

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards (Advisory) Committee 25 January 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director Governance	Classification: Unrestricted
Members Register of Interests	

Originating Officer(s)	Beverley McKenzie, Head of Members' Support
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Summary

This report updates the Committee on the Members' Register of Interests and the information published on the Council website.

Recommendations:

The Standards (Advisory) Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the information set out in Appendix 1 in relation to the completion of the register of interests during the current municipal year.
2. Note the arrangements for the publication of personal information for Councillors, including the exemptions for sensitive information.
3. Note the arrangements for the publication of Members contact details.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The report has been provided to the Standards Advisory Committee for noting and no decision is required.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Committee could chose not to consider this report but it is recommended as good practise for the Standards (Advisory) Committee to keep itself up to date with issues around Member Interests.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Members' Register of Interests

- 3.1 Members are required to complete a declaration of their interests within 28 days of their appointment and thereafter they must notify any changes to this within 28 days of becoming aware of the change.
- 3.2 As a matter of good practice and for the purpose of clarity, Members are asked to provide a nil return if there are no changes to the register at the six-monthly reminder. A reminder exercise was undertaken at the end of December 2017 and responses up to 12th January 2018 have been included in Appendix 1. A revised schedule will be tabled at the meeting to update on the current position. The next refresh will be done following the elections in May 2018.

Publication of the Register of Interest and Personal Details

- 3.3 The Declaration of Interests provided by members is published on the Member's web page. There has been some concern raised regarding the disclosure of the personal information and the possibility that the public could access a Member's personal information.
- 3.4 The Localism Act 2011(section 29) requires that the Members' register is available for inspection within the authority and that the register is published on the authority's website.
- 3.5 The Act makes provision for the non-publication of the sensitive interests, where the Member and the Monitoring Officer consider that the disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the Member or a person connected with the Member to be subject to violence or intimidation.
- 3.6 In such situations, the Members' register of interest will continue to be published on the website, however, the specific details of the interest will be withheld and the item will reflect "Not shown on web site".

Publication of Member Contact Details

- 3.7 The Council also publishes the contact details for Members. The Town Hall address is used for all correspondence. Members choose to publish their personal mobile number or the office number.
- 3.8 Some Members prefer to use their personal email, rather than the council provided account, to conduct their Council business. Each Member is required to register as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner. The Council will include the personal e-mail when publishing details on the website, Members' business cards and other publications.

- 3.9 Members are encouraged to use their Council email and avoid using their personal email for Council Business. This is in line with best practice across local government to ensure safe handling of residents' personal data. The Council's email system is protected by firewalls and advanced content filtering systems; filtering out spam and quarantining any suspect attachments.
- 3.10 Official correspondence will be forwarded to Councillors at their Council e-mail address. Officers will be authorised to send non-sensitive and non-personal information to the Members at their private e-mail address. It is the Councillors responsibility to check their Council email account.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 This is a noting report. There are no financial implications arising from the contents of the report.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that the Monitoring Officer must establish and maintain a register of interests of members and co-opted members of the authority. Section 29(5) of the Act provides that the Monitoring Officer must secure that a copy of the register is available for inspection at a place in the authority's area at all reasonable hours and that the register is published on the authority's website.
- 5.2 It is a requirement of section 30 of the Localism Act that a member or co-opted notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests for inclusion in the register within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member.
- 5.3 Section 32 of the Localism Act makes provision for sensitive interests. Section 32 applies to disclosable pecuniary interests and other interest which the authority has decided require registration. A sensitive interest is defined by section 32 as being where the member or co-opted member and the Monitoring Officer consider that the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member or a person connected with them being subject to violence or intimidation.
- 5.4 If a sensitive interest is entered in the register, section 32(2) of the Act provides that copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register, must not include details of the interest but may state that the member or co-opted member has an interest the details of which are withheld under section 32(2) of the Localism Act 2011.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific implications for One Tower Hamlets arising from the proposals in this report.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Committee meeting software provides an automated register of the Register of Interest. This is published to the Members' webpage and facilitates transparency and accountability to the electorate.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT (SAGE)

- 8.1 There are no SAGE implications arising directly from this report

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no risk management implications.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This report has no immediate implications for Crime and Disorder.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- none

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Register of Interests Submissions

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

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