SPILSBY TOWN COUNCIL

1974-2024 PROUDLY SERVING THE PEOPLE OF SPILSBY

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

September 2026

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1. Introduction

Spilsby Town Council is committed to treating people fairly, with dignity and respect.

As a small rural Town Council, we recognise that our role, resources and staffing are limited. We have two part-time employees; the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk and we do not provide the wide range of services delivered by larger local authorities. However, we are committed to ensuring that equality, fairness and inclusion are considered in the way we make decisions, employ staff, communicate with residents, manage our facilities and work with the local community.

This policy sets out a practical and proportionate approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. It reflects both our legal responsibilities and the reality of what Spilsby Town Council does.

2. Our vision for equality

Spilsby Town Council's vision is to be a fair, respectful and inclusive Council that serves the whole community. Out small size means our role and resources are limited, but we will consider equality in a practical and proportionate way when making decisions, managing our facilities, supporting community activity and employing staff.

We recognise that local equality issues in Spilsby are often linked to age, disability, poverty, rural isolation, poor transport links and access to services. We will therefore, pay particular attention to these issues while continuing to treat all people fairly, regardless of any protected characteristic.

We do not routinely collect or publish equality information about residents, undertake formal research or operate scrutiny panels. Instead, we use local knowledge, resident feedback, complaints, community engagement and councillor awareness to understand where barriers may exist and to respond appropriately.

The Council will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when exercising its functions and making decisions. This means considering, in a proportionate way, how decisions may affect people with protected characteristics, whether any disadvantage can be reduced or avoided, and whether steps can be taken to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

3. Our commitment to equality

Spilsby Town Council will seek to ensure that no person is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation; and
- Marriage and Civil Partnership, where relevant to employment and related matters.

The Council will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between different people and groups.

4. Our Local Context

As a small rural community, the Council recognises that the equality issues most commonly affecting local residents are often linked to:

- Age, particularly the needs of older residents;
- Disability, mobility and access;
- Poverty, financial hardship and rural deprivation;
- Limited public transport;
- Access to services, including the loss of local banking facilities;
- Social isolation; and
- Access to information for those who are not online.

The Council also recognises that Spilsby has limited ethnic diversity. This does not reduce the Council's duty to treat everyone fairly, regardless of race, nationality, religion. belief or background. It simply means that our equality work must be realistic, local and based on the needs that most often arise in our community.

We want Spilsby to be a welcoming, respectful and safe place for all residents, visitors, Councillors, staff, volunteers and service users.

5. How we put Equality into practice

The Council will take equality into account in a practical way when carrying out its functions. This may include:

- Considering accessibility when maintaining or improving Council-owned facilities;
- Making reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- Considering the needs of older, disabled or vulnerable residents when making decisions;
- Supporting community activity that reduces isolation or improves access to local services;
- Using clear and accessible communication;
- Considering whether residents without internet access may need alternative ways to receive information;
- Treating complaints, concerns and requests for assistance fairly and respectfully;
- Ensuring Council meetings, events and facilities are as accessible as reasonably practicable; and
- Working constructively with local organisations, volunteers and community groups.

As an Employer

Spilsby Town Council is committed to being a fair and respectful employer.

The Council will:

- Recruit and employ staff fairly;
- Avoid unlawful discrimination in recruitment, pay, training and employment practices;
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees where appropriate;
- Treat employees with dignity and respect;
- Take concerns about bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation seriously; and
- Ensure employment decisions are based on merit, role requirements and fair process.

As the Council has only two part-time employees, it does not publish pay gap information or operate staff networks. However, it will keep its employment practices under review and ensure that staff are treated lawfully and fairly.

6. Role and Responsibilities

Everyone acting on behalf of the Council is expected to behave respectfully and fairly.

Councillors, staff and volunteers should:

- Treat people with courtesy and dignity;
- Avoid discriminatory language and behaviour;
- Listen to residents' concerns, especially where access, vulnerability or disadvantage is raised;
- Consider equality issues when involved in Council decisions or activities; and
- Report concerns where they believe someone has been treated unfairly

Councillors must also comply with the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Individuals and groups have specific roles in meeting our equality, diversity and inclusion responsibilities.

There is a clear infrastructure to help deliver equality in the Council

The Mayor

Sets the priorities for the Council which focuses on tackling inequality, protecting vulnerable residents. They also ensure Spilsby is a great place to live, work, study and visit. The Mayor is responsible for equality considerations in the decision-making.

Councillors

Represent the views of their communities and bring their views in the Council's decision-making process in their role as Community Leaders.

Officers of the Council

Officers are expected to have an understanding of equality and embed relevant policy and practice into service delivery. Our values underpin everything that the Council does, including our work with partners to improve the quality of life for everyone who studies, works and lives in Spilsby.

The Town Clerk will act as the Compliance Officer to ensure this Policy is embedded across the organisation, reviewed and updated.

7. Equality monitoring and benchmarking

The Council will not routinely collect or publish detailed equality information about residents. This would not be proportionate for a small-town council and may not be necessary for the services we provide.

Instead, the Council will monitor equality issues through:

- Feedback from residents;
- Complaints and comments received;
- Issues raised at Council meetings;
- Local knowledge from Councillors and Officers;
- Engagement will community groups and partner organisations where relevant; and
- Review of accessibility concerns relating to Council facilities or activities.

8. What happens when things go wrong.

As a Council, we recognise that sometimes our collective or individual decisions or actions may not meet the standards we have set out.

The Council takes concerns about unfair treatment seriously.

If someone believes they have been treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or excluded from accessing Council services or activities, they may raise the matter with the Town Clerk.

We expect our work and all colleagues to show our commitment to Equality. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Customers have the ability to give feedback on their experience with the Council through our comment, compliments or complaints process.