



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 14TH SEPTEMBER 2016

**SUBJECT: OFFICERS DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
- APRIL TO JUNE 2016**

**REPORT BY: ACTING HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Audit Committee with information regarding the Register of Employees' Interests Forms completed by officers of the Council (excluding Schools) regarding Gifts and Hospitality for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016 ie the first quarter of the financial year 2016/17 and a comparison with the previous three quarters.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Enclosed as Appendix 1 is a list of Register of Employees' Interests Forms in respect of Gifts and Hospitality completed by officers of the Council (excluding Schools) for the 3 months 1 April to 30 June 2016.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council's Code of Conduct for Employees confirms that in performing their duties, employees must act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity and that they must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law. This is a Statutory Code requirement.
- 3.2 The Council acting through the Audit Committee is required to report officer declarations regarding Gifts and Hospitality on a quarterly basis.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council's Code of Conduct for Employees sets out guidance for employees on a range of issues, including the completion of a Register of Employee Interests form, which will help maintain and improve the high standards of conduct within local government and protect employees from misunderstandings and confusion.
- 4.2 Completed Register of Employees' Interests forms are submitted to Heads of Service, Directors or the Chief Executive who countersign the forms to show they are aware of the declaration. The form also records details of any controls / action taken to protect the Council's interests in the circumstances outlined on the form. A copy of the countersigned form is given to the employee and a copy sent to Human Resources for filing on the employee's personal file.

- 4.3 The Head of Service, Director or Chief Executive retains the original form and maintains a summary spreadsheet to record the forms. On a monthly basis the summary spreadsheet or a nil return is submitted to Human Resources for collation and monitoring for consistency and compliance.
- 4.4 In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees; in summary Gifts / Hospitality of less than £25 may be accepted by the employee but any Gift / Hospitality which could be seen by a third party as placing the employee under an improper obligation such as more than one Gift / Hospitality from the same party must be refused, irrespective of its value.
- 4.5 Employees may accept small offers of Hospitality only where the activity is of a nature where there is a genuine need to impart information or to represent the Council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Council should be seen to be represented.
- 4.6 The table below details the number of declarations regarding Gifts submitted by Directorate for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016 and the previous three quarters for comparison.

Directorate	Number of declarations received - Gifts			
	April – June 2016	Jan – March 2016	Oct – Dec 2015	July – Sept 2015
Communities	2	0	5	1
Corporate Services	0	2	2	1
Education and Lifelong Learning	0	0	0	0
Social Services	0	1	1	10
Total	2	3	8	12

- 4.7 The table below details the number of declarations regarding Hospitality submitted by Directorate for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016 and the previous three quarters for comparison.

Directorate	Number of declarations received - Hospitality			
	April – June 2016	Jan – March 2016	Oct – Dec 2015	July – Sept 2015
Communities	1	4	2	1
Corporate Services	1	1	0	1
Education and Lifelong Learning	0	0	0	0
Social Services	2	0	0	0
Total	4	5	2	2

- 4.8 The Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development will continue to monitor the declarations submitted and work with Heads of Service, Directors and the Chief Executive to improve their understanding, promote best practice and corporate compliance to the Code of Conduct where appropriate.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications, as the reason for declaring an interest applies equally to all staff, regardless of their individual characteristics.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The personnel implications are included in this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Audit Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The recommendations are designed to ensure members of the Audit Committee have an oversight of the position in relation to officers' Gifts and Hospitality.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Consultees: Nicole Scammell, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer (Acting)
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Colin Jones, Head of Property and Performance Management
Cllr Christine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Governance
Alessandra Veronese, Programme Manager Improving Governance Programme Board

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality 1 April to 30 June 2016