

**SUBJECT: MEMBERSHIP OF EXTREMIST POLITICAL PARTIES**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

---

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report for Members to consider a Joint Statement from the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Chief Fire Officer and Representative Bodies in relation to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's position regarding membership of extremist political parties or similar organisations.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following high profile media coverage the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Chairperson Samantha Samuels wrote to all chief fire officers in the UK Fire and Rescue Service to determine whether they had a clearly defined position on employee membership of extreme right wing organisations.
- 2.2 The Chief Fire Officers Association was also consulted to seek guidance on a proposed national position for fire and rescue services in relation to such activities to ensure consistency in messages given in responding to the media coverage.

**3 PROPOSED POSITION**

- 3.1 The Authority strives to ensure that all those employed by it have the personal qualities and attributes to ensure that we work effectively with all sections of our diverse communities and to ensure we fully support the Equality and Diversity agenda.
- 3.2 Membership of extremist political parties or other similar organisations is contradictory to the aims and Core Values of our organisation. For example; the British National Party's stance on issues such as Domestic Violence, Disability, Sexuality and Race does not support the Authority's aim to ensure fairness and equality for all.
- 3.3 Given the above, it is therefore important that the Authority clearly defines its position regarding employee membership of such political parties / organisations. In order to get an unambiguous message to both our employees and people within our communities that the Authority will not support membership of extremist political parties or other similar organisations it is imperative that a statement is released and is included as part of our Single Equality Scheme.

- 3.4 The Representative Bodies are in full support of an appropriate statement being released and a proposed joint statement has been developed to reflect the collective position (see Appendix A). It is proposed that this position be endorsed by Members and that this statement be jointly signed by the Chairman of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer and the Representative Bodies.

### **4 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 By issuing the above statement the Authority can minimise and potentially eradicate any risk of negative impact on its reputation as an employer of choice that embraces fairness and equality for everyone, which support fairness and equality in everything we do irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religion and/or belief.

### **5 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no health and safety implications in relation to issuing the above statement however, a clear position in relation to membership of extremist political parties or similar organisations may help to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees and the community we serve.

### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising however, ensuring our position is clear in that we will not support membership of extremist political parties or other similar organisations may prevent any future potential legal / financial implications.

### **7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Authority has clear policies and procedures in place to ensure equality and fairness for its employees and members of the community and the above statement will enhance its commitment to equality and diversity.

### **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note the content of this report;
  - b) Endorse the release of a joint statement; and
  - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.

---

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers in respect of this report.

**Appendix A**

**Joint Statement on Membership of Extremist Political Parties or Similar Organisations**

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority values diversity and supports the promotion of equality. As a public sector provider, we require all employees to provide an equal service to the people of Tyne and Wear regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or religion and/ or belief.

Media coverage regarding members of extremist political parties or similar organisations has prompted us to remind colleagues of the organisation's commitment to the equalities agenda, and the importance of promoting this through our daily activities.

We would like to emphasise that the values and objectives of extremist political parties or similar organisations are incompatible with the values and objectives of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority are committed to full compliance with its legal duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity.

Signed

Chairman of the Fire Authority

Chief Fire Officer

FBU

FOA

UNISON

GMB

