



AUDIT COMMITTEE – 26TH JANUARY 2021

**SUBJECT: OFFICERS DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2020**

REPORT BY: HEAD OF PEOPLE SERVICES

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 July to 30 September 2020 ie the second quarter of the financial year 2020/2021 and a comparison with the previous three quarters.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 There were no Register of Employees' Interests Forms in respect of Gifts and Hospitality completed by officers of the Council (excluding Schools) for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendation is designed to ensure members of the Audit Committee have an oversight of the position in relation to officers' Gifts and Hospitality.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 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 help maintain and improve the high standards of conduct within Local Government and protect employees from misunderstandings and confusion.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The table below details the number of declarations regarding Gifts submitted by Directorate for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 and the previous three quarters for comparison.

Directorate	Number of declarations received - Gifts			
	July - Sept 2020	April-June 2020	Jan - March 2020	Oct - Dec 2019
Chief Executive	0	0	0	2
Communities	0	0	0	1
Education and Corporate Services	0	0	0	1
Social Services and Housing	0	0	3	4
Total	0	0	3	8

- 5.7 The table below details the number of declarations regarding Hospitality submitted by Directorate for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 and the previous three quarters for comparison.

Directorate	Number of declarations received - Hospitality			
	July - Sept 2020	April – June 2020	Jan – March 2020	Oct – Dec 2019
Chief Executive	0	0	1	1
Communities	0	0	0	1
Education and Corporate Services	0	0	2	2
Social Services and Housing	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	3	4

5.8 Conclusion

The Head of People Services will continue to monitor the declarations submitted and work with Heads of Service to improve their understanding, promote best practice and corporate compliance of the Code of Conduct where appropriate.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions made within this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 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.

7.2 Corporate Plan 2018-2023

Whilst this report does not specifically contribute towards the Corporate Well-being Objectives, it does support good governance which is the foundation of the Council's performance management framework.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Having considered the five ways of working, they will not be affected by the contents of this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The personnel implications are included in this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

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

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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