

## Standards Committee

### AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Review of Register of Interests &amp; Gifts &amp; Hospitality for Employees and Members</b>
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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 December 2007
<b>Directorate:</b>	Chief Executive's
<b>Ward(s)</b>	ALL

### 1. Summary

1.1 In its annual work plan adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 Standards Committee's committed to a review of the Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality for Employees and Members. That review has now been carried out.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the findings detailed in this report be noted.

2.2 That the Monitoring Officer writes to all Parish Councils to remind them of the requirement to register gifts and hospitality and to forward copies of registrations.

2.3 That a further review of the register be included in Standards Committee's work plan for 2008/09.

### 3. Report Background

3.1 In its annual work plan adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 Standards Committee a ' Review of the Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality for Employees and Members' was identified with a target completion date of December 2007. That review has now been carried out.

3.2 The review considered whether the register and registration process is fit for purpose and whether Members and Employees are aware of their responsibilities in respect of the register. The review also considered the position of the registration of interests and gifts and hospitality by Parish Councils and notification of such registrations to the Monitoring Officer.

3.3 The review confirms that the Register and registration process are fit for purpose and that Members have received various training on their responsibilities in this regard and that whilst Employees have been made aware of their responsibilities the profile of the issue amongst Employees needs to be increased.

- 3.4 The review identified that, whilst all Members had completed registration forms when accepting office on election, a small number of Members have subsequently failed to provide an updated form following the adoption, by the Council, of the new Model Code of Conduct on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.
- 3.5 The Monitoring Office has reminded the individual Members in writing of their responsibilities in this regard and will provide a verbal up date report to the Committee. A general reminder in respect of the need to register gifts and hospitality has been included in the draft newsletter.
- 3.2 Information for Councillors on declaring gifts and hospitality is contained within the Code of Conduct parts of the Constitution and additionally reproduced in the Council Year Book. For employees guidance can be found in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy part of the Employee Handbook.
- 3.3 The Gifts and Hospitality Register is active with three entries having been made in November 2007.
- 3.4 For Parish Councillors registration of gifts and hospitality must be made to the Parish Council's own register. The Parish council must then send copies of entries to the Monitoring Officer. Whilst Parish Council's have indicated that a small number of entries have been made on to their registers no copies have been forwarded to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer has therefore written to all Parish Councils reminding them of their obligation to forward copies of entries.

#### **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

##### **4.1 Resources and Risk**

4.2 There are no financial implications or risks in carrying out this review.

4.3 There are identified risks in not carrying out a review of the registers on a regular basis. These risks include:

- ❖ Lowering of profile of the registers so that they become ineffective
- ❖ Breaches of the Code of Conduct
- ❖ Lessening of trust between Members, employees and customers should gifts & hospitality not be recorded.

##### **4.2 Legal**

None specifically arising from this report.

##### **4.3 Other Implications. None**

None

#### **5. Background Papers**

5.1 The Register of Gifts & Hospitality and the Register of Interests.

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