



PART I Agenda Item No	5
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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 3rd APRIL 2014

REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

This report advises the Committee on the outcome of the annual refresh of the Members' Interest Register, and asks the Committee whether action is necessary to secure a more rapid response in future.

- 1 **RECOMMENDED THAT** the Committee notes the information on the return of Members' Interests forms, and decides if action is necessary to improve the return of such forms in the future.
- 2 **INTRODUCTION**
- 3 This Committee, on 24 June 2013, agreed that Councillors be asked to make an annual declaration of their interests. The current disclosure regime makes it a criminal offence for a Member to fail to make a disclosable pecuniary declaration, so an annual reminder acts as a safeguard to remind Members' of their duty and protects Members from criminal sanctions. Also an annual declaration demonstrates that Councillors understand and respect the principles that underpin the declaration of interest regime. Finally an annual question posed to Councillors provides a useful reminder of their duty and prompts thinking about their circumstances.
- 4 In October 2013, all Members' were asked to make an annual update of their interests. Not all forms were returned so on 19 December a reminder was sent to 18 Councillors. Again not all forms were returned so a third reminder was on 31 January 2014 to 14 Members'. Since then other efforts have been made to secure the return of forms and today three responses are outstanding. A fourth Councillor has not completed a declaration of interest form but has advised that there have been no changes to their circumstances. The latest forms will be displayed on the website as we are required to do.
- 5 The Committee is asked to consider what action, if any, should be taken to secure the timely return of Members' Register of Interest forms.
- 6 **FINANCIAL AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**
- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the mater detailed in this report.

7 **LEGAL POWERS RELIED ON AND ANY LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and cop-opted members of this authority. That legislation also asks members to disclose their pecuniary interests.

7.2 The Council's own Code of Member Conduct states that Members must inform the Monitoring Officer of any change in their circumstances within 28 days of becoming aware of such a change

8 **EFFICIENCY GAINS AND VALUE FOR MONEY**

8.1 The regular updating of members' Register of Interests displays to the public how serious members have been in meeting their responsibilities to be open and honest about their personal situation.

9 **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not to annually update the Member Register of Interests could damage the Council's reputation as an open and accountable public body.

10 **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None

11 **CORPORATE PLAN & POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

12 **APPENDICES ATTACHED**

12.1 None

13 **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Document Title	Custodial Officer	Where Filed
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10.1 Not applicable

14 **AUTHOR**

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