

Report to Standards Committee

Subject: Gifts and Hospitality 2013/14

Date: 28 August 2014

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1. Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the Standards Committee of gifts and hospitality received between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

2. Background

- 2.1 As members of the Standards Committee are aware the Council has a Gifts and Hospitality Code of Practice for Members and Officers to enable Members and Officers to decide on the circumstances and the manner in which gifts and hospitality may be accepted. Historically, each council department held it's own register of gifts and hospitality in which details of gifts and hospitality offered were registered. However, since 2012 the register has been held centrally in an electronic folder.
- 2.2 The register of gifts and hospitality for Members is also now held in the electronic folder and is updated on the Monitoring Officer's behalf by Members' Services. Members have been reminded recently that they must ensure that it is kept up to date by notifying Members' Services of any gifts and hospitality in excess of £25.00 offered.
- 2.3 Across the Council officers, 42 offers of gifts or hospitality were accepted and 2 were refused. Most common gifts were boxes of chocolates or bottles of wine. In the main the boxes of chocolates were shared amongst the team and bottles of wine donated to the Mayor's Charity. There were 7 instances of hospitality offered – consisting of working lunches, evening meal at a conference event, tickets to Patchings Art Festival and tickets for an ice hockey game.
- 2.4 The elected Members recorded 5 offers of gifts or hospitality. The gifts consisted of a carved plaque and bottles of wine. The hospitality comprised free tickets to Patchings Art Festival, which were refused.
- 2.5 Members of the Standards Committee may recall that previously Officers

were reminded that the reason for acceptance of gifts should be that the gift is of low value and shared amongst staff. The reason for this is that “value” of the gift is the primary consideration in determining whether it is appropriate to accept a gift. The Code of Practice provides that all gifts should be refused unless they are modest gifts of a promotional character or small gifts of low value. The Monitoring Officer has noticed that this is not being followed in all cases, therefore guidance has been re-issued to Officers to remind them of the requirements of the Code of Practice and the circumstances in which gifts may be accepted.

3. Proposal

It is proposed that the Committee notes the report.

4. Resource Implications

None.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee notes the report.

6. Appendices

None.