

Audit Committee – 22nd September 2011

5. Register of Staff Interests – Audit Action Plan

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Purpose of the Report

This report has been requested by the Audit Committee to advise members of the proposed actions to be taken following the internal audit of this area which reported in February 2011 to ensure that the council has procedures to guide staff on the need to register and have approval for any interests they have that may impact upon their duties as an employee.

Recommendation

That members note the action being proposed as set out in the attached appendix (pages 3 to 4) and that a further progress report is made to the November meeting of this Committee.

Introduction

The South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) undertook an audit of the adequacy of controls and procedures in place for the Register of Interests for Staff across the Council as part of the 2010-11 audit plan work. Whilst the audit review did not identify any significant corporate risks or identify any significant findings they were only able to offer Partial Assurance due to the fact that some risks were deemed not well managed and it was felt that systems required improvement to guarantee the achievement of objectives. However the audit review did acknowledge that the Council fully complied with the statutory requirements relating to this area and that there was a robust procedure in place for dealing with any complaints.

Next Steps

The audit review identified 3 areas of concern, which are reflected in the action plan attached to this report. Members will note that one of the three agreed actions has already been implemented. The target date for the other actions is 31st December 2011 and work has already commenced on these so that is envisaged that all actions will have been largely completed by the time the Audit Committee meets in November 2011.

It is likely that a service-based system will be the preferred option as there is no easily identifiable resource centrally to manage the process for the council overall. To ensure there is a corporate overview, managers would be required to send their “year end” records to the Monitoring Officer for checking both as to content and consistency. This will also enable the Monitoring Officer to draw attention to or otherwise deal with any issues that the records may reveal.

Financial Implications

Any that there are can be met from existing resources.

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Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications resulting from the subject matter of this report as the statutory requirements contained in the Local Government Act 2000 are already being fully complied with by the council.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

There are no specific environmental implications arising from the subject matter of this report.

Equalities and Diversity Impact

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising from the subject matter of this report as all staff are subject to the requirements set out in the code of conduct.

Background Papers: *Internal Audit Report - 11th February 2011*
