

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee 15th June 2017

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY: GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS – UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Cllr G Denaro, Leader of the Council |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Ward Councillor Consulted | N/A |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report outlines suggested changes to the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Councillors provided at Part 21 in Bromsgrove District Council's constitution. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee have been asked by the Constitution Review Working Group to review and endorse the proposed changes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that the proposed changes to the Council's Gifts and Hospitality: Guidance for Councillors (Part 21), attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 When last reviewed, Council agreed that the policy on Gifts and Hospitality would not include any threshold on value. This means that currently Councillors have been advised to declare gifts/hospitality which are minor in nature and value and can be considered reasonable in the context of the activity the Councillor was undertaking at the time.
- 3.2 The Constitution Review Working Group asked Officers to simplify the Guidance and review the value of gifts/hospitality. This review has now taken place and the group have referred the guidance to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee for its consideration and comment prior to consideration by Council. A copy of the updated Guidance for Councillors is attached at Appendix 1. Changes are highlighted in italics.
- 3.3 As part of the review benchmarking work was undertaken and it was established that in the majority of cases local authorities require their Councillors to declare gifts and hospitality valued at £25 and over.

Financial Implications

- 3.4 There are no direct financial implications arising from this. However, the introduction of a threshold for reporting gifts and hospitality will lead to a reduction in the level of Officer time dedicated to recording gifts and hospitality.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 The Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Councillors forms part of the Council's constitution and as such if the proposed changes are approved by Council the constitution will be updated accordingly.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.6 There are no direct service or operational implications.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 There are no direct customer, equality or diversity implications.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Regular reviews of the Constitution minimise the risk of Councillors, officers and the public not being clear about how decisions are made and not knowing who is responsible for them. This knowledge is necessary to be able to hold decision makers to account.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Gifts and Hospitality: Guidance for Councillors (Part 21, Bromsgrove District Council's Constitution - update).

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