
MEETING: STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE: TUESDAY 2 MARCH 2004
SUBJECT: CODE OF CONDUCT – REGISTER OF INTERESTS
REPORT FROM: MONITORING OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

TYPE OF DECISION: N/A

REPORT STATUS: OPEN

PURPOSE/SUMMARY: To inform Members of guidance from the Standards Board for England regarding the Register of Members' Interests and the inclusion of information relating to membership of the Freemasons and membership of political party councillor associations.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons): The Committee is asked to note the information provided by the Standards Board, together with the fact that the information will be made available to all members of the Council and co-opted members through the next Standards Bulletin.

IMPLICATIONS -

Financial Implications and Risk Considerations

There are no such implications arising from this report

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:

Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? **Yes** **No**

Are there any legal implications? **Yes** **No**

Considered by Monitoring Officer: **Yes** The Council's Monitoring Officer is required, under the Local Government Act 2000, to maintain a Register of Interests for Members of Council and other voting representatives.

Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Staffing/ICT/Property: N/A

Wards Affected: N/A

Scrutiny Interest: N/A

TRACKING/PROCESS SERVICES

DIRECTOR: LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
NO	NO	NO	NO
Scrutiny Panel	Executive	Committee	Council
NO	NO	YES	NO

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Each Municipal Year, Members and voting co-opted members are asked to complete a form which is then included in the Register of Interests. Most of the information required is of a financial nature, but there is a section of the form dealing with "General Notice of Other Interests."
- 1.2 Within this Section, members are asked to list bodies on which a position of general control or management is held, including, "a company, industrial or provident society, charity or body directed to charitable purposes," and "a body whose principal purpose is to influence public opinion or policy."
- 1.3 The Standards Board has issued guidance which provides clarity on two issues which fall within the categories identified in Paragraph 1.2.
- 1.3 The Code of Conduct requires that, within 28 days of his/her election to office, a Member must register his/her financial and other interests. Also, the Code requires that a Member must within 28 days of becoming aware of any change in his/her registered interests, provide written notification to the Monitoring Officer of that change.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 Following recent discussions between itself and the United Grand Lodge of England, the Standards Board advises that it is necessary for Freemasons to declare membership of the Freemason Grand Charity under Paragraph 5.1.2(c) of the Code

of Conduct which states that members need to register membership of bodies that are “directed to charitable purposes.” All Freemasons pay an annual subscription fee to their own individual Masonic lodge, part of which goes to the Grand Charity. As such, Freemasons are obliged under the Code of Conduct to register their membership of the Grand Charity and to declare this interest where appropriate.

- 2.2 The Standards Board further advises that membership of councillor associations should be registered under Paragraph 5.1.2(d) which refers to bodies “whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy.”

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Members have received an e mail regarding the Freemason issue, but it is intended to include the information contained within this report, on the two issues covered, in the next Member Information Bulletin which will be issued shortly.

List of Background Papers: - Letter from the Standards Board for England dated 5 February 2004.

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