

# Item no.

Report to: **Standards Committee**

Date: **15 July 2005**

Report of: **David Taylor, Monitoring Officer**

Subject: **Request for Dispensation for Peterlee Town Council**

Ward: **Peterlee**

## 1. **Purpose of Report**

To consider a request for Dispensation from the obligation to declare prejudicial interests in connection with a report to be considered by Peterlee Town Council relating to subsidy on the proposed twinning visit to Nordenham, Germany in 2006.

## 2. **Consultation**

I attach copy of the letter from John Arthur, Town Clerk at Peterlee Town Council dated 24 March 2005 which he has written after discussion with me as to the best way of resolving this matter.

## 3. **Background**

In order to ensure the success of the visit to Nordenham to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Council's twinning partnership, Peterlee Town Council wish to consider the merits of subsidising the cost of the trip for participants. Participants on these visits generally include a mixture of councillors and members of the public who express an interest in travelling. Clearly any member who may be interested in undertaking the trip has a financial interest in the cost being subsidised. Any Member whose relatives or friends may have an intention of applying to go on the twinning visit would also have a financial interest in the outcome of the decision. Such interests would constitute a prejudicial interest and would in the absence of dispensation prevent the Member participating in the debate and voting on the report. In those circumstances John Arthur and I agree it likely that more than 50% of the Town Council would have a prejudicial interest in the report he proposes to submit.

The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) (Dispensations) Regulations 2002 permit the Standards Committee to grant a dispensation in those circumstances if they consider that the transaction of the Council's business would be impeded as a result of the Code of Conduct and if in all circumstances of the case they consider it appropriate to grant dispensation.

## 4.0 **Implications**

### 4.1 **Policy**

None

4.2 **Financial**

None

4.3 **Legal**

None

4.4 **Risk**

The Town Clerk and I are satisfied that granting dispensation to permit the Town Council Members to determine this report can be justified even though some financial benefit may accrue to those Members who participate in the visit if the recommendation is approved.

4.5 **Communications**

None

4.6 **Corporate Implications**

None

4.7 **Equality and Diversity**

None

4.8 **Procurement**

None

4.9 **Electronic Service Delivery**

None

5.0 **Recommendation**

The Standards Committee is recommended to grant a dispensation to Peterlee Town Council Members to debate and vote on the question of whether a subsidy should be made available to persons participating in the proposed twinning to Nordenham in 2006.

**Background Papers**

Letter of Application dated 24 March 2005 from the Town Clerk at Peterlee Town Council.