

Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Date: 5th September 2011

Subject: Officer Registration of Interests 2011/12

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. Scrutiny Board (City Development) on 17th May 2011 considered a report on Officer Registration of Interests and referred the matter to this Scrutiny Board.
2. The minute arising from the discussion at Scrutiny Board (City Development) reads;

In summary, a number of issues and comments were made including:-

- *The fact that the Employee Code of Conduct had recently replaced the former Officer Code of Conduct.*
- *That the administrative procedures in place as a consequence of the Employee Code of Conduct require all employees with relevant interests to declare them at least once a year*
- *That staff are reminded annually of this duty to declare their interests. It was reported that this had last been undertaken on 11th April 2011*
- *That staff identified by Directors as "high risk" posts are specifically targeted particularly if they are politically restricted posts, or graded JNC Chief Officers (or above). Members asked what salary level this related to and officers advised that it was £45,000pa and above.*

- *That the average return rate from all Directorates in respect of the most recent reminder was 90% following one request to complete a return and a reminder. One Directorate's return was only 62% whilst City Development Directorate's return was 93%. Directors will now be pursuing those non returns in respect to "high risk" posts with a view to achieving a 100% return rate*
- *The fact that unlike Members declarations of interest employee declarations of interests are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information legislation as it is personal information within the meaning of the Data Protection Act.*
- *The fact that the current Government has confirmed that it does not intend to proceed with the introduction of a national officer code of conduct*
- *That ALMOs are not covered by these arrangements*
- *The suggestion that some London Boroughs have introduced a voluntary declaration scheme for officers which are published on the internet.*
- *That in accordance with the Council's terms and conditions of service the onus is on individual officers to make any necessary declarations of interest and that appropriate training and guidance is offered and provided by the Business Support Centre and the relevant Directorate's*
- *Concerns as to the process and whether it is fit for purpose.*

RESOLVED-

- a) *That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.*
 - b) *That Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services) be asked to undertake an inquiry on officers declarations of interest to identify the effectiveness of the current arrangements and whether it is fit for purpose.*
3. Attached as Appendix 1 is a report from the Head of Human Resources on this matter. Officers will be in attendance.
 4. Councillor John Procter (as Chair of the former Scrutiny Board (City Development) has been invited to attend today's meeting to outline the discussion had by Scrutiny Board (City Development) and the reason for the referral to this Scrutiny Board.

Recommendations

5. Members are asked to;
 - (i) Receive and discuss the attached report with officers and Councillor John Procter
 - (ii) Consider whether further Scrutiny is required.

Background documents

6. Minutes of Scrutiny Board (City Development) 17th May 2011