

**Open report on behalf of David O'Connor, Executive Director Performance and Governance**

Report to:	<b>Audit Committee</b>
Date:	<b>12 November 2012</b>
Subject:	<b>Register of Officers' Interests, Gifts and Hospitality</b>

**Summary:**

This report updates members of the Committee on the review of the Register of Officers' Interests, Gifts and Hospitality.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Committee notes the latest position and supports the proposed programme of awareness-raising.

**Background**

Members of the Committee will be aware that a management review of the Register of Officer's Interests, Gifts and Hospitality has been carried out.

This review highlighted a need for a more clear and consistent approach to registering officers' interests, gifts and hospitality.

The review confirmed that declarations were being made, but there was inconsistency across different areas of the Council.

The Register is now maintained by Democratic Services and declarations of officer interests, gifts and hospitality should be channelled through the Democratic Services Manager.

Guidance on declarations has been included in the Council's Officer Code of Conduct and as part of the review, a number of minor revisions have been made to the document.

Consultation on the revisions was delayed due to a need to incorporate a general review of the Code of Conduct.

The revised Officer Interests section of the Code of Conduct was issued for formal consultation on 15 October 2012. The consultation ends on 16 November 2012.

Subject to the results of the consultation, the Code of Conduct will be updated and a programme of awareness-raising will take place to draw officers' attention to the requirements.

Internal communications will be carried out during the month of December to raise awareness. Liaising with colleagues in communications, reminders will also be issued to officers on a monthly basis for the first six months of 2013 and quarterly reminders thereafter.

## **Conclusion**

Officers need to be aware of their duties under Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality.

Publication of the revised guidance on declaration of officers' interests, gifts and hospitality, and the subsequent programme of awareness-raising should provide the necessary assurance that employees understand their obligations in this area.

## **Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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