

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



CONSTITUTION ADVISORY GROUP

DATE: 13 th July 2010

TITLE	Amendment to Code of Conduct for Officers
REPORT OF	Sue Parsons, HR Manager Policy

PURPOSE	To inform the Advisory Group of proposed changes to the Code of Conduct for Officers with regard to hospitality and gifts.
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ORIGIN OF PROPOSAL	Officer Sub Group
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RECOMMENDATION:

that the attached amendments to the Code of Conduct for Officers (Section F3 in the Constitution) be accepted.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. An internal audit was carried out early in 2010 in order to provide assurance that appropriate controls are in place to effectively mitigate or minimise the risks to the Authority associated with Members and Officers receiving gifts and hospitality. The principal objective of the audit was to determine whether there had been adequate and effective controls operating during 2009/10 in relation to the Gifts & Hospitality Register and to identify and agree remedial action with regard to control failure or system weaknesses.

2. The audit identified findings and made a number of recommendations designed to introduce new controls and procedures or to enhance and strengthen existing controls.
3. Among the findings it was found that the guidance available for Officers' declarations was unclear and could lead to some gifts and hospitality not being declared appropriately which may result in reputational damage to the Council and allegations of undue influence.
4. It was recommended therefore that the Code of Conduct for Officers be amended to explain whether offers can be accepted and which Senior Management should approve acceptance.

Contact Officer Details:	Key Background Papers:
Sue Parsons HR Manager Policy Extn 42047 0300 300 6019	

F3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR OFFICERS

5. Hospitality and Gifts

- 5.1 In undertaking their duties officers may be offered gifts or hospitality from persons or organisations having, or proposing to have, a contractual or client relationship with the Council. Such offers could be made to gain an advantage over another person or organisation or could be construed as such and therefore must not be accepted without prior approval from an appropriate Assistant Director.
- 5.2 If officers receive a gift of any description then this must be made known to their Assistant Director who will decide on the course of action to be taken. Likewise only hospitality for which prior approval has been given by your Assistant Director should be accepted from outside persons or organisations. Small gifts, such as pens, calendars, diaries etc, provided they are not material in value, need not be declared.-
- 5.3 The Gifts and Hospitality form must be completed and **ANY** gifts or hospitality agreed and accepted will be recorded in writing in the register maintained by each Director for their service areas. The Chief Executive and all Directors should record the receipt of any gifts or hospitality they receive in the register maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

The Gifts and Hospitality form is available at the following link on the Intranet:

http://intranet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/images/Gifts%20and%20hospitality%20procedure_tcm8-16175.doc