



## WOODPLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

### ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Adopted Sept 2020

#### **Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment**

In support of our value to respect others Woodplumpton Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of its employees, officials, members, contractors, visitors to the Council or members of the public from the community which we serve.

The Council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace.

This Policy reflects the spirit in which the Council intends to undertake all of its business and outlines the procedures that will be followed in relation to any complaints. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Elected Members Code of Conduct and the employees Contract of Employment.

The Council will issue this Policy to all employees as part of their induction and to all Councillors as part of their Welcome Pack. The Council may also wish to share this Policy with contractors, visitors and members of the public.

**Bullying** - Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse of this use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress."

**Harassment is** - "Unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment." This usually covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age. These definitions are derived from the ACAS guidance on the topic.

Bullying and Harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient. They are generally evidenced by a pattern of conduct, rather than being related to one-off incidents.

Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, mental health issues, lack of respect for others, turnover, damage to the Council's reputation and ultimately, legal proceedings against the Council and payment of legal fees and potentially unlimited compensation.

#### **Process for dealing with complaints of Bullying and Harassment**

**Informal approach** - Anyone; employee, contractor, member or visitor, who feels he or she is being bullied or harassed should try to resolve the problem informally, in the first instance. It may be sufficient to explain to the person(s) involved in the unwanted behaviour, or an intermediary, that their conduct is unacceptable, offensive or causing discomfort. Anyone concerned about being bullied or harassed is encouraged to maintain a journal or other record of the incidents.

Where the complaint relates to a member of the public being offensive or abusive in person or on the telephone, an attempt will be made to explain why their behaviour is upsetting and the employee, Councillor or contractor is advised to walk away or terminate the conversation after advising the offender to put their concerns in writing in accordance with the Council's Communications Policy.

**Formal approach** – If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a complaint about harassment or bullying can be raised confidentially and informally, initially with the Clerk, Chairman or another Councillor if more appropriate. It may be appropriate for the complaint to be put in writing after the initial discussion, as this will enable the formal Grievance Procedure or Code of Conduct to be invoked.