

SUBJECT:	Update on Standards Framework
REPORT OF:	Monitoring Officer
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanna Swift
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WARD/S AFFECTED	None

1. Purpose of Report

To report on compliance with requirements of the standards framework following the local elections in May 2015

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the current position, review the notification form for disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and consider any further action that may be required.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure the Council meets its statutory duty of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its members

3. Content of Report

- 3.1 The standards framework introduced by the Localism Act 2011 requires every newly elected member to notify the monitoring officer of their disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's), within 28 days of taking office. Following the elections on 7 May members took up office on Monday 11 May and the deadline for notification of DPI's was Monday 8 June. Under the Council's code of conduct members are also required to notify the monitoring officer of their personal interests within 28 days of taking office. Both sets of interests must be open to public inspection and published on the Council's website. A copy of the notification form issued to members with their Induction Pack is attached to this report for ease of reference
- 3.2 The monitoring officer is pleased to report that all new councillors returned their notification forms by 8 June and all returning councillors had done so by 12 June. The details have been entered into the Council's democratic services software system modern.gov and appear below each councillor's contact details on the website
- 3.3 The monitoring officer would welcome feedback on the notification form which was amended for these elections to include covering guidance notes and a glossary of terms, examples of the types of interest under each category and separate space for members' DPI's and those of their spouse /partner.
- 3.4 The monitoring office is also responsible for maintaining and publishing the registers of interests for members and co-opted members of the 12 town and parish councils in the District. These registers are currently being compiled and checked before

publication on the Council’s website under the respective town/parish council’s name.

- 3.5 Members need to notify the monitoring office of any new DPI’s in items of Council business within 28 days of a relevant meeting and also update their personal interests within 28 days of any change occurring. Members can self-manage their interests pages on the modern.gov system and the monitoring officer will issue detailed guidance to assist members, as well as sending members an annual reminder to check their register entries

4. Consultation

Not applicable at this stage

5. Options

Members may wish to suggest changes to the notification form and request further updates on compliance with the framework. .

6. Corporate Implications

Financial – The cost of preparing or amending any forms or guidance would be met from within existing budgets

Legal – As set out in the report

Risks issues – Members could be at risk of prosecution or complaints if they fail to comply with the Localism Act requirements for declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. The Council’s decisions would be at risk of challenge if they are taken with bias or pre-determination

Equalities - None specific

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

There are no direct links to the Council’s main policy objectives. But the Council has a duty under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members. Ensuring that all members (particularly new members to the Council) understand their obligations under the Council’s code of conduct, is a matter of good governance and is important in preserving the confidence of local communities. .

8. Next Steps

The monitoring officer will issue guidance on how members access modern.gov to self-manage their interests’ page.

Background	None except those referred to in the report
Papers:	