

To: Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

On: 28 November 2016

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Register of Senior Officers' Interests

1. Summary

- 1.1 The 2015/16 Annual audit report to Members and the Controller of Audit issued by Audit Scotland included a recommendation that information relating to senior officers' interests should be published on the council website and the council should consider extending the scope of the register to other staff.
 - 1.2 This report confirms that information from the Register of Senior Officers' Interests has been published from 28 October 2016 on the Council's website <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/4365/Register-of-Senior-Officers-Interests>
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note that the action in the annual audit report from Audit Scotland regarding publication of information relating to senior officers interests has been implemented.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 Each year, Audit Scotland, as the Council's external auditors, issues a report following the audit of the Council's annual accounts. This report is published and then included as part of the Council's report on its Audited accounts which is considered by this Board and then full Council
- 3.2 The annual audit report for 2015/16 was considered by this Board on 19 September 2016 and by full Council on 29 September 2016. The detailed audit report included at Appendix IV an action plan which lists 8 issues identified during the audit with recommendations for action to address those issues.
- 3.3 Action 5 of those listed stated:

"Register of Interest

A register of interest has been recently collated for senior officers however this information is not in the public domain

Recommendation

Information relating to senior officers interests should be published on the council website and the council should consider extending the scope of the register to other staff"

- 3.4 The management response to the recommendation was to agree to publish details of the register of interests from 31 October 2016 and to consider when and if disclosure of further information was appropriate by 30 June 2017.
- 3.5 In contrast with the Register of Interests for elected members, there is no statutory requirement for the Council to maintain or publish a register of interests for officers. However, such a register has been maintained on a voluntary basis since 2013 with the chief executive, all directors and heads of service being asked to complete a form asking for categories of information. This was extended to two other relevant posts not at head of service level, the Strategic Commercial and Procurement Manager and the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 3.6 The purpose of the voluntary register was to recognise that senior officers were responsible in terms of the Scheme of Delegations for making decisions involving significant sums of money. Therefore, it was important that

information to monitor potential conflicts of interest was available to auditors and other officers responsible for monitoring such matters.

3.7 At the request of Audit Scotland, it has now been agreed to make the following categories of information from the register for each senior officer available on the Council website:

- Name.
- Position held in the Council.
- Particulars of any other paid employment held outwith the Council.
- Name and address of any business and the nature of the interest therein.
- Details of any directorship, consultancy or financial interest not listed elsewhere in the register.
- Details of any non-financial interest in any organisation such as a professional body, trade association, club etc in which the officer is a member or an office holder.
- Details of any shareholding or other financial interest in any company where the total nominal value of any securities exceeds £25,000 or 1% of the total nominal value of the issued share capital, whichever is less.
- Description and location of any property owned, leased or mortgaged within Renfrewshire (home addresses not disclosed).

3.8 The information in the categories listed above was published on the Council website for the first time on 28 October 2016. Renfrewshire is the only Council in Scotland that has published information on the interests of its senior officers.

3.9 A review will be undertaken of these new arrangements ahead of the 30 June 2017 deadline to determine whether the requirement to register interests should be extended to other officers and whether further information should be included in the information published on the website.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – not applicable

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – the publication of information from the senior officers register of interests is intended to assist with transparency in respect of decisions made by officers exercising delegated functions.
3. **Community Planning** – not applicable
4. **Legal** – The senior officers register of interests is not a legal requirement but has been introduced at the request of Audit Scotland
5. **Property/Assets** – not applicable
6. **Information Technology** – not applicable
7. **Equality & Human Rights** –

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – not applicable
9. **Procurement**- not applicable
10. **Risk** –not applicable
11. **Privacy Impact** – not applicable

List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 – Report to Council on 29 September 2016 on the Audit of Accounts 2015/16.

The foregoing background paper will be retained within Finance and Resources for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Ken Graham, Head of Corporate Governance

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