

Register of Gifts and Hospitality

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1. Summary

- 1.1.** Members requested that they receive a six monthly report on the gifts and hospitality received by members.
- 1.2.** This report sets out details of the gifts and hospitality received during the period December 2022 to July 2023 (see Appendix A).
- 1.3.** To consider a request from the Constitution and Governance Committee to review the Gifts and Hospitality value of £50, as set out in the Code of Conduct, and reduce the value to £0.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** To note the gifts and hospitality received set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2.** To consider the request from the Constitution and Governance Committee to reduce the value of gifts and hospitality declared to a value of £0, and whether the Standards Committee wish to add this to their work programme for a more detailed report setting out the implications for this change.

3. Background

- 3.1.** This report sets out details of gifts and hospitality registered by Somerset Councillors during the period from December 2022 to July 2023.
- 3.2.** As set out in the Code of Conduct any gifts or hospitality either accepted or rejected by a member over the value of £50 must be declared within 28 days of receipt.
- 3.3.** Somerset Council adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct following a decision of Full Council in February 2023 in readiness for the new Council from April 2023.

- 3.4.** The Model Code of Conduct has set the value of gifts and hospitality either accepted or declined by councillors at £50.

4. Options Considered and Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** To note the register of gifts and hospitality received over £50.
- 4.2.** To accept or reject the request from the Constitution and Governance Committee to carry out a review of the value of gifts and hospitality to be declared by councillors.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** It is important that the Council has a formal mechanism for reviewing the gifts and hospitality register and the authority risks not discovering failings in the maintenance of the register. This could lead to not only reputational damage to the authority but personal action against individual members.
- 5.2.** The authority minimises the risks by regularly reviewing the Register and by providing regular advice and guidance to members on the proper upkeep and entry on the Register.
- 5.3.** The committee can review the Code of Conduct and request that a report is included in its work programme in respect of reducing the value of gifts and hospitality to a value of £50.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** Somerset Council Constitution and Code of Conduct.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author