

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 3rd June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Declaration of Interests by Members

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the local application of the systems for declaration of interests by Members in order to maintain the values of good governance and ethical behaviour.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee notes the Report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Integrity in local government is essential to command the confidence of the community and of all organisations with which the Council comes into contact. It is relevant also in relation to financing, competing for limited national and regional resources and recruitment.

3.2 This is not the place to go into a full account of the types of personal interest but essentially there are two categories:

3.3 **Personal Interests** You have a personal interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting affects the well-being or finances of you, your family or your close associates more than most other people who live in the area affected by the issue. Personal interests are also things that relate to an interest you must register.

3.4 **Personal and prejudicial Interests** are personal interests that affect you, your family, or your close associates in the following ways: _ their finances, or regulatory functions such as licensing or planning which affect them _ and which a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of the facts would believe likely to harm or impair your ability to judge the public interest. If you have a personal interest you must normally declare it in the meeting.

Halton Best Practice

3.5 Halton has a healthy and challenging culture of declaration of interests that is consistent with the legal requirements and with best practice. Although the prime responsibility rests with the individual Member. The practical expression of this culture takes various forms:-

1. the declaration of interests by Members at start of meetings, both formal and informal
 2. Availability of guidance from Monitoring Officer and his staff
 3. the completion of the Register of Interests
 4. the annual sending out of a questionnaire which forms an opportunity for reflection and self-review
 5. Guidance and Training
 6. Engaged involvement by the Council's Standards Committee
- 3.6 The Report of Members Interests is held by the Committee Services Manager. Members are sent fresh forms to complete each May, and also receive a form should a new interest be declared at any meetings. There is a link on each Councillor's paper on the Council's website indicating that information on interest is publicly available on request from Committee Services.
- 3.7 A register of gifts and hospitality is also maintained by Committee Services. Members are required to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over received in connection with official duties as a member, and the giver of the gift of hospitality. This must be done within 28 day of receipt. There will automatically be a personal interest in a matter under consideration at a Meeting if it is likely to affect the giver of the gift or hospitality that is reported. If that is the case, the existence and nature of the gift or hospitality must be declared as well as name of the giver and how the business relates to that person. The Member must then consider whether the interest is also a prejudicial interest.

Once 3 years have passed since registration of the gift or hospitality, the obligation to declare it at Meetings ceases.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are none

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to comply with regulation and declaration requirements would amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and have serious risks in performance terms.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
NIL	N/A	Mark Reaney