

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

A.3 ANNUAL REPORT ON DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

(Report prepared by Ian Ford and Lisa Hastings)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the Committee with an overview on the register of, and declarations of, interests made by Members from 1 April 2021 until 21 January 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was agreed at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 29 June 2016 that, as part of its annual work programme, the Committee would receive an annual report on declarations of interest and associated matters. This report covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 21 January 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee NOTES the contents of this report, subject to any comments or recommendations that the Committee may wish to make following its consideration of the report.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

In accordance with the Committee's Work Programme, this is an annual report on declarations of interest and associated matters. This report covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 21 January 2022 and provides statistics on:-

- the number of declarations of interest made at meetings;
- the number of offers of gifts and hospitality that have been registered by Members during this period; and
- updates to the Members' Register of Interests.

The data has been collated from the Committee system Modern.gov which the Council started using as of August 2016 and from Members' submissions.

Register of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Council is required to publish the 'Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests' on its website in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, which prescribes the categories of interests.

It is confirmed that the Council's website includes a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for all District Councillors and this is updated, when an individual Member

provides details of an amendment direct to the Monitoring Officer. Any entry, which is relevant to a business item on an agenda, must be declared by the individual Member and they must subsequently remove themselves from the meeting, unless a prior dispensation has been granted by the Monitoring Officer.

One individual dispensation has been requested during the relevant period.

Declarations of interest at meetings

Members are required to declare Personal and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests at meetings and those recorded on the committee system, as declared by District Councillors for the period 1 April 2021 to 21 January 2022 are set out in **Appendix A** to this report. All minutes of the meetings also record the declarations.

Use of Blanket dispensations

The Members' Code of Conduct at paragraph 7.3, as agreed by full Council in January 2018 contains blanket dispensations for any business of the Authority where that business relates to the Council functions in respect of:

- i. housing, where the Member is a tenant of the Authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to their tenancy or lease;
- ii. school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where the Member is a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
- iii. statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where the Member is in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
- iv. an allowance, payment or indemnity given to Members;
- v. any ceremonial honour given to Members; and
- vi. setting Council Tax or a Precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

Since their introduction, some of these blanket dispensations have been called upon at meetings of the Cabinet and full Council.

Declarations of offers/receipt of gifts and hospitality

Following the Standards Committee review of the Council's Gift and Hospitality Policy for Members, new guidance and a notification form was issued to all District Councillors in May 2016. There have been no recorded declarations of offers/receipt of gifts and hospitality made by District Councillors in the time period covered by this report.

Updates to Members' Register of Interests

Since the new Members' Code of Conduct was adopted to take effect in April 2018, Members are required to register details of their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and their Personal Interests within 28 days of becoming a Member (or being re-elected or reappointed) or a change in those details, in the Authority's Register of Interests. Personal Interests are defined in Paragraph 5 of the Code as relating to or is likely to affect any item of business of the Authority within any of the six categories as set out in 5.1 (a) to (f).

Following Guidance and a Notification Form being issued in 2018, Members are advised to register their Personal Interests with the Monitoring Officer. In the time period covered by

this report one Member has registered a Personal Interest (on two separate occasions) with the Monitoring Officer. To date these forms have not been published on the Council's website but retained within a central register. The most common declarations are made under paragraph 5.1 (d) being "any other body of which the Councillor is a member and in which they hold a position of general control or management –

- (i) exercising functions of a public nature;
- (ii) directed to charitable purposes; or
- (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);

LEGISLATION/POLICY:

The Council's Code of Conduct for Members sets out guidance for Councillors regarding the registration and disclosure of interests. The relevant legislation is the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Table of Members' Declarations of Interest made at Council, Cabinet or Committee meetings 1 April 2021 to 21 January 2022