
Ethics Committee

19 December 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:
Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:
Executive Director for Resources

Ward(s) affected:
Not applicable

Title: Review of Lord Mayor's Gifts and Hospitality

Is this a key decision?
No

Executive Summary:

At its meeting on 29 August 2014, the Ethics Committee considered a report on a review of the procedure for dealing with gifts and hospitality for elected members. The Committee decided that it would like to review the procedure for accepting and registering Gifts and Hospitality and to view details of gifts and hospitality received in the current Municipal Year. This report sets out the current practice in relation to gifts and hospitality received by the Lord Mayor and the gifts received to date.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider the current practices for recording gifts and hospitality received by the Lord Mayor; and
- (2) make any recommendations on changes to those practices that it considers appropriate.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Review of Lord Mayor's Gifts and Hospitality

1. Context (or background)

1.1 At its last meeting on 29 August 2014 the Committee considered a report on a review of the procedure for dealing with gifts and hospitality for elected members. The Committee decided that it would like to review the procedure for accepting and registering gifts and hospitality offered to the Lord Mayor and to view details of gifts and hospitality received in the current Municipal Year. This report sets out the current practices and gifts received to date.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 At present there is no formal, approved policy on the receipt of Gifts and Hospitality by the Lord Mayor. However, an informal policy has developed over many years and is applied by the Lord Mayor's Office to Gifts and Hospitality received. Each year, the incoming Lord Mayor receives a short induction from officers on the principles to be applied when considering the receipt of Gifts and Hospitality.

2.2 Gifts

2.2.1 A distinction is made between gifts of relatively low monetary value (or of symbolic value) and more substantial gifts received by the Lord Mayor on behalf of the City Council. Where a gift is substantial and is clearly intended as a gift to the City of Coventry, the Lord Mayor receives it as such and details are entered in a register maintained for this purpose. The gift is then kept by the Council and, where appropriate, put on display.

2.2.2 During the course of their year, the Lord Mayor receives many gifts, such as mugs, craft items, chocolates and flowers. Most, if not all of these, have a monetary value under £25 although many will have a symbolic value as a reminder of an official visit or occasion. Gifts under £25 in value are not recorded as there is no requirement to do so and it is left to the Lord Mayor's discretion as to whether he or she keeps the item. Where a gift is clearly intended as a gift to the Lord Mayor personally, rather than to the City Council and it has a value of more than £25, the Lord Mayor records its receipt in the normal Gifts and Hospitality register for elected members.

2.3 Hospitality

The Lord Mayor receives many instances of hospitality during the course of their mayoral year, almost all of which are offered to them in their ceremonial role. These are therefore not recorded.

2.4 Gifts Received in Municipal Year to Date

In the current Municipal Year to date, the Lord Mayor has received only two gifts on behalf of the City Council. These are a bell and a buoy presented to her by HMS Diamond in October 2014.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If the Committee makes any recommendations as to changes in practice, it is recommended that these be introduced in the 2015-16 Municipal Year.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. However, reviewing the procedures for dealing with gifts and hospitality offered to the Lord Mayor will help to demonstrate that the Council continues to monitor and review ethical standards within the Council.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Clarifying the Lord Mayor s' obligations with regard to gifts and hospitality will help to reduce the risk of acceptance of inappropriate gifts or hospitality.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Keeping matters such as this under review will help to promote high standards amongst elected members in accordance with the Localism Act.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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