**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**1 JULY 2014**

**ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**


**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R JOHNSON TO COUNCILLOR N J RUSHTON**

"Recently Derbyshire County Council has set a policy that all councillors should declare that they are members of the Society of Freemasons. Would you agree that this Council should also have a similar policy, in declaring that all councillors declare if they belong to the Freemasons, so that residents of North West Leicestershire will have confidence in their representatives being honest, transparent and above board?"


**RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR N J RUSHTON**

"In replying to the question from Cllr Johnson I have taken advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer and I have been advised of the following:

The reference above is in relation to a decision taken by Derbyshire County Council to amend and extend the locally agreed Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests in their members Code of Conduct. The full wording of that amendment being as follows:

"Any trade union of which you are a member *and membership of pressure groups, the Freemasons or other influential bodies of which you are a member." (*With the amendments being in Italics).

I am advised by the Monitoring Officer that Member's have been given advice during previous training sessions that the Freemasons is a body directed to charitable purposes and that  membership of the Freemasons (or other  similar organisations) is a registrable interest under the Code of Conduct under Section 11 of the Register. The Monitoring Officer or her Deputy are always available to give advice to individual Members should they have concerns about registering interests.

In preparing the new Code of Conduct as a result of the changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011 Members will recall a cross party working group was established to make recommendations to Council which were subsequently adopted. If Members feel that it would be appropriate to review and /or amend the locally agreed Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests then Council can request that be done".