

## **Report to Standards Committee**

**Subject:** Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests: A guide for Councillors – updated September 2013

**Date:** 16 December 2013

**Author:** Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To inform members of the Standards Committee that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued a further updated Guide for Councillor on Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests.

### **2. Background**

2.1 At the beginning of August 2012, DCLG published a guide for councillors on openness and transparency on personal interests. This guide was updated in March 2013 under the same title as before with an additional paragraph confirming that no dispensation is needed for a member with a liability to pay council tax to take part in the business of setting council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support.

2.2 DCLG has updated this guide again to confirm that in its view membership of a trade union should be registered and declared. The revised version of the guide was issued in September 2013.

2.3 A copy of the updated guide is attached at Appendix 1.

2.4 The Council's Code of Conduct already includes a requirement for members to disclose interests other than disclosable pecuniary interests. These other interests include the following:

*"You have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the Council where  
...*

*(a) It relates to or is likely to affect:*

*... any body:*

*... one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or **trade union**)*

*... of which you are a member ..."*

Members of the Borough Council are therefore obliged to register their membership of a trade union and the Council's position is consistent with that expressed by the DCLG.

### **3. Proposal**

It is proposed that the Standards Committee notes the contents of the updated guide.

### **4 Resource Implications**

None.

### **5 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Standards Committee notes the contents of the updated guide.

### **6 Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Openness and transparency on personal interests: A guide for Councillors updated September 2013.