



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 21/08

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	11 February 2021
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For approval
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Localism Act 2011 requires that the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (as a relevant local authority) must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its Members. To help achieve this, the Authority must adopt a code which deals with the conduct expected of Members whilst acting on behalf of the Authority.</p> <p>When the Authority was formed in 2016 Members adopted the code of conduct included as appendix 1.</p> <p>Although no conduct complaint has ever been brought against a member of the Authority (in their Fire and Rescue capacity) it remains important that the Authority should promote high standards of conduct and from time to time review its code against what is regarded as best practice.</p> <p>As part of its work supporting all tiers of local government to continue to maintain high standards of leadership and performance, the Local Government Association (LGA) has recently completed work to develop a new model councillor code of conduct, included as appendix 2.</p>

	<p>The LGA sees a link between high standards of leadership and high performance and it is in this context that the new model code has been developed and is now recommended to the Authority for adoption.</p> <p>After a proposed joint statement, introductory text and definitions, the code includes paragraphs or sections addressing purpose, general principles and application and then goes on to address the minimum standards of behaviour expected of all Members. It does this in ten main sections based upon the principles of conduct in public life.</p> <p>The section on application of the code is clear in setting out the circumstances in which the requirements of the code apply to Members. The code is also helpfully direct in the application of its requirements to individual Members in a series of “As a councillor I...” statements.</p> <p>The Localism Act leaves authorities free to adopt their own code of conduct, restricted only by the need for any code to be consistent with the principles of conduct in public life. In line with this freedom the LGA advises that the model code is a template for authorities to adopt either in whole or with local amendments.</p> <p>One particular part of the model that Members might wish to consider is the inclusion of a new category of “other registerable interests” and proposed restrictions on participation when a councillor has such an interest (see appendix 2, paragraphs 6 and 7 on pages 11 and 12).</p> <p>At present Members are required only to comply with the legal minimum by disclosing “disclosable pecuniary interests”, and these are interests of yourself and your spouse or partner only. The proposed model goes further in defining a new category of other registerable interests and by bringing within scope the interests of relatives or “close associates” (see appendix 2, Tables 1 and 2 on pages 14 and 15).</p> <p>There is value in a consistent approach across the constituent authorities and the Fire and Rescue Authority.</p>
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	I will be recommending to Dorset Council that it adopts the model code of conduct in its entirety. I am waiting to hear from Monitoring Officers about the positions of the other constituent councils and will report on these at the meeting.
RISK ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	There are no direct budget implications for the purposes of this report. At present there may be financial implications associated with any conduct complaints and investigations.
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree that the Authority should adopt the core provisions of the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct. 2. Consider the adoption of those provisions of the Model Code relating to other registerable interests.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	The Localism Act 2011
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 - The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority Members Code of Conduct Appendix 2 - The Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct
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