

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item No. 10

Subject : Gifts & Hospitality Policy
Committee : Personnel Committee
Date : 25 November 2024
Author : Asa Thorpe, Chief Executive Officer

1. Report Summary:

- 1.1 Salisbury City Council has a Gifts & Hospitality Policy regarding how gifts and hospitality for staff be administered by staff and managers.
- 1.2 The policy was last reviewed in October 2023, when it was noted there were no legislative changes.

2. Background:

- 2.1 The changes proposed follow discussions among the Senior Management Team in an effort to minimise confusion over various specified gifts and acts of hospitality, and contribute to setting a new culture.
- 2.2 The Drafted Policy now includes an Appendix, at the suggestion of the Senior Management Team, of possible gifts and acts of hospitality and actions staff should take in relation to each.

3. Recommended changes

- 3.1 Clarification on what is classed as 'gifts' received, how they should be handled and accounted for.
- 3.2 Clarification on what is classed as 'hospitality', both received and given, and how they should be handled and accounted for.
- 3.3 The primary change is the addition of an Appendix A detailing some examples of a Gift or act of Hospitality and confirming how it should be accounted for. It is envisioned that the Appendix is a 'live working document', that can be updated when new types of gifts or hospitality are experienced, without affecting the main Policy.
- 3.4 Additional changes include reasserting the guiding principle of "no" while also ensuring no offence is caused to the giver and acknowledging that 'gifts' are not solicited (but sometimes come as an automatic 'thank you for business').
- 3.5 The principle that all gifts and hospitality should be discussed with line manager(s) and/or Senior Management Team manager and/or Chief Executive Officer has not changed.

4. Recommendation:

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 4.1.1 Adopts the suggested amendments in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy including an Appendix A.

4.1.2 Gives Officers the opportunity to updated Appendix A without updating the whole Policy.

Wards Affected: All

Background papers: None

Implications: Staff confirmation of what constitutes a gift or hospitality and how to account for it.

Financial: None (except staff continue to register a gift or hospitality)

Legal: None

Personnel: All employees of the Council.

Environmental Impact: None

Equalities Impact Statement: None identified

SALISBURY
CITY COUNCIL



Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Draft

Policy Number	Version	Author	Doc No.	PDF No.	Date Published / Reviewed	Review Due	Review Team	Changes:
CS002	1	CT	37639	46003	1 March '14	June '16	Management	
CS002	2	KAB	37639	54060	20 Jan 2016	Jan 2019	OMG/SF	New nominal gifts level of £20. New Dec Form
CS002	2	HR	37639	54060	Feb 2020	Feb 2022	SMT	No changes required
HR08					25/10/2023	25/10/24	Worknest	No legislative changes but overlaps with HR07 so consider amalgamation

Distribution

Internal: All SCC Staff

External: Website/Councillors/Partners

1. Gifts & Hospitality

- 1.1. As a local government employee, your conduct must not give anyone reason to question your impartiality or think that you have been influenced by gifts or hospitality. This is crucial because accepting gifts or hospitality could not only affect your personal reputation but also that of the Council, even if no wrongdoing is intended.
- 1.2. It is illegal to request or accept any gift, reward, or hospitality in return for influencing any decision or action in your capacity as a local government employee.
- 1.3. You must decline any personal gift offered to you or your family by anyone who has or may have dealings with the Council, such as contractors, suppliers, or individuals seeking Council decisions (e.g. planning applications). Even the perception of influence could undermine trust in your role.
- 1.4. You are not allowed to accept any fee, reward, or gift for work done beyond your salary and allowances as specified in your contract, except as outlined in this policy.
- 1.5. The guiding principle in relation to the accepting, or giving, of gifts and hospitality is 'no'. However, you should discuss with your manager, SMT member or the Chief Executive in advance as they may authorise 'by exception'.

2. What is a gift?

- 2.1. A gift includes any item or service you receive without charge or at a discounted rate not available to the public. Examples include promotional items, discounts, or services not generally available.
- 2.2. It does not include staff offers/ discounts which are negotiated corporately.
- 2.3. Common gifts might include (but are not exclusive to) pens, calendars, mouse mats, books, flowers, bottles of wine, chocolates and other business stationery and promotional items.

3. What is hospitality?

- 3.1. Hospitality is the offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event on terms not available to the general public. Common hospitality includes meals, refreshments, and tickets for cultural or sporting events.
- 3.2. If you are in a position where to not offer hospitality (tea/coffee, etc) would be considered bad manners or disrespectful, you must discuss with your manager, SMT member or the Chief Executive Officer in advance. Your

manager will also advise if SCC might reimburse you for any associated expenses or costs.

4. What should you do if offered a gift or hospitality?

- 4.1. You should tactfully refuse any personal gift, or hospitality, which is offered to you, or to a member of your family.
- 4.2. If you are unable to refuse a gift, such gifts, where possible, should be shared among the team / colleagues, or put into a team raffle – such gifts might include pens, calendars, mouse mats, books, flowers, bottles of wine, chocolates and other business stationery and promotional items.
- 4.3. All offers of hospitality must be declared and you must obtain the written approval of your manager *before* accepting or enjoying the hospitality offered.
- 4.4. If you attend any conferences, workshops or similar work-related activities, which includes hospitality or perceived benefit-in-kind, the outcomes should be shared with the whole team.
- 4.5. ALL or hospitality must be declared to / via your manager.
- 4.6. Complete the [Gifts and Hospitality Declaration Form](#) for all gifts or hospitality, regardless of whether you accept or decline the offer.

5. Are there any gifts/hospitality which can be accepted without any approval?

5.1. Since hospitality is often offered in advance, then you must seek your manager's approval before accepting (and complete the Gifts & Hospitality Declaration Form).

5.2. Occasionally, small gifts (e.g., pens, diaries, or chocolates) are offered with goodwill, and refusing them might cause offense.

Likewise, occasionally, small offers of hospitality, are offered (eg cup of tea/coffee) with goodwill and as part of wider discussions or meetings, and refusing them might cause offence.

5.3. If you believe it would cause offence to refuse a small gift, or small act of hospitality, then you may accept such small gifts and hospitality but you must declare same to your Line Manager – ideally in advance. All gifts and hospitality need to be recorded and declared.

5.4. All hospitality offers must be discussed with your manager in advance, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All managers should refer to their SMT member, or the Chief Executive Officer, and/or get confirmation from them, in advance.

6. As a guide:

- 6.1. *Gifts* which can be accepted include: calendars, mugs, mouse mats, small gifts given at the end of a courtesy visit (e.g. to a factory) or conference, gifts/ tokens presented to you by visitors where refusal would be regarded as inappropriate.
- 6.2. Acceptable hospitality includes invitations to events or functions where you are officially representing the Council, working lunches to continue business discussions, or refreshments offered during meetings. This also covers meals or refreshments provided by public sector partners as part of joint working initiatives or during events promoting Council-supported projects.
- 6.3. *All* gifts, benefits, or hospitality offered to you or your family as a result of your employment - whether accepted or not - *must* be declared using the Gifts and Hospitality Declaration Form.
- 6.4. You must never accept significant gifts or hospitality from service users, actual or potential contractors, or outside suppliers. Doing so creates a risk of actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- 6.5. If an organization wishes to sponsor a Council activity, the same rules regarding the acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply. The Chief Executive Officer must be involved in any decision on such matters.
- 6.6. Where the Council sponsors an event or service, no employee or their family members should benefit unless there has been full disclosure of the interest to the Chief Executive Officer. All such sponsorship arrangements must be recorded.

Acknowledgment

I have read the Gifts and Hospitality Policy. I understand the contents and agree to adhere to the procedures outlined

Signed:

Please print:

Name:

Post:

Date:

Please sign and return to the HR Manager

Gifts & Hospitality Appendix

The guiding principle in relation to the accepting, or giving, of gifts and hospitality is 'no'. You should tactfully refuse any personal gift, or hospitality, which is offered to you, or to a member of your family. However, you should discuss with your manager, SMT member or the Chief Executive in advance as they may authorise 'by exception'.

As a local government employee, your conduct must not give anyone reason to question your impartiality or think that you have been influenced by gifts or hospitality. This is crucial because accepting gifts or hospitality could not only affect your personal reputation but also that of the Council, even if no wrongdoing is intended.

It is illegal to request or accept any gift, reward, or hospitality in return for influencing any decision or action in your capacity as a local government employee.

You must decline any personal gift offered to you or your family by anyone who has or may have dealings with the Council, such as contractors, suppliers, or individuals seeking Council decisions (e.g. planning applications). Even the perception of influence could undermine trust in your role.

What constitutes a Gift or act of Hospitality and how should it be accounted for:

A gift includes any item or service you receive without charge or at a discounted rate not available to the public. (E.g. promotional items, discounts, or services not generally available, etc).		Use this Declaration Form: [insert link to 2024 Form]
Pens	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Calendars	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Mouse mats	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Books	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Flowers	Share among Team / colleagues	Share with Team/colleagues by displaying in office or similar
Bottles of wine / drink	Put into Team / all-staff raffle	
Chocolates	Share among Team / colleagues	
Business stationery	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Promotional materials	Make available to Team / colleagues	

Diaries	Make available to Team / colleagues	
Hospitality is the offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment, or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event on terms not available to the general public. (E.g. meals, refreshments, tickets for cultural or sporting events, etc)		
ALL hospitality must be declared and you must obtain the written approval of your manager <i>before</i> accepting or enjoying the hospitality offered	You must seek your manager's approval before accepting	Use this Declaration Form: [insert link to 2024 Form]
Conference / seminar / workshop attendance	Share outcomes with Team/colleagues	Share attendance among Team/colleagues if appropriate
Work-related activities (eg team-building event)	Share outcomes with Team/colleagues	Share attendance among Team/colleagues if appropriate
Left-over catered food	Share with colleagues (to try and avoid or minimise food waste)	Send email to colleagues to advise what and where.