



PROTOCOL FOR RECEIPT OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

This Protocol is designed to provide local guidance for Members - when acting in their official capacity - which is in accordance with the revised Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

In summary, you must treat with extreme caution any offer or gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you personally. In all cases, you should bear in mind that the test is, would a member of the public, knowing the facts, reasonably think that you might have been influenced by the gift or hospitality received.

The revised Code has added an additional question to the Register of Interests form, requiring any gifts and hospitality worth £50 or over, received in connection with a Member's official duties during the past three years, to be entered on the form. A personal interest also has to be declared at any meeting when an issue arises relating to the gift donor/provider of the hospitality. As with all matters covered by the Register of Interests, any changes during the year to the information given should be notified to the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible by e mail, and an updated gifts section of the form completed for inclusion on the Register.

To provide you with some additional guidance, set out below are examples of gifts and hospitality, together with the recommended response in each case:-

1 GIFTS

As a general rule, you are strongly advised to politely refuse any gift which you know or believe to be worth more than £50. If you are unable to refuse such a gift, you must have the details placed in the Register of Interests, by informing either the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Manager within 28 days by e mail. The Code does not require any gift below this value to be recorded in the Register, although Members can still inform one of the above officers if they so wish.

If a Member also holds an office such as Mayor or Leader of the Council, it will sometimes be necessary to clarify whether the gift is made to the Member personally or to him/her as a representative of the Council. If the latter, the most appropriate course of action should be discussed with the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Manager.

2 HOSPITALITY

This is often more difficult to assess in terms of actual cost and therefore Members will need to make a judgement, based upon common sense and reasonableness.

As a general rule, attendance in an official capacity at a function organised by a public authority or local non-profit-making organisation is acceptable, subject to the detailed guidance set out below. However, if a Member believes that the cost of providing the hospitality is over £50, it should still be declared and recorded in the Register as set out above.

In other circumstances, offers of hospitality should be treated with care. If a Member believes that the offer has been made with a view to exerting influence or to improve the standing of a private individual or firm in relation to current or future dealings with the Council, the offer should be declined.

In addition, if a Member decides to accept hospitality and subsequently discovers that the reason behind such hospitality was to exert undue influence, then the Member should, as soon as practical after such hospitality has been received (but in any event within 28 days), give notification by e mail to the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Manager. Members should also, for their own protection, advise one of those officers in the event that they are concerned about the underlying intention behind an offer of hospitality, even though such offers have been refused.

Examples of hospitality could be:-

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| (i) light refreshment (eg. coffee and biscuits) before, during or after site meeting, visits, presentations, opening ceremonies etc. | If accepted, no need to record in the Register, as unlikely to exceed £50. |
| (ii) lunch and/or evening meal provided as part of event by another local authority, Government body, body associated with the National Health Service, voluntary body AGM or committee meeting. | If accepted, there is no need to record in the Register (unless thought to be over £50). |
| (iii) lunch and/or evening meal provided as part of event by voluntary body AGM or committee meeting, but for a specific fund raising/lobbying purpose. | Caution is advised, particularly if you sit on a committee which may be awarding grants to such bodies, but if accepted, no need to record in the Register (unless thought to be over £50 or if Member wishes to register). |
| (iv) lunch and/or evening meal provided as part of a private sector sponsored conference or promotional event. | As (ii) above, but Members may still wish to register, even if below £50. |
| (v) lunch and/or evening meal provided as part of | Caution is advised. If |

a private sector sponsored conference, plus overnight accommodation and additional meals.

at all possible, this should be politely declined, but must register if accepted.