

Committee: Standards and General Purposes

Date: 3 November 2016

Wards: All

Subject: Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality by Officers

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Monitoring Officer

Lead member: Chair of Standards and General Purposes Committee, Councillor Peter McCabe

Contact officer: Paul Evans

Recommendations:

A. That the committee notes the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Section 4 of the Council's Officers Code of Conduct for Employees deals with the acceptance of gifts and hospitality by members of staff. Officers are required to ensure that the receipt of gifts approved by their managers and hospitality which they may receive are recorded in their departmental hospitality registers.

1.2. This report provides information on gifts and hospitality recorded in the hospitality registers for the period 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016.

At the last report it was noted "Senior Officers should be named, and that there should be greater consistency in the way that gifts, especially with a value of over £25, be recorded.

2 DETAILS

2.1. The Code of Conduct for Employees requires that:

All offers of gifts must be reported to managers

Significant gifts (over £25) must be registered on the departmental register

Acceptance of gifts should only occur in very limited circumstances and approved in advance by the manager

All offers of hospitality must be reported to managers

The hospitality (no minimum value) must be registered on the departmental register

There are limited circumstances where acceptance of hospitality may be acceptable.

Hospitality received in the course of business meetings and at free training does not need to be registered, but managerial approval is required.

2.2. The inspection by the Monitoring Officer of the various registers shows that:

The departmental registers continue to be maintained electronically in the adopted corporate manner in all departments.

Notifications and registrations have taken place in the departments as follows

(Excluding tickets for non-senior officers for the tennis championships)

Registrations:

Department	Registrations
Chief Executives	2 (1 accepted)
Children Schools and Families	11 (9 accepted)
Community and Housing	8 (8 accepted)
Corporate Services	1 (1 accepted)
Environment and Regeneration	1 (1 accepted)

Excluding entries for non-senior officers relating to the tennis championships the register for the period 1 October 2015 to the 30 September 2016 contained 23 entries, 20 of which were accepted.

The nature of the gifts and hospitality accepted can be classified as falling within a number of categories

- Project and partnership working hospitality
- Gifts from businesses
- Gifts from individuals

The register does not disclose significant inappropriate acceptances of gifts or hospitality.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Committee could decide not have this information reported to it but has previously recognised that this would not be compatible with its role as the best practice promoter and monitor of ethical standards.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. A review of the registers was reported to Corporate Management team on 27 September 2016

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. This is an annual report

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Section 117 Local Government Act 1972 makes it an offence for an officer under the cover of office or employment to accept any fee or reward other than proper pay and benefits.

- 7.2. The receipt or gift of any reward or advantage for an act or omission that suggests favour to any person in their official capacity may constitute a criminal offence under the Bribery Act 2010.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Failure by officers to address their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action by the Council. Failure of the Council to monitor and promote the observance of the Code could result in an unnoticed lack of compliance and managers which may result in complaints, damage to the reputation of the Council, possible adverse impacts upon the quality of the Councils decision making processes and legal challenges to council actions.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

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