

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 7 November 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Openness and transparency on personal interests – DCLG guidance

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Resources

WARDS: All

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To outline present Government Guidance in support of the Declarations of Interest requirements for Members.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS: That the report be noted.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The previous Standards regime was swept away with the Standards Board for England in April this year.

3.2 Halton has adopted its own Code of Member Conduct and this is included in the Council's Constitution.

3.3 DCLG have issued some supportive guidance in relation to declarations of interest. This is called - ***Openness and transparency on personal interests - A guide for councillors (DCLG)***

3.4 The document covers

Why are there new rules?

Does this affect me?

How will there be openness & transparency about interests?

What personal interests should be entered in the register?

What must I do about registering my personal interests?

What are pecuniary interests?

Do I have any disclosable pecuniary interests?

Does my signature need to be published online?

Who can see the register?

Is there scope for withholding information?

When is information removed from the register?
What does a disclosable pecuniary interest stop me doing?
Do I have to leave the room?
When & how do I apply for a dispensation?
What happens if I don't follow the rules?
Where can I look at the national regulations?

A copy of the Guidance is attached as an Appendix to this Report and can otherwise be sourced at:-

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/2193362.pdf>

3.5 The Code must be read in the context of the law at large including the Localism Act 2011 (including provisions as to Bias and Predetermination), Bribery Act 2010 and Local Government Act 1972.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HALTON

None.

6.2 EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS IN HALTON

None.

6.3 A HEALTHY HALTON

None.

6.4 A SAFER HALTON

None

6.5 HALTON'S URBAN RENEWAL

None.

7.00 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 No key issues have been identified which require control measures.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Report of itself does not contain specific equality and diversity issues.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None.