

Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee
14 October 2013

Report by the Secretary/
Director of People

**GUIDANCE: DCLG OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY
ON PERSONAL INTERESTS**

REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department for Communities & Local Government has issued guidance (September 2013) in respect to Councillors' personal interests, to specifically include union membership (Openness and transparency on personal interests).

A copy of the Guidance is attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee is asked to consider this report and make any recommendations it deems appropriate to the Fire Authority.

MEMBER CODE

2. The Committee will recall the Member Code of Conduct adopted by the Fire Authority in July 2012. That Code is attached at Appendix 2.
3. The Code includes the declaration of personal interests, which includes any political party or trade union membership. This is included in the annual Declaration of Member Interests (which all Members complete in readiness for the AGM or as soon as possible thereafter).
4. The revised Guidance is attached at Appendix 1. Within the local government community, it has caused some debate around the need for the Guidance, particularly in respect to disclosure of trade union membership.
5. The Authority adopted in its Code the requirements of disclosure, which are set out in Appendix 2. On the face of the Guidance, there are no immediate issues for the Authority.
6. During 2013/14 there will be a review of the Code of Conduct in any event.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

7. Not applicable.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

8. None arising directly.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The Guidance should be considered by all local authorities.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

10. None arising directly.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11. None arising directly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12. None arising directly.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

13. None arising directly.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

14. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

15. None.

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

16. The Committee is asked to consider this report and make any recommendations it deems appropriate to the Fire Authority.

R GRAHAM

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