

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 14 JULY 2009

### MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Report of the: **CORPORATE RESOURCES DIRECTOR**

Status: **For Information**

Portfolio Holder **Cllr. Elaine Bracken**

Head of Service Mrs. Christine Nuttall – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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**Recommendation:** That the Committee express a view on whether Members' Register of Interest forms should be made available online.

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#### Background

- 1 It is a legal requirement that Members' Register of Interest forms are made available for public inspection during normal office hours. Currently, anyone wishing to view the Members' Register of Interests must come to the Council and physically view the file.

#### Introduction

- 2 A number of other authorities make their Members' Register of Interest Forms available on their website and Standards Board Guidance encourages this, as it increases openness and transparency. However, Members' consent should be sought under the Data Protection Act 1998 before their forms are made available online. An e-mail was sent to all Councillors and members of the Standards Committee, asking for their views on this matter.

#### Response to the Survey

- 3 Fourteen members replied to the e-mail. Of these, eleven were in favour of publishing the information online and three were against. Four non-councillor members of the Standards Committee also replied to the e-mail, all of whom were in favour of publishing the information.

#### Next Steps

- 4 If the Committee is minded to recommend that Members' Register of Interest forms should be made available online, then it is suggested that the matter is taken to the Council meeting on 21 July 2009 for a decision. If the Council decided to publish Members' Register of Interest forms, individual Councillors would still be able to request that their forms are not published online.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

5 None arising directly from this report.

### Community Impact and Outcomes

6 Publishing Members' Register of Interest forms online would make it easier for people to access this information and could only increase the Council's already strong commitment to openness and transparency.

### Legal, Human Rights etc.

7 The Council is required to make Members' Register of Interest forms available for inspection under s. 81 of the Local Government Act 2000.

## **Risk Assessment Statement**

8 None arising from this report.

**Sources of Information:** Standards Board for England Bulletin – May 2002  
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