

## **MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE – 21ST SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **Report of the Monitoring Officer**

#### **Part A**

#### **ITEM 6      REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

##### Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding the number of Register of Members' Interests that have not yet been returned. As the last meeting of the Committee scheduled on 16th March 2020 was cancelled the yearly update is being provided to this meeting (at 15 months).

##### Recommendations

1. To note the report;
2. That the Committee considers whether it wishes to schedule a future update of the Register of Members' Interests and the processes for ensuring it is kept up to date.

##### Reasons

1 & 2. Under the Localism Act 2011 (Sections 29 and 30), the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and the Councils Code of Conduct, Members of the Council are required to disclose their own and partners disclosable pecuniary interests, and other personal interests.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

On 11th September 2017, the Member Conduct Committee received an update from the Monitoring Officer about the processes to keep the register up to date. At that meeting the Committee resolved that a time limit of four weeks be added to the email reminders sent asking Borough Councillors and the Clerks of Parish and Town Councils to confirm if their entry in the Registers of Members' Interests required amending or had not changed, and also that the wording in the text of the email reminders sent to Borough Councillor and Clerks of Parish and Town Councils included reference to the Localism Act 2011, other relevant legislation and the requirement to respond within 28 days of any changes.

##### Processes for keeping the Register of Members' Interests up to date

There is no legal requirement for the Monitoring Officer to regularly check with Councillors that their Registers of Members' Interests are up to date. The procedures that have been introduced are voluntary, although there are statutory requirements for Councillors to notify the Monitoring Officer of changes in certain circumstances.

To date, emails have been sent on a six monthly basis to all Borough Councillors and Clerks of Parish and Town Councils asking about entries in the Registers of

Members' Interests. Emails have been sent on 3rd July 2020 with a reminder sent on 24th July 2020.

As recommended at the Member Conduct Committee on 12th September 2016, a positive confirmation of whether or not there have been changes to entries in the Register of Members' Interests is sought from all Borough Councillors. Parish clerks were advised that Parish Councillors should only respond if a change was required\*.

The response rates for 2019/20 and 2020/21 are set out below:

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>% Response Rate</b>
Parish Clerks on behalf of Parish Councillors	August 2018	37%
Borough Councillors	August 2018	35%
Parish Clerks on behalf of Parish Councillors	February 2019	31%
Borough Councillors	February 2019	73%
Borough Councillors	July 2020	73% (after 2 <sup>nd</sup> reminder)
Parish Councillors	July 2020	30% *

#### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

It is recommended that the Committee receives update reports at six monthly intervals.

#### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

##### *Financial Implications*

None

##### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with maintaining registers of interests rest with individual councillors and not with the Council itself.

Background Papers: None

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