

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
COMMITTEE:	Standards Committee
DATE:	12.09.2018
REPORT TITLE:	Methodology Advice Note on the Review of the Registers of Interests of elected and co-opted members
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	For the Standards Committee members to confirm the draft Advice Note as a precedent to be shared when the Standards Committee comes to conduct a review of the Registers of Interests of Members in the future
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A INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 The Standards Committee has completed a review of the Registers of Interests of elected and co-opted members of the Isle of Anglesey County Council between December 2017 and March 2018, as part of its work programme for 2017/2018.
- 2 In anticipation of that review, the Standards Committee members were provided with guidance on what they needed to consider and how to report the information so that a generic letter of advice could be provided to all members detailing good practices and improvements required.
- 3 The guidance was provided by way of a [report to the Committee on 13 September 2017](#).
- 4 It was deemed that an Advice Note, which details (a) documents to be reviewed, (b) what to consider within those documents and (c) how to record findings, would be beneficial. Albeit this will not be required for use immediately, it will be useful for future reviews of the registers of interests of members.

B ADVICE NOTE

- 1 The draft Advice Note which has now been prepared is reproduced as **Enclosure 1**.

- 2 The draft Advice Note details the documents to be reviewed, how those documents need to be reviewed and how to report the findings. The Note also includes links to the various documents.
- 3 It is envisaged, should the Standards Committee decide to conduct a review of the Registers of Interests of Members at a future date, the Advice Note will be shared with them so that all members conduct a similar review, which is fairer on those whose Registers are being reviewed as there will be consistency in the process.

C RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The Standards Committee is asked to note the contents of the draft Advice Note in **Enclosure 1** and confirm the same is approved.
- 2 Does the Standards Committee wish for the Chair of the Standards Committee to attend a meeting of the Group Leaders in order to discuss the contents of **Enclosure 1** ?

STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
REVIEW OF THE REGISTERS OF INTERESTS OF ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS –
METHODOLOGY ADVICE NOTE

You have been asked to carry out a review of the Registers of Interests for elected and co-opted Members. This note has been produced in order to assist you in that process by detailing the documents which need to be reviewed, the type of information which you will need to gather from looking at those documents and the method for reporting your findings.

A. DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED

The documents to be reviewed during this exercise are :-

1. The Standing Register of Interests

- The law and the Council's Code of Conduct require councillors and voting co-opted members to declare and record personal interests.
- The Standing Register of Interests for each Member is available online at [Councillors and voting co-opted members - declarations of interest](#)
- Whilst reviewing the Standing Register, you will also need to consider the list of membership on outside bodies, as [recorded by the Council for each Member](#), and the [Member's biography page](#) so as to cross-reference these with the information included by the Member on his/her Standing Register

2. The Register of Declarations of Interests in Meetings

- This Register comprises of paper forms which are completed by each Member who declares either a personal or a personal and prejudicial interest regarding an item discussed at a meeting. You can request the full paper copies of the relevant Member's 'Declarations in Meetings Forms' by contacting the Committee section.
- Information included on those forms is copied on to the relevant [Member's biography page](#) and included under the heading "More information about this councillor" by clicking on "Declarations at meetings". You will need to review this panel for each Member.
- You will then need to cross-reference the information included in the declaration with the Minutes for the relevant meeting. The Minutes of meetings can be found [here](#).

3. The Register of Gifts and Hospitality

- The [Register of Gifts and Hospitality](#) for each Member is available for public examination online.
- The Standards Committee has prepared and circulated a [briefing note](#) to Members on frequently asked questions regarding gifts and hospitality which you should read in order to assist you with the review.

4. Members' Training Records

- The record is kept and produced by the Human Resources section.
- Members are also required to complete an online record of all Training events attended. This information is on the relevant Member's biography page and included under the heading "More information about this councillor" by clicking on "Training". You will need to review that panel for each Member.

5. Annual Reports

- Annual reports are prepared by each [elected Member only](#).

- A link to each Member's Annual Report is included on that [Member's biography page](#) under the heading "Additional information" by clicking on "Members Annual Reports". You will need to review that panel for each Member.

B. WHAT NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED?

1. The Standing Register

- 1.1 This Register needs to be completed within 28 days of election and then updated (online) as and when changes occur. An annual letter is sent to all Members to remind them of the requirement in the Code of Conduct which expects Members to update this Register within 28 days of any material change to the relevant interests.
→ Check when the Register was last updated.
- 1.2 Members must ensure that sufficient information is included regarding Part 1 – Financial Interests. For example, is the description of land/property in which the Member has an interest clear enough to enable the public to identify the location?
→ Check that this section has been completed satisfactorily. Is anything unclear?
- 1.3 Members must also ensure that adequate information is included in Part 2 – Other Interests. The name of the body / organisation needs to be noted in full (no abbreviations) and the column on the right (noting the status of the individual on that body) must also be completed.
→ Check that this section has been completed satisfactorily. Is anything unclear? Have abbreviations been used?
- 1.4 Members need to ensure that they put a line through irrelevant boxes or that they write "none", "no", "not applicable".
→ Check that no box is left empty – it either needs substantive information or confirmation that no information needs to be included in that section
- 1.5 The list of membership of outside bodies, as recorded by the Council for each Member, (the link to this list is included in A1 above) should be the same as what has been included by the Member on his/her Standing Register.
→ Check if there are any anomalies between the list which is being provided by the Council and the list which the Member has included on the Register.
- 1.6 The relevant information which appears on the Member's Register of Interest should be the same as that included on the Member's biography page.
→ Is there any information on the [Member's biography page](#) which does not correspond with the information included in his/her Standing Register?

2. The Register of Declarations of Interest in Meetings

- 2.1 In general, and as a matter of principle, the paper declaration forms (held by the Committee section after being completed by the Member) should be standalone in order that the public understand the interest and how it is relevant to the item on the agenda, the connection with that item, and whether the interest is a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest meaning that the Member had to leave the meeting as a result.
→ Check if the form been completed in full and in a way that would make sense to anybody reading it (i.e. members of the public who have no information or specific expertise with regard to the Code of Conduct and its requirements)?
→ Is there sufficient information regarding the interest and how it is relevant to the Agenda item?

- 2.2 Is there any indication that Members are having difficulty differentiating between the declaration of personal interests (where they would be permitted to remain in the meeting) and the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests (where they are required to leave meetings)?

Or are Members declaring interests unnecessarily and being over-cautious?

→ Consider, based on the facts which have been declared by the Member / the detail included in the Agenda, Reports, Minutes, if the declaration was personal or personal and prejudicial. Does your opinion resemble what the Member expressed?

- 2.3 Review the Minutes for the meeting in which the declaration was made to ascertain if those Minutes confirm the information included on the paper form.

→ Check that the Minutes confirm (a) a declaration of interest was made, (b) whether that interest was personal or personal and prejudicial, and (c) if prejudicial, that the Member left the meeting for that item.

- 2.4 → Are there any examples when Members have declared interests in meetings but have then forgotten to complete the declaration of interests in meetings form?

- 2.5 → Do you wish to suggest any changes to the form for the declaration of interests in meetings in order to assist Members or to improve clarity and/or transparency for the public?

3. **The Register of Gifts and Hospitality**

- 3.1 Declarations must be made within 28 days of the receipt of any gift or hospitality which is higher than the £20 limit. You are asked to review the registrations in order to determine whether they conform with the Code's requirement / the information contained in the briefing note (referred to in A3 above).

→ Check whether the Member has included sufficient information regarding the item?

→ Has the Member registered the gift/hospitality received in a timely manner?

→ Can you suggest any further improvements or advice which needs to be provided to the Members in relation to gifts/hospitality?

4. **Members' Training Records**

- 4.1 Review the paper record provided by HR and compare with the information on the Member's biography page.

→ Is the information between the two consistent?

- 4.2 → Consider how many training sessions has the Member attended in comparison with the number of sessions he/she has been invited to attend?

- 4.3 → Are there certain training sessions which the Member has failed to attend which causes particular concern?

5. **Annual Reports**

- 5.1 → Has the Member produced an Annual Report for the relevant period?

- 5.2 → Is the information on the Annual Report complete? Does it conform with the information included for that Member elsewhere e.g. list of membership of outside bodies, training record etc.

C. REPORTING YOUR FINDINGS

1. It is suggested that you report your findings by way of a table with the following headings:

ADOLYGYDD	AELOD	COFRESTR SEFYDLOG DATGAN DIDDORDEB	DATGANIADAU MEWN CYFARFODYDD	RHODDION A LLETYGARWCH	HYFFORDDIANT	ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL
REVIEWER	MEMBER	STANDING REGISTER OF INTERESTS	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN MEETINGS	GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY	TRAINING	ANNUAL REPORT

2. The information which is included under each heading will be the 'answers' to those questions which have been asked in B above, whilst considering the documentation referred to in A above.
3. You may include any further information / comments which has not been mentioned or referred to in this Advisory Note. This Note has been prepared by way of guidance only and is not designed to limit your conduct in carrying out the Review.
4. If, following conducting the review, you require further information or details, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Member directly.

Prepared by the Monitoring Officer
August 2018