

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board
DATE: 26 May 2010
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Resources
SUBJECT: Declarations of Interest by Officers
WARDS Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide the Board with an update about Declaration of Interests arrangements which apply to all Officers of the Council in order to maintain the values of good governance and ethical behaviour.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes the Report

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members of the Board may remember receiving a detailed report on Declarations of Interests and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality at its meeting on 3rd June 2009.

3.2 It is not the intention to repeat the information contained in that report, but it is worth reminding Members that there is a specific duty under Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 providing that it comes to the knowledge of an Officer employed by a local authority that a contract in which he or she has any financial interest has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Authority, he or she must as soon as practicable give notice in writing to the Authority of the fact. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

3.3 Furthermore it is also an offence for Officers to receive within their office or employment any fee or reward other than proper remuneration.

3.4 The Officers' Code of Conduct within the Constitution contains detailed provisions concerning these matters. It is the personal responsibility of Officers to ensure proper declarations, and of course there is a vital need to ensure public confidence in local government.

3.5 The only exception to the general rule about Officers not accepting gifts or hospitality relates to small gifts of nominal value, for example inexpensive calendars, diaries, etc. Any hospitality given or received by Officers must be justified in the public interest and should be proportionate to the occasion. Offers of hospitality must be refused where a suggestion of improper influence is possible.

3.6 Each Chief Officer is required to maintain a Gifts and Hospitality Register showing what gifts / hospitality has been offered, to whom and by whom, when, with whom the offer was discussed, and whether or not the offer was accepted.

3.7 The Officer Registers of Gifts and Hospitality are held in each of the Council's Strategic Directorates. The Officers responsible for their maintenance are set out in the table below:-

DEPARTMENT	MAINTAINING OFFICER
Resources	Angela Scott – Principal Committee Services Officer
Environment & Economy	Mick Noone – Operational Director Highways, Transportation and Logistics
Adult & Community	Jayne Cumpper – Senior Financial Services Officer
Children & Young People	Margaret Musson – Senior Planning & Communications Manager

3.8 The Monitoring Officer has made contact with each of the keepers of the Registers, and there is evidence of good practice in Directorates, including regularly updated registers and reminders being sent out to staff.

3.9 It is important that employees are reminded of the duties on a regular basis to ensure compliance.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 Ready to comply with the principles outlined in the Report could result in Officers being in breach of the Code and / or their Contracts of Employment and may amount to a criminal offence.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 None

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 None