

**REVIEW OF THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS' AND CO-OPTEES' DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM & REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**18 February 2019**

**CLASSIFICATION:**

**Open**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED**

**All Wards**

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR**

**TIM SHIELDS – CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

## **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 That Standards Committee note the report; and
- 2.2 That Standards Committee note that a quarterly email will be sent from member services to remind members to review and update their form and advise Governance services accordingly.

## **3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

- 3.1 This report is for noting and an annual review of the forms, will continue to help develop the arrangements for managing Members' declaration of interests.

## **4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

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

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE**

- 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 Following on from the Municipal election in May 2018 , all elected Members were required to complete an ROI form within 28 days of taking up office. Governance and Member Services ensured that this was done.
- 6.5 Appropriate advice and guidance was sent to Members following their election in May 2018 and it is suggested that a quarterly email be sent from member services to remind members to review and update their form and advise Governance Services accordingly. It has been common practice to also keep Members updated as and when necessary, on case law relating to declarations of interest. Following on from the election in May 2018 all Members of the Council were required to, and attended mandatory training on the Members Code of Conduct.
- 6.6 Following the review by Central Government in early 2018 of standards in public life in England and Wales, as defined in the Localism Act 2011, the key findings and recommendations of that review were published on 30 January 2019. The headline findings will be part of a verbal update later in this agenda. It is likely that the review findings, if brought into effect by central government, will require revisions to Localism Act 2011, and subsequently revisions will be required to the existing Members Code of Conduct. It will be suggested during the verbal update that Members receive a further report in the early summer of 2019, following an in-depth review of the key findings and their implications.

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