

Meeting:	Standards Committee (Special)
Date:	23 April 2007
Subject:	Publication of the Register of Members' Interests
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Director of Legal and Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	The Leader
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Summary of responses to the Member survey on publication of the register

## **SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report sets out progress against actions agreed at the Standards Committee meeting on 5 December 2007 in relation to the use of the Democratic Services Team's modern.gov software for the administration of the Register of Members' Interests.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Members' entries in the Register of Interests be published on both the internet and intranet, subject to Members having the option to request that their home address or details of their employer be not published.

## **SECTION 2 - REPORT**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 December 2006, the Standards Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Governance which outlined proposals to use the Democratic Services Team's upgraded modern.gov software to:

- implement a system of automatic monthly e-mail reminders to Members to keep their entries in the Register of Interests up to date;
- publish the Register of Members' Interests on the intranet and internet; and
- implement a facility allowing Members to update their Register of Interests forms via the intranet.

The report also set out the results of a survey of London Boroughs into whether they published their Registers of Members' Interests on their websites.

2.2 The Standards Committee agreed that:

- subject to any teething problems, officers use the upgraded modern.gov software to implement the system of automatic monthly e-mail reminders to Members;
- officers write to all Members of Council seeking their views on the proposal to publish the Register on the website;
- officers ascertain why some Boroughs had chosen to publish the Register while others had not; and
- subject to the outcome of the consultation of Members, Members view their Register of Interest forms via the intranet but update them via the normal officer procedures.

This report sets out progress against those agreed actions.

2.3 With regard to implementing the automatic monthly e-mail reminders and the facility for Members to view their Register of Interests forms via the intranet, this involves work by both officers and the software supplier which is on-going and should be completed shortly.

2.4 A letter was sent to all Members of Council, the Independent Members of the Standards Committee and the voting Co-opted Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee seeking their views on the proposal to publish the Register. At the time of writing 10 Council Members and 2 Independent Members have responded. Of those, 5 said they would be happy for their entry in the Register of Interests to be published, 6 would be happy for their entry to be published provided certain categories of information (eg address/employer) were not published, and 1 Member did not agree with the proposal to publish the Register. The detailed comments and reasons submitted with responses are set out at Appendix A. If any additional responses are received from Members after the publication of this report, these will either be tabled or reported orally at the meeting.

2.5 A survey was also carried out of London Boroughs asking them to explain the reasons why they had or had not published their Register of Members' Interests on their website. At the time of writing 24 London Boroughs have indicated whether or not they published their Registers, of which 10 have given a reason why they did or not do this. The results were as follows:

- 14 Boroughs publish their Registers, and the reasons given for doing this were: greater transparency and openness; increased accessibility; good practice; or that it was done in response to an ethical governance audit/an Audit Commission inspection on ethical probity.
- 4 Boroughs did not currently publish their Registers but were planning to in the near future (no reasons given)
- 6 Boroughs do not publish their Register and the reasons given were: there had not been Member-level agreement to it in the past; the Standards Committee had agreed that having the Register on the website would be unduly intrusive; and Members had not been informed that the Register would be published.

2.6 Given that the majority of Members who have responded support the publication of either their complete entry in the Register or an edited version, and the majority of London Boroughs have either already published their Register of Interests or plan to do so in the near future, the Standards Committee is now asked to agree that Members' Register of Interests forms be published on both the internet and intranet, subject to Members having the option to request that home address or details of their employer be not published be not published.

2.7 The work to implement the automatic monthly e-mail reminders and the facility for Members to view their Register of Interests forms via the intranet is being contained with existing resources, and will reduce the amount of officer time spent sending reminders to Members in the long run. In the event that the Committee agrees to publish the Register to the internet and intranet, this work will also be contained within existing resources.

### **SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE**

Name: Myfanwy Barrett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 13 April 2007		
Name: Hugh Peart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring Officer
Date: 13 April 2007		

## SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

**Contact:** Claire Vincent, Democratic Services Manager, tel: 020 8424 1637

**Background Papers:** Reports to and Minutes of the Standards Committee meetings on 19 September and 5 December 2006.

**IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?**

1.	Consultation	N/A
2.	Corporate Priorities	N/A
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	N/A