

## **Item 7 (b) – Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests**

### **Recommendation to Council:**

- a) to consider whether the DCLG amendment underlined in red and highlighted in the Illustrative Text, as set out in Appendix A in this report be incorporated into the Sevenoaks District Council's Code of Conduct;
- b) to note the amended Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) "guide for councillors" set out at Appendix B regarding "Openness and transparency on personal interests".

—

The attached report was considered by the Standards Committee and the Governance Committee, relevant minute extracts below:

#### Standards Committee - 16 January 2014 (Minute 4)

The Chief Legal and Governance Officer presented a report which advised that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had published revised guidance on personal interests with respect to membership of trade unions which required a slight amendment to the Council's Code of Conduct. Also attached for information was additional guidance that had been published in relation to openness and transparency on personal interests, which confirmed that the DCLG's view was that a dispensation was not required to take part in the business of setting council tax or a precept, simply by virtue of being a homeowner or tenant within the Authority's area. The Committee noted this clarification as this had been a matter under discussion at the last meeting.

A query was raised over the anomaly that might occur if the NALC Code had been adopted by a Parish/Town Council.

*Action 1: That an email be circulated to give Members an opportunity to update their disclosable pecuniary interest forms.*

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- a) the DCLG amendment underlined in red and highlighted in the Illustrative Text, as set out in Appendix A of the report be incorporated into the Sevenoaks District Council's Code of Conduct; and
- b) the amended Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) "guide for councillors" set out at Appendix B of the report regarding "Openness and transparency on personal interests", be noted.

Governance Committee - 29 January 2014 (Minute 27)

The Chief Legal and Governance Officer presented a report which advised that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had published revised guidance on personal interests with respect to membership of trade unions which required a slight amendment to the Council's Code of Conduct. Also attached for information was additional guidance that had been published in relation to openness and transparency on personal interests, which confirmed that the DCLG's view was that a dispensation was not required to take part in the business of setting council tax or a precept, simply by virtue of being a homeowner or tenant within the Authority's area. The Committee noted this clarification.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

- c) the DCLG amendment underlined in red and highlighted in the Illustrative Text, as set out in Appendix A of the report be incorporated into the Sevenoaks District Council's Code of Conduct; and
- d) the amended Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) "guide for councillors" set out at Appendix B of the report regarding "Openness and transparency on personal interests", be noted.