

REVIEW OF THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS' AND CO-OPTES' DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2016

CLASSIFICATION:

Open

WARD(S) AFFECTED

All Wards

CORPORATE DIRECTOR

Gifty Edila, Corporate Director of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires all local authorities to adopt a Code of Conduct for its elected Members and voting co-optees.
- 1.2 The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 requires all Members to complete a declaration of interests form on their election to office, and for voting co-optees to complete a form on their appointment to office.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Standards Committee is asked to note the report.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 This report is for noting and lessons learnt from this review, will continue to help develop the arrangements for managing Members' declarations of interests.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES

- 5.1 The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 provides that Members and co-optees must complete a declaration of interest form.
- 5.2 The Council's Code of Conduct has implemented the Regulations and provides that all Members and co-optees (including non-voting co-optees) must complete a declaration of interest form.
- 5.3 Standards Committee further requires regular review of compliance with the Regulations and the Code of Conduct by the Monitoring Officer.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Localism Act 2011 places an obligation on all local authorities to promote high ethical standards in public office.
- 6.2 Regulations also require Members and co-optees to be transparent and declare all disclosable interests on their declaration of interest form.

- 6.3 The declaration of interests forms are held in a hard copy register and on the Council's website as well.
- 6.4 Having reviewed the forms, the majority of Members have been keeping their forms updated. A small minority of Members last updated a form in 2012. They have been invited to review their forms to see if any further updates are necessary. By law Members must notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of a change in circumstance.
- 6.5 Appropriate advice and guidance is sent to Members as and when necessary, to keep them updated on case law relating to declarations of interest. In 2015 two separate guidance have been sent to Members, one on a successful prosecution of a Councillor who participated in a decision in which they had a disclosable interest. The second related to an article on 'bias' in decision making and also a list of recent court cases addressing the issue of Members' interest in decision making.

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