communication between employees and customers.
- avoid stereotyping by making inappropriate assumptions, or other categorisations, based on gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, marital status, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin and creed.
- increase understanding of different needs of all people in the community.

This will be achieved by emphasising equality in service delivery as well as the equality in employment, in the Council's induction process, briefing sessions and other training or development.

3.6 SERVICE PLANNING

Equal opportunities is an integral part of service delivery. Local implementation of the above principles will be incorporated into the Council's Business Planning process via Departmental Service policies and Equalities Service Statements.

3.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We recognise that genuine equality of opportunity can only be assessed by monitoring what is actually happening and then using this information to modify and improve our future action plans and policies and procedures.

Monitoring and evaluating information will help us to:

- Measure the number of customers using services and the take up by sections of the community; and
- identify the percentage of service users from minority groups.

Where monitoring is in place and it shows that the use of services is disproportionate, appropriate action will be planned. Examples of such actions are as follows:

- provide publicity material in different languages, where appropriate;
- provide alternative ways of communicating with people with disabilities. For example use the minicom; tape; large print; Braille, dial in telephone/minicom information line for customers with disabilities to contact;
- consulting with customers (where a disproportionate take up of service has been identified) to improve service e.g. to meet their particular cultural needs, if appropriate.

3.8 EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Braintree District Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government. This was developed by a steering group comprising representations from the Employers Organisation for Local Government, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

This is a framework that sets up a way of working within local authorities which will make mainstreaming equalities into service delivery and employment an issue for all aspects of the council's work. Using five levels, we will introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equalities. These levels cover all aspects of policy-making, service delivery and employment.

The Standard will:

- provide a systematic framework for the mainstreaming of equalities;
- help Braintree District Council meet their obligations under the law;
- integrate equalities policies and objectives with Best Value;
- encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice appropriate to local circumstances;
- provide a basis for tackling forms of institutionalised discrimination;
- provide a framework for improving performance, over time

Putting the Equality Standard in Place

The standard builds on the principles of:

- Quality
- Leadership
- Community involvement.

Braintree District Council will be able to assess progress based on 5 levels:

- Level 1: Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Level 2: Assessment and Consultation
- Level 3: Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4: Information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5: Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Monitoring

Monitoring/reporting against the Equality Standard will take place from April 2002.

3.9 CONCLUSION

- A key objective of the Council is to provide quality services. As stated by the Audit Commission and encompassed in the Equality Standard for Local Government: quality cannot be achieved without equality of opportunity. The pursuit of equal opportunities in service delivery requires the commitment of each member of staff.
- The rewards of achieving excellence in the management of service delivery are potentially considerable: a more responsive and better quality service to all people in the community, and more efficient and effective use of Council resources.

4 TARGET GROUPS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We are committed to making equality of opportunity a reality for all people in both employment and service delivery.

In particular we recognise the following as key target groups for us to focus on:

- People with disabilities

We recognise that discrimination against people with disabilities can take many forms and can result in individuals not reaching their full potential or having access to the services they require. Disability can include both physical and mental impairments. For further information see the Guidelines on the Employment of Disabled People.

The Council aims to ensure that the proportion of its employees who are disabled reflects the proportion of the District's population of working age who have a disability. To assist in achieving this, disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the job will be interviewed.

The Council is committed to its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995(Amendment) Regulations 2003 and will take reasonable steps to provide and adapt premises, facilities, or equipment wherever possible to meet the needs of disabled people. The Council will make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of premises to facilitate access for disabled people.

- Gender

We are opposed to discrimination on the basis of gender and recognise that women and men can be discriminated against because of their gender or care responsibilities which can result in them not reaching their full potential.

The Council is committed to ensuring women and men are encouraged to apply for all jobs equally. We will ensure that access to employment, promotion and development opportunities do not unfairly discriminate against either sex. We are also committed to continuing to develop and implement family friendly employment policies and worklife balance initiatives.

The Council is committed to its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 which cover employment matters as described above and also covers unlawful discrimination, the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public. The Council also recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.

- Race

The Council recognises that people can be discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, colour or nationality.

We want our workforce to accurately reflect the make-up of the population of the District. We are committed to monitoring the ethnic origin of applicants for employment and those shortlisted/appointed in order that we can take further action to encourage more ethnic minorities to apply for posts and to be proportionately represented across all grades and salary levels.

The Council is committed to its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote racial equality and establish a Race Equality Scheme.

- Age Discrimination

The Council recognises that discrimination can take place based on assumptions and stereotypes based on an individual's age.

Age related criteria will not be used in recruitment and selection or development and training decisions. The Council will ensure that job applicants are selected solely on the basis of their skills, qualifications, competencies and experience. The Councils Recruitment Policy includes details on employing staff aged 65 and older, to ensure that all applications are treated within the same framework. The Councils Retirement Policy includes further details on normal age retirement, and options for continuing to work beyond normal retirement age at 65, to ensure that all retirements are fair.

- Other forms of discrimination

The Council recognises that other forms of discrimination exist which have not been dealt with under the specific target groups mentioned above (e.g. religion or belief, health issues, sexual orientation, marital status).

We are committed to the overall general principles of fairness and equal access to the Council's services and employment and will take appropriate action where inequalities are identified.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF EQUALITIES LEGISLATION

The Equal Pay Act 1970

The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for any individual to be treated less favourably than a person of the opposite sex who works for the same employer. This is in relation to pay and other terms and conditions of employment, where they are employed in work that has been rated as equivalent under a job evaluation scheme or on work that is of equal value.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 exists to protect people from discrimination due to past convictions. A person convicted of a criminal offence can become rehabilitated after a defined period of time following conviction, through a conviction becoming 'spent', which allows the person to be treated for most purposes as if the conviction never occurred

Convictions involving custodial sentences of over 30 months cannot become spent. For some professions and areas of employment the law requires disclosure of all convictions including those deemed to be spent.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Sex Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly, on the grounds of sex or marital status against women, men or married persons; in employment, training and related matters, education, provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the disposal and management of premises.

The Race Relations Act 1976

The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic origin or national origin. The Act makes racial discrimination unlawful in employment, training and related matters, education, provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the disposal of management of premises.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in April 2001 strengthening and extending the scope of the 1976 Race Relations Act. This first major reform of the 1976 Act, which arose in part following the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, has been targeted at the public sector and prohibits racial discrimination by public authorities in all their functions. It places a new enforceable positive duty on public authorities to eliminate discrimination and to promote racial equality.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995(Amendment) Regulations 2003

The DDA introduces measures aimed at ending discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Act's provisions include employment, access to goods, services and facilities, and the buying and renting of land or property. The Act is being introduced on a staggered basis, with many of the Act's provisions now being brought into force. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995(Amendment) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1st October

2004. From this date there will no longer be an exemption for those who employ fewer than 15 people, practical work experience will also be covered by the DDA whether unpaid or paid and new groups of workers are covered e.g. police and prison staff. From 1st October 2004 employers are under a new obligation to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of premises to facilitate access for disabled people under Part 111 of the DDA. Service providers have a statutory obligation to take reasonable steps to remove physical barriers or provide services by other appropriate means.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force on 2nd October 2000 and is one of the most significant pieces of constitutional legislation enacted in the United Kingdom.

The Act allows people to claim their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), in UK courts and tribunals instead of going to the European Court in Strasbourg. The Act requires all public authorities in the UK to act compatibly with the Convention rights and has significant implications for many areas of local government activity.

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 became effective from 1st May 1999. The Regulations extend the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to cover direct discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment, self-employment and vocational training. This group have the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds that an individual intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment. Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances, if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular sex in order to do the job and the employer can show that the treatment of the person is reasonable.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force on 2nd December 2003. The Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief in employment including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. They prohibit direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discrimination during employment and in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended. It may be about the individual's religion or belief (real or perceived) or it may be about the religion or belief (real or perceived) of those with whom the individual associates. Exceptions may be made in very limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular religion or belief in order to do the job. Liability falls on both the employer and the employee who is found to have acted in a discriminatory way.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1st December 2003. The Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in employment including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. They prohibit direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discrimination during employment and in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended. It may be about the individual's sexual orientation (real or perceived) or it may be about the sexual orientation (real or perceived) of those with whom the individual associates. Exceptions may be made in very

limited circumstances if there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular sexual orientation in order to do the job. Liability falls on both the employer and the employee who is found to have acted in a discriminatory way.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 became effective from 1st October 2006. The Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age in employment matters including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, appraisals, dismissals and training. They prohibit direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discrimination during employment, and in certain circumstances after the working relationship has ended. It may be legitimate in very limited circumstances to treat people differently on the grounds of their age, if it can be proven there is an objective justification that allows an employer to set requirements that are directly age discriminatory, due to being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. There can also be a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular age in order to do the job, and certain exemptions from or exceptions to the age regulations exist.