

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Transformation	Council	20 July 2010

OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To advise members of proposed revisions made to the Officer Code of Conduct and to seek approval by Council as any change to this document would represent a Constitutional Change.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- It is recommended that approval is given to the following amendments to the Officer Code of Conduct:
 - Responsibility for the implementation to sit with the Human Resources Team.
 - Quarterly monitoring report of disclosures produced for the Strategy Team.
 - All disclosures to be considered by the relevant Director.
 - All gifts and hospitality with a monetary value of £5 or above must be declared.
 - Revised criteria for determining when gifts and hospitality should be declared

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Officer Code of Conduct was reviewed following an Audit inspection which recommended that ownership of the code was established and that monitoring arrangements were strengthened. Whilst addressing these issues the opportunity was taken to look at other aspects of the Code, and in particular the disclosure of gifts and hospitality and providing greater guidance to employees of when disclosures should be made.
- The report was submitted to the Standards Committee for their consideration, and they recommended that a £25 threshold for gifts and hospitality should be introduced as this would be consistent with the Member Code of Conduct. However, given the significant difference in the nature and level of decisions taken by officers, as oppose to those taken by members, it is felt that the threshold of £25 is too high, and that for officers it should be set at £5, for the reasons detailed below.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- It is important that there are clear responsibilities relating to the Officer Code of Conduct and that effective monitoring is carried out to ensure openness and transparency.
- With Directors considering all disclosures there should be greater consistency and also be able to identify any potential trends.
- The nature and level of decisions taken by officers are significantly lower than those taken by Members and therefore could be seen as being more easily influenced by gifts and

hospitality and potentially of gifts and hospitality of a lower value.

8. As well as having a value threshold officers are also required to consider the motive behind the gift or hospitality and whether if challenged, they could justify accepting it. (The general guidance is that any gifts of value should be donated to the Mayor's charity.) Therefore officers may be required to declare any gift or hospitality for which it may be argued as trying to influence a decision or may be perceived in such a way.
9. Finally, hospitality may be difficult to value and therefore officers would again be required to consider the motive for the hospitality and how it may be perceived.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10. Establishing a value threshold of £25 for gifts and hospitality, but rejected in accordance with the reasons detailed above.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

11. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	√

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	√
Human Resources	√	Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

GARY HALL DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Graeme Walmsley	5186	23/04/2010	v/hrpolicies/current/code of conduct

There are no background papers to this report.