
Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council

Procedure to deal with requests from parish councillors under the Equality Act 2010 for 'reasonable adjustments'

1. Introduction

Councils (including parish councils) are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make "reasonable adjustments" to accommodate the needs of disabled councillors, who would otherwise be placed at a disadvantage compared to a non-disabled councillor.

When such a request is made, there needs to be a fair, consistent and transparent procedure in place so that all councillors are treated equally.

Consideration also needs to be given to ensure that the parish council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are complied with and that requests are reasonable and justified. This needs to be balanced against the need to protect privacy and confidentiality in respect of the councillor making the request.

Reasonable adjustments are not for the personal benefit of a councillor, they are to ensure the councillor is not placed at a disadvantage because of their disability.

2. What are the types of changes that may have to be considered?

There are three different things that organisations may have to do to make it easier for a disabled person: -

- Change the way things are done.
- Change a physical feature (ie a ramp in a building).
- Provide equipment, aids or services.

3. What is meant by reasonable?

Adjustments only have to be made if it's reasonable to do so. What is reasonable depends on things like:

- The person's disability
- whether the changes are practicable
- whether the change being asked for would overcome the disadvantage being experienced
- the size of the organisation
- how much money and resources are available
- the cost of making the changes
- if any changes have already been made.

4. Ownership of equipment purchased

Any equipment or products purchased will remain the property of the parish council. If the parish councillor no longer needs the items, or if the parish councillor leaves his or her role, the parish council reserve the right to ask for the equipment to be returned.

5. Procedure to make a formal request for 'reasonable adjustments'

a. The request should be put in writing to the Parish Clerk with the following information included: -

- Basic information about the disability and why this is putting the person making a request at a disadvantage compared to a non-disabled councillor.
- Details of the 'reasonable adjustment' being requesting and how this will address the disadvantage being suffered.
- A written quotation for any equipment or products being requested.
- Written confirmation from a medical professional that the 'reasonable adjustment' being requested is required in order to fulfil your parish councillor role. Any reasonable costs for this will be reimbursed by the parish council.

b. Upon receipt, the Clerk will discuss the request with the Chair and if necessary, the Clerk will contact the requester and ask for any missing information. The request cannot be progressed until all information listed above has been provided.

c. When all information has been provided and the Clerk and Chair are agreed that the first three points in paragraph 3 above are satisfied then, an item will be added to the next PC agenda to be dealt with under 'Confidential Items' entitled 'Consider request made by a councillor for reasonable adjustments'.

d. At the meeting, the requester will not have to declare an interest because the reasonable adjustment is not for the personal benefit of the councillor, it is to ensure the parish councillor is not placed at a disadvantage because of their disability.

e. Neither the identity of the requester or details of their disability will be circulated to councillors or appear on the agenda or minutes.

f. When the item is discussed, Parish Councillors will consider: -

- Are the costs acceptable to the PC?
- Are the changes to the way things are done acceptable to the PC?

-
- g. On the minutes, details of the resolution will be published, stating only expenditure approved and that the item has been purchased to satisfy the council's obligation under the Equality Act.
- h. If the request is turned down, the Clerk will be instructed to write to the requester informing them of the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- i. If the request is approved, the Clerk will be instructed to write to the requester informing them of the decision.
- j. If the 'reasonable adjustment' relates to how things are done, the Clerk will be instructed to make the necessary changes.
- k. If the 'reasonable adjustment' requires the purchase of equipment, goods or services, such purchases will be carried out in line with the parish council's Financial Regulations.
- l. If goods or services are purchased, the payment will appear on a subsequent agenda and minutes (as with all purchases). However, it will state only the name of the supplier and that the item(s) have been purchased to satisfy the council's obligation under the Equality Act.
- m. The decision of the Parish Council will be final. However, subsequent requests can be made if circumstances have changed.