

APPENDIX 1 – EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

GUIDELINES ON ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS/HOSPITALITY

(1) In many areas of the commercial world it is common practice to offer and accept gifts, hospitality and other benefits. This practice is frequently used to influence a decision when one company is seeking business with another and it is perfectly legal to do so – but it can be quite the contrary in public service.

(2) The acceptance of gifts, hospitality or other benefits, even on a modest scale, may arouse suspicion of impropriety and extreme caution and discretion should be exercised in accepting either. In principle you should refuse any personal gift offered to you or your family by any person or company who has or seeks dealings of any kind with the Council.

(3) The only reasonable exceptions to the guidance given in 2 above are:-

(a) Small gifts of a purely token value given by way of trade advertisements (e.g., calendars, diaries, articles for general use in the office).

(b) Small articles, again purely of a token value given at the conclusion of courtesy visits (e.g. to a factory)

(c) A small gift offered without warning and where refusal would give particular offence

(4) Should you receive an unexpected gift, which falls outside the categories (see 3 above) you should consult your Director or Head of Service, as appropriate, who will decide the course of action. This may include:-

(a) returning the gift, ensuring that the donor is told in a polite way why this has been necessary,

(b) passing the gift on to some charitable cause if it is appropriate to do so,

(c) agree that the gift may be kept by the recipient.

(5) Details of all gifts covered by the above categories must be recorded in a book kept for this purpose by the Director or Head of Service, as appropriate. A copy of the relevant Hospitality Register Form is attached at Appendix 2

(6) Directors/Heads of Service receiving gifts which fall within paragraph 4 should consult with the Chief Executive Officer before accepting if they are in any doubt. Any gift which is accepted should be recorded as described in paragraph 4.

Hospitality is sometimes offered to employees and it is not always possible or desirable to reject offers of a moderate nature.

Examples of acceptable hospitality include:-

(a) a working lunch of a modest standard, provided to allow business discussion to continue,

(b) A social event, e.g. a society's golf day or an open day organised by a company where other organisations are guests.

(7) Some offers of hospitality are clearly unacceptable and these would include offers of holiday accommodation, individual offer of theatre tickets for yourself or your family and individual invitation to dinner.

(8) You should be particularly cautious when any form of hospitality is offered by an individual or organisation seeking to do business with, or a decision from the Council as acceptance might affect your relations with the party offering it and how this might be viewed by councillors, your manager and the public. If in any doubt at all you should consult with your Director or Head of Service as appropriate before acceptance. Directors/Heads of Service must consult with the Chief Executive Officer.

(9) Acceptance of offers of hospitality must be recorded in the book kept for the purpose by the Director or Head of Service as appropriate as described in paragraph 4.

(10) These guidelines are intended as a general overview on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality but cannot cover every eventuality. If you are in any doubt you should consult your Director or Head of Service, as appropriate, or the Chief Executive Officer.