

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2013

REPORT BY: MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY REGISTER OF MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANISATIONS

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To discontinue the locally adopted requirement to voluntarily register membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Prior to the Local Government Act 2000 Councils were free to adopt their own codes of conduct. Flintshire County Council looked into this matter and resolved, amongst other things, as follows:-

- a) That the Council pursues the introduction of a Flintshire Code of Guidance for members;
- b) That the Council introduce a voluntary register for Members to disclose any membership of freemasonry or of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules on membership or conduct; and
- c) That a small working group of Members politically balanced comprising 8 Members (5 Labour, 2 Alliance and one Liberal Democrat), be constituted to pursue the preparation of a draft Flintshire Code of Guidance for Members and report back to the committee with recommendations.

2.02 Since that time, of course, a statutory code of conduct has been introduced. Within the provisions of that code there is a requirement to register membership of charitable organisations and other bodies. However, the County Council has never formally discontinued the old register and it has come to my attention that some Councillors are still registering their membership of groups such as the Masons.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Council therefore has two requirements to register. The statutory code of conduct is clearly well publicised and compliance with it is mandatory with a statutorily imposed enforcement regime. The local register is voluntary and its existence is not well known.

3.02 The statutory code requires membership or holding a position of general control or management in the following organisations to be registered:-

- A charity or body directed to charitable purposes.
- A body whose principle purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy.
- A private club society or a association operating within your authority's area.

3.03 This is very likely to cover membership of organisations such as the Masons and maybe seen as covering all of the bodies there were intended to be covered by the voluntary register. I would therefore recommend that we discontinue the voluntary register.

3.04 In order to clarify for members that the statutory register does cover membership of bodies such as the Masons or any other similar organisation then I would suggest just circulating an advice note to that effect.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the voluntary register set up in 1997 be discontinued.

4.02 That the Standards Committee recommends to Council that it discontinues.

4.03 That the Monitoring Officer issue an advice note about what is covered by the requirement in the statutory code with respect to registration of membership of societies and bodies.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None as a result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None as a result of this report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None as a result of this report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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