

REPORT OF THE CLERK

REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

1 Purpose of Report

To update the Standards Committee on the latest position regarding the completion of the Register of Members' Interests form.

2 Recommendations

That Members note the content of the report.

3 Background

Under the Model Code of Conduct adopted by the Fire Authority, all Members are required to register their financial and other interests with the Fire Authority. Members are also required to provide written notification of any changes to those interests within 28 days of becoming aware of the changes.

On 14 June, a letter was sent to all Members of the Fire Authority and Independent Members of its Standards Committee asking that they complete and return a Register of Members' Interests form. As it had been over a year since a number of Members had completed a Register of Interests, it was deemed appropriate to ask all Members to complete a fresh entry. Those Members, who had not returned the form by 7 July were sent a reminder and advised that a report on the Register of Interests was to be considered at the July meeting of the Standards Committee. At the time of that meeting, however, a number of responses were still awaited.

Members are not required to complete a fresh Register of Interests annually and the onus is upon them to provide written notification of any changes (as outlined above). Officers do, however, prompt all Members annually in an attempt to ensure that the Register of Interests is kept up-to-date. At its meeting in July the Standards Committee agreed that a further reminder letter be sent to all those Members, who had not returned their Register of Interests form. Accordingly, a letter was sent on 15 August and officers can report that all Members have now responded.



4 Avoidance of Duplication

At the July meeting, following a question from a Member, the Clerk undertook to find out whether, to avoid duplication, the Register of Interests completed for a Member's constituent authority could be shared with the Fire Authority. Officers can now advise that guidance from the Standards Board for England states that Members must complete a register of interests for each authority on which they sit.

Also, according to the Board, any photocopy of an interest form can only be published elsewhere, if the Member concerned has given permission, otherwise there may be implications under the Data Protection Act. Accordingly, Members should continue to complete a separate Register of Interests form for the Fire Authority.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

Under the Local Government Act 2000 Members are required to register their financial and other specified interests in the Fire Authority's register maintained under section 81(1) of that Act. The financial and other interests, which must be registered, are set out at paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Model Code of Conduct adopted by the Fire Authority. There is also a requirement to provide notification of any changes to those interests within 28 days of becoming aware of them. Failure to comply with the rules relating to the registration of interests will amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Whilst it is good practice for Members to complete a fresh Register of Interests form annually, there is no obligation for Members to do so, if their circumstances have not changed since they last completed or updated their existing form.

7 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

8 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

Model Code of Conduct

Register of Members' Interests Form

Standards Committee 24 July 2006 Report 5 - Register of Members' Interests, and minutes



Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	
Financial		Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	

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