
10 January 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A- Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: Review of Guidance on Declaration of Interests

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary

At its meeting in November 2018, the Committee considered a report on a review of the guidance currently issued to elected members on the declaration of interests. The Committee resolved to authorise the Monitoring Officer to:

- (a) update and streamline the FAQs as set out in the report
- (b) produce a step by step guide to declaration of interests ;and
- (c) delete the hard copy register of interests form and guidance notes from the Member Information pages of the Intranet.

The Monitoring Officer was also requested to bring the revised and new documents to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

This report is to advise the Committee that officers are working on revisions to the online FAQs on the registration of interests and on a step by step guide to the declaration of interests. These will be the subject of a report back to the Committee at its March meeting. The intention is for the new guidance to be available for the start of the 2019/20 municipal year. It will also be incorporated into training provided for newly elected and existing councillors early in the new municipal year. In the meantime officers have removed the hard copy register of interests form from the Members' information pages on the Intranet.

Recommendations: the Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current position; and

(2) Request the Monitoring Officer to bring a draft step by step guide to the declaration of members' interests and revised FAQs on the registration of interests to the March meeting of the Committee.

List of Appendices included: None

Other useful background papers:

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Review of Guidance on Declaration of Interests

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 At its last meeting, the Committee considered a report on a review of the guidance currently issued to elected members on the declaration of interests. It reviewed the current guidance and resolved to authorise the Monitoring Officer to :
- (a) update and streamline the FAQs as set out in the report
 - (b) produce a step by step guide to declaration of interests ;and
 - (c) delete the hard copy register of interests form and guidance notes from the Member Information pages of the Intranet.

The Monitoring Officer was also requested to bring the revised and new documents to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

- 1.2 This report updates the Committee on the current position.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 **Option 1:** do nothing. This is not recommended as the FAQs have been in place for over 5 years and would benefit from a review and the Committee has already resolved to revise the guidance.
- 2.2 **Option 2:** Revise the guidance documents. Officers have removed the outdated hard copy of the register of interests form from the members' information section on the Intranet. Officers are working on revisions to the online FAQs on the registration of interests and on a step by step guide to the declaration of interests. These will be the subject of a report back to the Committee at its March meeting. The intention is for the new guidance to be available for the start of the 2019/20 municipal year. It will also be incorporated into training provided for newly elected and existing councillors early in the new municipal year.

Recommendations: the Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current position; and**
- (2) Request the Monitoring Officer to bring a draft step by step guide to the declaration of members' interests and revised FAQs on the registration of interests to the March meeting of the Committee.**

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Officer will bring back revised and new guidance to the March meeting of the Committee with a view to the new guidance being available to members at the beginning of the new Municipal Year.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

Members are required to register and declare their statutory and non-statutory interests by the Localism Act 2011 and under the Code of Conduct. While the responsibility for making these declarations rests with the individual member, having up to date and accessible guidance on how to discharge this responsibility aids transparency and assists the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour as is required under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The purpose behind this report to suggest ways in which the risk of members failing to comply with their statutory and non-statutory obligations can be minimised. It is prudent to review the guidance issued to members from time to time to ensure that it is up to date, relevant and accessible.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Updating and improving guidance given to members will help ensure that the Council meets its obligation to promote and maintain high standards of ethical behaviour.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

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Cllr Walsh	Chair of Ethics Committee		18/12/18	18/12/18

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