

Agenda item 7

AGS/35/19	
Report title: Members Gifts and Hospitality Register 2018-19	
Report to: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	
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Date: 3 June 2019	For: Discussion
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County Divisions affected: 'All Essex'	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the outcome of the review of the 2018-19 Member Gifts and Hospitality register.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the findings of the review and make any recommendations they may have.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 All Members must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £25 which they have accepted as a Member from any person or body other than the Authority. The Monitoring Officer places the notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality. This duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the Authority for this purpose. This is set out in part 5 of the Constitution. Members are not required to register the value of the hospitality.
- 3.2 In the period April 2018 to March 2019 there were 18 instances of gifts or hospitality declared and these were logged on the individual Councillor's profile on the Committee Management System. 65 Members did not declare any gifts or hospitality. There are two declarations for items with a value of less than £25 and 1 relates to a declined invitation.
- 3.3 An examination does not reveal any particular concerns relating to the acceptance of significant hospitality from ECC contractors or those seeking funding from ECC. The register does not demonstrate any trends in terms of those offering the gifts and hospitality. Nonetheless members may wish to consider whether or not they wish to express any view on any of the hospitality accepted.

4 Legal implications

- 4.1 Members are required by the Code of Conduct to register acceptance of gifts and hospitality over £25

5. Equality and Diversity implications

- 5.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 5.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6. List of appendices

- 6.1 Member gifts and hospitality register 2018-19.