

IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Iron Acton Parish Council's Equality and Diversity Policy makes clear the Council's opposition to any form of discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Indeed, legislation and practice in the United Kingdom protects individuals against such discrimination or unfair treatment.
- b. The Council recognises and values people's differences and seeks to ensure that all its employees and Councillors are treated fairly and with respect.
- c. In accordance with this the Council has adopted these procedures to protect employees and Councillors from harassment, bullying, abuse and intimidation on any grounds.
- d. Harassment, bullying, abuse and intimidation can take many forms and may include tasteless jokes, abusive remarks, sexual harassment, threatening behaviour and physical abuse.

2. PROCEDURES FOR MAKING AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT OF HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

- a. There is sometimes a mismatch between the intentions of individuals' behaviours and how others experience them. What seems unobjectionable to one person may be unacceptable to another. In recognition of this, the Council encourages individuals who are unhappy with the behaviour of others to consider, in the first instance, making an Informal Complaint using the procedures set out in paragraphs 2.b. or 2.c. below.
- b. Where a person experiencing behaviour she/he finds unacceptable is comfortable doing so, she/he should raise her/his discomfort directly with the person involved, making it clear that aspects of that person's behaviour are unwelcome and asking her/him to stop.
- c. Details of complaints of harassment, bullying, abuse or intimidation can be sensitive, and if the person experiencing unacceptable behaviour is uncomfortable raising the issue on a one to one basis with the individual concerned, she/he should consider asking the Clerk or the Chairman of the Council accompany her/him or to have an informal word on her/his behalf.

3. PROCEDURES FOR MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT OF HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

- a. Where an informal complaint fails, or an individual is uncomfortable making an informal complaint, the matter should be referred in writing to Chairman of the Council (or, if the Chairman is the complainant or subject of the complaint, to the Vice Chairman), providing details of the behaviours considered unacceptable. The complaint should include the name(s) of the person or people concerned, the nature of the behaviour, dates, times and frequency (if possible), and the names of any witnesses of the behaviour.

- b.** On receipt of a formal complaint, the Council will take action to end or minimise as far as possible contact between the complainant and the individual against whom the complaint is directed (the complainee) while an investigation takes place.
- c.** The complaint will be investigated by the Chairman or Vice Chairman (as appropriate). The investigator will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days and undertake a thorough investigation on the Council's behalf, informing both complainer and complainee of the details of the allegations.
- d.** Once the investigation has been undertaken the investigator will produce a written report setting out the complaint, the results of the investigation and provisional recommendations for the Council, and send copies to complainer and complainee. The investigator will arrange to discuss the report with each party and record any further observations they may have, before presenting the final report, including the observations, to the next meeting of the Council.
- e.** The Council will consider the report in closed session and decide what action should be taken to resolve the complaint. The Council will inform both parties of its decision in writing within 5 working days of its decision.
- f.** If the complainant or complainee is unhappy with the Council's decision she/he may take matters further under the Council's Grievance and Whistleblowing Procedures or Complaints Procedures, if appropriate.

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