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**MEETING:** Audit Committee  
**DATE:** 23rd September 2008  
**SUBJECT:** Gifts & Hospitality  
**REPORT FROM:** Head of Strategic Finance  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Stephen Kenyon

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**TYPE OF DECISION:** NON KEY DECISION

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/  
STATUS:** For Publication

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**SUMMARY:**

This report presents Members with an update on the system to declare, monitor & report gifts and hospitality offered to / received by staff.

The report presents a summary of declarations made for the period to January to June 2008.

**OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons):**

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and endorse the approach outlined.

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**IMPLICATIONS -**

**Corporate Aims/Policy  
Framework:**

Do the proposals accord with the Policy  
Framework?  Yes No

**Financial Implications and  
Risk Considerations**

An effective process to record, monitor, and report offers of gifts and hospitality serves to protect both staff and the Authority against allegations of improper conduct.

**Statement by Director of Finance  
and E-Government:**

A robust mechanism to control offers of gifts and hospitality is a fundamental aspect of the Council's corporate governance / ethical

framework

**Equality/Diversity implications** Yes  No   
**Considered by Monitoring Officer:**  Yes No

Are there any legal implications? Yes  No

**Staffing/ICT/Property:** No

**Wards Affected:** No

**Scrutiny Interest:** Scrutiny may wish to examine registers of Gifts & Hospitality received

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**TRACKING/PROCESS**

**DIRECTOR:** Finance & e-Government

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Audit Committee	Council
		23/9/08	

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A robust mechanism to control offers of gifts and hospitality is a fundamental aspect of the Council's corporate governance / ethical framework.
- 1.2 The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance reinforces this through the core principle of "Promoting the values of the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour".
- 1.3 The Audit Committee approved a report outlining the "web-based" system for declarations at its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007, and has received regular updates at subsequent meetings.
- 1.4 This report summarises declarations made for the period from January to June 2008.

2. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 2.1 Comprehensive guidance relating to gifts and hospitality is included within the "Employee's Code of Conduct"; issued to every member of staff and available on the intranet.
- 2.2 Guidance on the "Corporate HR" area of the intranet has been revised to make it more readily accessible.

- 2.3 A “web based” mechanism for Members to record declarations has recently been developed jointly by Internal Audit and the Corporate HR Division, and implemented with effect from September 2007.
- 2.4 A separate mechanism applies for teachers; registers are maintained at school buildings, reported to Boards of Governors, and examined by Internal Audit under the FMSIS audit arrangements.
- 2.5 Since the last report, the system has been further developed to record potential “conflicts of interest”, for example where a member of staff may be related to contractors working for the Council.
- 2.6 Analysis of registers completed for the period reveals the following;

<b>Department</b>	<b>Number of Declarations</b>	<b>Average Value</b>
EDS	11	£54
Childrens Services	5	£12
Adults Services	58	£15
Chief Executives	6	£73
Members	0	0
Conflicts of Interest	5	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>£25</b>

- 2.7 The number of declarations is higher than previous reports; examination of individual submissions highlights that this is attributable to the receipt of minor gifts at Christmas time.

### **3. ISSUES**

- 3.1 Whilst the use of a web based register is efficient, managers must ensure a procedure is in place for staff without access to intranet.

### **4. RISKS**

- 4.1 The system only picks up declarations made by staff; clearly it is the items that are not being declared that are potentially inappropriate.
- 4.2 The overall internal control framework, the anti-fraud strategy, the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy, and the work of Internal Audit all offer additional assurance in this respect.

### **5. FUTURE ACTIONS**

- 5.1 Departmental managers are responsible for the operation of the register in their area, however compliance with the declaration process will be continually monitored by the Internal Audit Section.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Members are requested to;

- (a) affirm their support for the importance of registering gifts and hospitality
- (b) endorse the current approach for declaring offers of gifts / hospitality
- (c) note the declarations made to date.

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### **List of Background Papers:-**

Individual Gifts & Hospitality Registers (available at meeting)

### **Contact Details:-**

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