

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS 23rd MAY 2008

Report of the Monitoring Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Committee of the continuing monitoring of the registration of personal interests by City and Parish Councillors.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the report be noted

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Members may recall that at its meeting on the 13th September 2007, the Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer on the progress that had been made in ensuring that all city and parish councillors registered their personal interests as required by the Code of Conduct, and were mindful of the need to register any changes within twenty eight days.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 The Monitoring Officer reported in September that it was intended that at the start of each municipal year in May, a letter would be sent to all Members of the City Council reminding them of the need to register any changes. It was intended that this letter would require a response from each Member, either a declaration to the effect that there has been no change, or the return of a completed "change" form.

2.2 It is intended that these letters will be sent to Members of the City Council around the time of the Annual Council meeting, requesting a reply by the middle of June. This will enable the Monitoring Officer, and indeed this Committee, to be confident that Members have properly considered their registration of interests.

2.3 With regard to the parish councils, by virtue of the very number of councillors and the frequency of resignations and co-options, it has been extremely difficult for the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the register contains a registration form completed by each and every parish councillor. A checking process has been ongoing over the last few months, and at the time of writing this report, there are four parish councillors

whose registration forms appear to be outstanding. The Monitoring Officer has been in contact with each of these individually.

2.4 In order to ensure that the registrations of parish councillors are kept up to date, the Monitoring Officer has written to the clerks of all the parish councils within the district, requesting them to draw to the attention of their councillors the requirement to register any changes to their personal interests, and enclosing copies of the change form. The letter also asked the clerks to draw to the attention of their councillors the fact that their home address was likely to be required to be registered in the section of the form relating to beneficial interest in land within the parish. The Monitoring Officer has noted that very many parish councillors have entered a nil return in this section, and feels that it is likely that many may have done so in error.

2.5 It is hoped that these actions will ensure that city and parish councillors maintain accurate register entries of their personal interests.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Registration of personal interests is a requirement of the Members' Code of Conduct.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her role as adviser to the Standards Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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