

Committee(s)	Dated:
Standards Committee (special meeting)	1 st July 2015
Subject: Annual Update to Members' Declarations – latest responses	Public
Report of: The Town Clerk and the Comptroller & City Solicitor	For Information

Summary

This report provides Members with a further update, following the submission to the last meeting of the Committee on 15th May 2015, on the annual update to the Members' Declarations which commenced in December 2014 following the introduction of new requirements in the Members' Code of Conduct. The Committee noted that the vast majority of Members were now compliant with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and the annual update request, although a further seven to ten Members still appeared either not to have responded to the request for confirmation that no updates were required or they may not have yet updated their Members' Declaration. Consequently, it was agreed that further correspondence should be circulated by the Chairman of the Committee to those Members who may have incomplete registers. It was further agreed that all the relevant forms, guidance and a copy of the Member's existing Declaration should be circulated with that communication and it should be specified that a response must be received within two weeks. That communication would also highlight the possibility of formal proceedings in appropriate circumstances.

This report provides an update about the status of the Members' Registers of Interest for those 9 individual Members written to by the Chairman of the Standards Committee in June 2015 in respect of potentially incomplete registers.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 15th May 2015, an update report about the Annual Update to Members' Declarations was considered and concern was expressed that a small number of Members may not appear to be fully compliant with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of their statutory declarations and/or the declaration of non-pecuniary interests. Following that discussion it was agreed that a letter be circulated by the Chairman of the Standards Committee, on behalf of the Committee, to those

Members that appeared to have incomplete registers and that they be invited to update their Members' Declaration as appropriate within a period of two weeks.

Current Position

2. Since the meeting on 15th May 2015, the Chairman of the Standards Committee has written further, individually tailored letters to nine Members about their Members' Declaration (Register of Interest).
3. Following circulation of those letters in early June 2015, various updates have been received and a number of Members' Declarations – including both the statutory and non-pecuniary categories - have been updated. The current position in respect of responses and updates to the Members' Declarations for these nine outstanding Members is set out in Appendix 1. This shows that, of the nine Members that were contacted by the Chairman, all nine have responded. Where updates were required, these have been updated and published online.

Moving Forward

4. Although the Committee agreed that those who had not responded to the Chairman's final chase letters within the specified two week time frame would be invited to meet with the Chairman of Standards and the Chief Commoner to discuss the matter in greater depth, it was thought that Members of the Standards Committee should first be apprised of the latest situation at this special meeting.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

5. The annual reminder to review and update Members' declarations satisfies the objectives of the Standards Committee in seeking greater transparency about the City of London Corporation's governance framework and those involved in decision-making processes.

Conclusion

6. The annual reminder process is an important exercise to maximise transparency of the City of London Corporation's decision-making processes and those who serve on the City Corporation's committees and sub-committees. The 2014 update exercise, which commenced in December 2014, has been a complex process and suggests that some Members are not fully aware of the new requirements. This issue will continue to be addressed through the formal Member Development Programme and, where necessary, with the provision of 1-2-1 advice and guidance to Members about the Standards regime and the local requirements.

7. Members are invited to note the current position in respect of the 'final chase' exercise (annual update to Members' Declarations) that took place in June 2015.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - current position in respect of the Members' Registers of Interests Annual Update process.

Background Papers

The Members' Code of Conduct (*as agreed on 16th October 2014*)

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