

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board

DATE: 14 November 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the system for declaration of gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers of the Borough Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Democratic Services maintain the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Members are required to declare and register any offers of gifts or hospitality worth £25 or more which is received in connection with official duties as a Member, together with the details of the person who makes the offer or gives the gift or hospitality. This must be completed within 28 days of receipt.
- 3.2 The Monitoring Officer looks at the Register periodically, and it is clear that Members are aware of its existence and are using it. In addition, Standards Committee receive an annual report on its contents. At the last meeting in July 2012, the Monitoring Officer reported that since 1 May 2011 there had been 12 entries by Members and 21 by Officers.
- 3.3 Officers are also required to declare and register any offers of gifts or hospitality, and each Directorate maintains its own Register for use by staff. The Officer Code of Conduct requires the Officer to discuss any offer with their line manager, prior to either accepting or declining the offer. However, all offers must be recorded whether or not they are accepted.
- 3.4 Generally, there is a presumption that any offers should be declined unless they are small gifts of nominal value given by way of trade advertisements to a wide range of people (for example, inexpensive calendars or diaries), or on the conclusion of a courtesy visit (for example, to a factory or other premises). Officer registers are regularly inspected by the respective Strategic Director.

- 3.5 From 1 May 2012 to 30 September 2012 there had been 12 entries by Officers and Members. The registers are public documents and open to inspection.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to comply with the requirement for Members and Officers to declare the receipt of and/or acceptance of gifts or hospitality would amount to a breach of the respective Code of Conduct and potentially have serious consequences for the Member, Officer and the Authority as a whole.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Register of Gifts and Hospitality	Democratic Services, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes	Angela Scott
Standards Committee Report 17 July 2012	Democratic Services, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes	Angela Scott