

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish controls to ensure compliance with all applicable anti-bribery and corruption regulations including the Bribery Act 2010 and to ensure the council's business is conducted in a socially responsible and legal manner.

Gifts And Hospitality

The expressions 'gifts' and 'hospitality' have wide meanings and no conclusive or exhaustive definition is possible, but can be illustrated by example.

Gifts and Hospitality may include:

- The free gift of any goods or services;
- The opportunity to acquire any goods or services at a discount or at terms not available to the general public;
- The opportunity to obtain goods or services not available to the general public;
- The offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event;
- The use of a free car.
- Common gifts include pens, diaries, calendars and other business stationery, articles of clothing, books, flowers and bouquets. When making purchases, for the council or privately, one should be cautious if additional services, privileges or advantages are offered which might be related to one's position in the Council.

Bribery undermines democracy and the rule of law. Routine local council activities and decision making may expose councils to the risk of bribery offences being committed. Such risks could, for example, relate to entering contracts for the supply of goods or services or commenting on planning applications. It could be said the greater the range and/or financial value of activities carried out by a council the greater the risk of bribery occurring.

Councils may be offered corporate hospitality/gifts by those who want to supply goods and services to them, or by those seeking to win favour and/or favourably influence decisions on relevant matters placed before the council.

Appropriate Gifts and Hospitality

There are some circumstances where one may accept gifts and hospitality as being in the normal course of duties;

- Civic hospitality provided by another public authority;

- Normal and modest refreshment in connection with any meeting in the course of ones work as a Councillor, employee or volunteer (e.g. tea, coffee and other normal beverages and biscuits);
- Tickets for sporting, cultural and entertainment events which are sponsored or promoted by the Council or bodies to which one has been appointed by the Council, where the tickets are offered in relation to fulfilling that sponsorship or promotion;
- Small low value gifts (such as pens, calendars, diaries, flowers and other mementos and tokens);
- Drinks or other modest refreshment received in the normal course of socialising arising consequentially from Council business (e.g. inclusion in a round of drinks after a meeting);
- Modest meals provided as a matter of courtesy in the office or meeting place of a person with whom the Town council has a business connection;
- Souvenirs and gifts from other public bodies intended as personal gifts (e.g. at civic events).

Councillors, employees and volunteers should treat with extreme caution the offer of any gift or hospitality by organisations or persons who do, or might, provide work, goods or services to the Council, or who might be applying to the Council for some kind of decision, e.g. planning permission.

Register of Hospitality and Gifts

To ensure transparency, the council maintains a Register of Hospitality and Gifts. Councillors and Officers are prompted to update the Register as and when gifts/hospitality is received above the value of £10.

Limits of the Policy

The Policy does not apply to:

- Gifts and hospitality one may receive from family and friends (as birthday or other festival presents) that are not related to one's position in the Council
- The acceptance of facilities or hospitality provided to you by the Council;
- Gifts given to the Council that one accepts formally on the Council's behalf and are retained by the Council and not by one personally.

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