

## Towards a Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire &amp; Rescue Authority

MEETING	Shadow Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	23 June 2015
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Draft Member Code of Conduct
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To recommend the adoption of a Member Code of Conduct by the Authority
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	One of the key documents for the new Authority is a Member Code of Conduct. This report refers to the current Member Codes of Conduct of the current Combined Authorities.
RISK ASSESSMENT	None
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	No separate impact assessment has been carried out in bringing forward this report.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	This report does not give rise to any new budget implications.
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are recommended to adopt the Dorset Model as its Member Code of Conduct.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None
APPENDICES	A: Dorset Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct B: Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority Member Code of Conduct
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer, Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority Jonathan Mair, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Dorset Fire Authority

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 With the new Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority assuming legal status in shadow format from 1 April 2015, it is critical that governance arrangements are fully considered, developed and scheduled in readiness for 1 April 2016. Whilst the Dorset Fire and Rescue Authority and the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire and Rescue Authority, and the services they provide, are similar, there are some differences in respect of the governance arrangements and in particular the Member Codes of Conduct adopted by the two current Fire Authorities are based on different model Codes.

## 2. Member Codes of Conduct

- 2.1 The different Codes of Conduct adopted by the Dorset Fire Authority and the Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority are attached. The two Authorities have adopted different approaches. The Dorset Fire Authority Member Code is based on the previous statutory model Code issued following the Local Government Act 2000 which includes reference to a list of 'do's' and 'don'ts' for the guidance of members in relation to the standard of behaviour expected of members. It does not, however, contain reference to the declaration of any personal or prejudicial interest. The Wiltshire & Swindon Member Code is based on the model code issued by the DCLG following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, and is more general and less specific in its requirements of members in some respects and although it makes reference to private interests, it gives no guidance as to what these might be, and when and how these should be declared.
- 2.2 At the meeting of the Joint Committee of the two current authorities on the 4<sup>th</sup> June, the Joint Committee decided to prefer the Dorset Fire Authority's approach as being more helpful to members in setting the standard of behaviour expected. The Joint Committee, however, asked that I consult with all members of the new Authority prior to this meeting and we will report back at the meeting on any comments received. Cllr Newbury has already circulated his own comments.
- 2.3 The Monitoring Officers of the two Authorities are of the view that of the 2 alternatives, the model Code based on the 2000 Act is more certain and helpful to members in setting out the standard of behaviour expected, and recommend it forms the basis of the Member Code for the new Authority.

## 3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 **Members are asked to consider which of the two current member Codes of Conduct to adopt as the Member Code of Conduct for the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority.**