

COUNCIL MEETING

14 January 2020

Member Questions under Council Procedure Rule 4.5 (K)

1. **The following question has been asked by Cllr Mullone**

Question

I understand that an elected councillor's declarable interests include membership of secretive societies, such as the Masons, where members are known to gift one another quid pro quo advantages. Given that such organisations are known to loom large in public life, could anyone tell me if such a declaration of interest is required for the council's officers? An officer's power is gifted through a hiring process in a closed room, and is considerable. A councillor's power is loaned by the people in the cold light of day, and is on its own nugatory.

SO: Mr chairman I should like to know: Are our officers required to declare organisations that may confer upon them secret advantages?

Response from the Chairman

If an officer may potentially gain an improper advantage as a result of their employment, yes. In practice, councillors' conduct requirements are largely governed by the Members' Code of Conduct. That includes requirements to declare interests arising from membership of organisations in certain situations as well as prohibitions against improperly conferring advantages on another. The rules applicable to officers are more comprehensive than those applicable to Members. For example, effective controls exist not only in the employee code of conduct but also through their employment and the wider law.