

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee  
**DATE:** 4 September 2013  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director - Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Declaration of Interests of Members  
**WARD(s):** N/A

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To report on the local application of the systems for Declarations of Interests by Members in order to maintain the values of good governance and ethical behaviour.

**2. RECOMMENDATION: That Committee notes the report.**

**3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 On 17 July 2012, the Committee received the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Declarations of Interest by Members.

3.2 The purpose was to remind Members that integrity in Local Government is essential to command the confidence of the community and of all organisations with which the Council comes into contact.

3.3. The report introduced the new concept of disclosable pecuniary interests and other disclosable interests which had been established by the Localism Act 2011. Members were reminded that to fail to disclose disclosable pecuniary interest or to take part in decisions when they exist can amount to a criminal offence.

3.4 The new Code of Conduct was approved by Standards Committee at the same meeting, and referred for adoption by full Council which subsequently took place in July 2012. Following that, the Register of Interests was updated to take account of the requirements of the Act, and the necessary publication on the Council's website of Members' interests was carried out.

3.5 The Council has a challenging culture on Declarations of Interests, with the prime responsibility resting with individual Members. The practical expression of the culture takes various forms:

- Declaration of interests by Members at the start of meetings, both formal and informal
- Availability of guidance from the Monitoring Officer and his staff
- The completion of the Register of interests

- The annual sending out of a Declaration form which forms an opportunity to reflect
  - Guidance and Training
  - Engagement and involvement by the Standards Committee.
  - Sending out of forms from Committee Services when a new interest becomes apparent at a meeting.
- 3.6 The Register of Interests is held by the Principal Committee Services Officer and each Councillor's page on the Council website contains a link to the interests registered.
- 3.7 Committee Services also maintain the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Members are required to register any gifts or hospitality worth £50 or more received in connection with official duties as a Member. They should also provide details of the person who makes the offer or gives the gift or hospitality. This must be done within 28 days of receipt. At meetings when an item is under discussion which is likely to affect the giver of the gift or hospitality, then the existence and nature of the gift must be declared by the Member as well as the name of the giver and how the business relates to that person. The Monitoring Officer looks at the Register of Gifts and Hospitality periodically and he is clear that Members are aware of its existence and using it. Between 1 May 2012 and 30 April 2013 there have been six entries made by Members and twenty by Officers.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The publication of the Register follows the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

#### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None

#### **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 None

#### **7. RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Failure to comply with the registration and declaration requirements would amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and have serious consequences for both Member and Authority. Furthermore, a breach of the disclosable pecuniary interest provisions may well amount to a criminal offence.

#### **8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 8.1 None

#### **9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 9.1 None.