
Ethics Committee

8 October 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A- Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Law and Governance

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

In its work programme, the Committee has decided to review entries in the Registers of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality every six months. The report for the six months to 30 December 2019 was due to be considered by the Committee at its meeting in March 2020, which was cancelled. This report therefore sets out the entries in the Registers for the period 1 July to 30 June 2020.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to consider the entries of gifts and hospitality received by officers for the 12 months ending 30 June 2020 and make any recommendations that it considers appropriate.

Appendix included: Table of Gifts and Hospitality received by Officers: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

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 Officers' Gifts and Hospitality 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Committee's work programme includes an item for this meeting to review entries on the registers of officer gifts and hospitality every six months. Because the March 2020 meeting was cancelled, it was not possible for the Committee to consider the report on gifts and hospitality received in the 6 months ending 30 December 2019. This report therefore covers the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct for Employees sets out the requirements for employees when being offered or accepting gifts or hospitality. The basic rules are:

(a) Gifts

- Personal gifts should never be accepted unless they are modest and are of token value (less than £25). The manager's permission must be obtained
- Items such as coffee mugs, diaries, calendars, pens or other promotional materials can be retained if they are in use in the office and can be considered to form part of the general mailings of a company.
- Where small gifts, such as chocolates, are given as thanks for a service provided, these can be accepted if they are shared within the Team or raffled for charity.
- Gifts worth more than £25 should be refused. If this is not possible, the manager should dispose of them to charity and record the fact in the register.

(b) Hospitality

- Hospitality consisting of light refreshments, working lunch or other meals which are part of a visit, conference, meeting or promotional exercise is acceptable.
- Invitations to social events offered as part of normal working life, or where the Council should be seen to be represented, may be accepted if authorised in advance by the appropriate Assistant Director.
- Invitations to other types of hospitality which are not directly linked to the City Council's functions should not be accepted.

The rules relating to gifts and hospitality were amended by the Committee in July 2016 and those changes were accepted by full Council in September 2016.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Officers have been asked to provide details of gifts and hospitality received during the 12 months ending 30 June 2020. The declarations are set out in the Table in the Appendix to this report. There have been no declarations of gifts and hospitality since just before nationwide restrictions were imposed in March.

Recommendation:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to consider the entries of gifts and hospitality received by officers for the 12 months ending 30 June 2020 and make any recommendations that it considers appropriate.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

Officers were asked to provide details of their registers.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

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 gifts and hospitality offered to employees on a regular basis 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?

Reviewing gifts and hospitality received by employees 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 and employees 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 at this stage

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