

Committee(s)	Dated:
Standards Committee	5 October 2018
Subject: Co-opted Members and Declarations of Interests	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision

Summary

At its last meeting in May the Committee considered a report on registration of interests by Co-opted Members and their online publication. It was noted that an annual update was underway and that co-optees' declarations of interest would then be published.

In August, the returned declaration of interest forms were published on the Corporation's website.

This report sets out details of outstanding forms by Committee and Members are asked to consider these details and decide what future steps to take on this matter.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the information set out in the report and decide what future steps to take on this matter.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation's Code of Conduct for Members, adopted in its latest iteration by the Court of Common Council on 8 March 2018, applies to any Member of the City Corporation and any Member of a Committee of the City Corporation. The Code requires the registration of disclosable pecuniary interests, as specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State, together with certain non-pecuniary interests.
2. The Committee has considered previous reports concerning the registration of interests by Co-opted Members. In May 2015 the Committee noted that whilst the statutory provisions in relation to online registration only applied to those Co-opted Members who were entitled to vote on matters relating to the City Corporation's local authority or police authority functions, this did not preclude the register of interests of all Co-opted Members being made available online as a matter of policy. It was agreed that all Co-opted Members should be required to submit a register of interests' form, which

would be published online to promote greater consistency and transparency. The need to make Co-opted Members fully aware of the new approach to managing and publishing interests, and to afford them ample time to raise any queries, was acknowledged.

3. Subsequently, in October 2015, the Committee was advised that over 50% of Co-opted Members had not submitted a response and that many of those contacted had also expressed concern at plans to publish their interests, with some suggesting that they might resign over the matter. With regard to the technicalities around publishing the responses received, the Town Clerk reported that this had now been trialled and would be technically possible if the Committee were minded to proceed with this exercise. The Committee requested a paper for the following meeting detailing how each of the various Sub/Consultative/Grand Committees concerned were constituted and providing Members with some advice on how best to proceed in each case. The Committee requested that, in the interim, the Town Clerk contact all relevant Committee Chairmen requesting that they remind their Co-opted Members of the need to submit responses.
4. Further details of Co-opted Members by Committee were then considered by the Committee in May 2016. This included the number of Co-opted Members on each Committee, whether they were a legal requirement, whether they were involved in City Fund functions, whether they had voting rights, and the number of forms returned. The Committee requested that the Town Clerk write to all Co-opted Members as a final reminder regarding the completion of their declaration of interests forms before publishing all information received by the end of the calendar year. Following the Committee's decision in July 2016 to recommend to the Court that a review of the standards regime be undertaken, work on some associated framework issues, including interests' publication as detailed above, was temporarily paused pending the review's outcome.

2018 update on registration of interests

5. In May 2018, the Town Clerk commenced the annual exercise to contact Elected and Co-opted Members to remind them to review and update their existing declarations. Co-opted Members whose declarations were not currently held on file were invited to complete and return a form within 28 days. The Town Clerk informed Co-opted Members that declarations would be published on the City Corporation's webpages and completed returns were then published online during August.
6. The Committee were previously informed that they would receive a report back at its October meeting with an update on progress, together with the latest statistics on response rates for each Committee, to consider whether to review the overall policy and how best to address any non-compliance. The breakdown of outstanding numbers of disclosable pecuniary interest forms (out of 82) is set out below:-

Board of Governors of CLFS: 3

Board of Governors of CLSG: 2

Social Investment Board: 2

Keats House Consultative Committee: 2

Barbican Estate RCC: 7

Board of Governors of GSMD: 3

Property Investment Board: 1

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 1

An update will be made at the meeting on non-disclosable interest forms not returned.

Conclusion

7. The Committee is asked to note the current position and decide what future steps to take on this matter.

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