

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

1. Purpose of Report

To consider compliance with requirements of the standards framework and review current notification documents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the current position and provide any comments/feedback on the notification form for disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and the process for updating their interests.

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 As members are aware the standards framework introduced by the Localism Act 2011 requires all elected members to notify the monitoring officer of their disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's), within 28 days of taking office and thereafter within 28 days of any changes to their DPIs. Furthermore, 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 and again to notify any changes within 28 days. Both sets of interests must be open to public inspection and published on the Council's website. This form was reviewed by the Committee in 2017 and includes guidance notes and a glossary of terms, examples of the types of interest under each category and a separate space for members to record their DPI's and those of their spouse /partner. The current version is attached to this report for ease of reference.
- 3.2 The monitoring officer is pleased to report all councillors, including the councillors who were elected in 2017 are up to date with their register of interest forms. The details are kept in the Council's modern.gov system and appear below each councillor's contact details on the website. Members are now able to update their details electronically via the extranet and details of the process have been circulated with councillors' weekly Bulletin. If members have comments on the notification form or procedure for updating their interests, the monitoring officer would welcome feedback.

3.3 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 have now been compiled and the forms received published on the Council's website under the respective town/parish council's name. Clerks have been reminded about these requirements including publication of the registers on the town/parish council's own website, if they have one.

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 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

Any suggested changes/feedback from members will be pursued.

Background Papers:	None except those referred to in the report
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