

Report of the Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor) to the meeting of the Standards Committee to be held on 21 July 2010.

A

Subject:

Register of Interests

Summary statement:

Members are invited to consider the progress made for ensuring that the Members Register of Interests is kept up to date and accessible to the public.

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Improvement Area:



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Suzan Hemingway, Assistant Director Corporate Services (City Solicitor)



1. Summary

- 1.1. Members are invited to consider the progress made for ensuring that the Members' Register of Interests is kept up to date and accessible to the public.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Member's Code of Conduct contains the following provision regarding the registration of Member's interests.

"32 Subject to paragraphs 34 to 36, you must, within 28 days of;

32.1 This Code being adopted by or applied to your authority, or

32.2 Your election or appointment to office (where that is later)

register in your authority's Register of Members' Interests (maintained under section 81 (1) of the Local Government Act 2000) details of your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 18 by providing written notification to your authority's Monitoring Officer.

- 33 Subject to paragraphs 34 and 36 you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new personal interest or change to any personal interest registered under paragraph 32, register details of that new personal interest or change by providing written notification to your authority's Monitoring Officer.

Sensitive Information

- 34 Where you consider that the information relating to any of your personal interests is sensitive information, and your authority's Monitoring Officer agrees, you need not include that information when registering that interest, or, as the case may be, a change to that interest under paragraphs 32 to 33.
- 35 You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraphs 32 to 33 is no longer sensitive information, notify your authority's Monitoring Officer asking that the information be included in your authority's Register of Members' Interests.
- 36 In this Code, "sensitive information" means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subjected to violence or intimidation."

- 2.2 Newly elected members of Council are provided with the Registration of Interests Form immediately after their successful election to the Council. A copy of this form is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In addition, following the election, Members of Council are provided with a copy of their existing Register of Interests at the Annual Council meeting, with a request that they check the entries on the register and update where appropriate. Members who do not return their forms are contacted to ensure the return is received. City Solicitor can confirm that all ninety Members of the Council have provided an up to date form for 2010/2011
- 2.4 There is a statutory requirement to have the Register available for public inspection. A hard copy of the Register is kept in the City Solicitor's office and in the office of Member Support. However, over recent years many local authorities have provided a copy of the Members' Register of Interests online and made it accessible through their website. Discussion has been undertaken with Members to put in place a similar system at Bradford.
- 2.5 Officers are in the process of finalising arrangements to produce the Members' Register of Interests online. It is hoped this can be achieved by the end of September 2010. Elected Members will shortly be provided with an email and a further copy of their most recent entries (May 2010) with a further request to check the accuracy of the document before it is made available electronically.
- 2.6 Standards Committee will be aware that the onus on ensuring that the Register of Interests is up to date and accurate rests with individual Members. Further the Code of Conduct (para. 33) places an additional obligation on elected Members to register details of any change to any interests within 28 days of the Member becoming aware of that change.

3. Financial and resource appraisal

- 3.1 The arrangements to publish the Register of Interests online are to be met from existing resources.

4. Legal appraisal

- 4.1 The proposals to publish the Register of Interests online further support compliance with the legal requirement to make the Register publicly accessible.

5. Other Implications

- 5.1 There are no Equal Rights, Sustainability, Community Safety, Human Rights Act, Trade Union implications arising from this report.

6. Not for Publication documents

- 6.1 None.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That the Standards Committee members note the progress made in ensuring the Register of Interests is up to date, accurate and accessible to the public.
- 7.2. Standards Committee members are asked to consider what further action should be taken to ensure that members are aware of their obligations and compliant therewith.

8. Reason for Recommendation

- 8.1. It is important that the public have confidence in their elected representatives and can access appropriate information regarding members of Council's Register of Interests.

9. Appendices

- 9.1. Appendix 1 – Blank Register of Interests form