

**UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF DISCLOSABLE
PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

**(Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and
Monitoring Officer)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members may recall that under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, the Monitoring Officer retained as a duty, a requirement to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members and Co-opted Members of the Authority (the District Council). The legislation also provided that the Monitoring Officer should continue to be responsible for maintaining the Register for Parish Councils which should be open for inspection at the District Council's offices and published on the District Council's website. Where a Parish Council has a website, the District Council also is required to provide that Council with the information required to enable them to publish their current register on its own website.
- 1.2 Because of some uncertainty in the legislation, the Monitoring Officer considered that Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms (DPIs) should be returned within 28 days from the date on which a new Code had been adopted by the District, Town or Parish Council.
- 1.3 As the Monitoring Officer continued to have responsibility for dealing with complaints against Members of Parish Councils, there was clearly an advantage in encouraging all Councils to adopt the same or largely similar code to that adopted by the District. So whilst it was a decision for each Council to consider, all Town and Parish Councils have been encouraged to adopt the District Council's Code (adopted on 4th July 2012) or alternatively the "Model" produced by the National Association of Local Councils. All Town and Parish Councils were requested to advise the Monitoring Officer when their Council had adopted a new Code and confirm whether it was identical to that of the District or NALCs.
- 1.4 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils also have encouraged Town and Parish Councils to adopt the District Council's version of the Code to seek to achieve consistency in approach across Huntingdonshire.

2. THE CURRENT POSITION – DISPOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

- 2.1 Following adoption of a Code of Conduct by the District Council on 4th July 2012, DPI forms have now been received from all 52 District Councillors.
- 2.2 Of 71 Town and Parish Councils, 21 have had their register published (which comprises the DPIs of all Councillors) on the District Council's

website and copies of their register returned to their Clerk for publication locally should that be possible.

- 2.3 In terms of individual DPs, 371 of the total of 650 have been received from Parish Councillors and 279 are outstanding. For practical reasons, a Parish Council register is not published until the DPs of all Councillors currently serving on the Parish Council have been received. Two further registers are nearing completion.
- 2.4 Whilst the Monitoring Officer exercised some leniency in the early stages of this process, mainly due to the varied meeting arrangements of the Parish Councils, it is now prudent to consider what action the Monitoring Officer should take to pursue those Councils where DPs remain outstanding.

3. THE CURRENT POSITION – CODES OF CONDUCT

- 3.1 Whilst there is no legal obligation upon the Town and Parish Councils to notify the Monitoring Officer, records indicate that 61 (of 71 Town and Parish Councils) have adopted a Code of Conduct. Fifty of those Parish Councils have adopted, possibly with some minor amendments to reflect local circumstances, a Code based on that adopted by the District Council. Eleven Town and Parish Councils have opted for the Code promoted by NALC. Of the remainder, the Monitoring Officer is aware that four Councils have progressed towards adoption of a Code but confirmation is awaited as to what version that might be. There are six Councils where it is not yet clear what action, if any, has been taken.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report represents the position at the time of the despatch of the Agenda and will be updated at the meeting.
- 4.2 In noting the updated position, however, the Committee may wish to express a view on the action it considers would be appropriate to take against those Councillors who have yet to submit their DPs to the Monitoring Officer.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Register of DPs

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