

WIRRAL COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 27 JANUARY 2009 REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

1. Executive Summary

This report sets out current work taking place on the process for registering gifts and hospitality.

2. Registration of Gifts and Hospitality

- 2.1 At the meeting of this committee the issue of registration of gifts and hospitality was raised by a member of the committee. The Committee resolved (minute 18 refers):

That the Committee receive a further report on the various issues relating to the registering of gifts and hospitality.

- 2.2 Members will be aware that the Council implemented a new software programme for its democratic processes which has been in operation since October 2008. The Council continues to develop the system and its uses. The register of member's interests is in the process of being transferred from the paper system on to the computer system. This will enable members to update their own entry on the register and it will be accessible via the Council's website to the public. Members will be sent an automatic reminder every 3 months of the need to update any changes to their interests.

- 2.3 It is intended that declarations of any gifts and hospitality received will also be entered directly on to the system in the same way. Work is taking place on this and the intention is that it will be completed by 31 March 2009. An issue has arisen over the obligation on members who are offered gifts or hospitality in their capacity as members of other authorities or boards to which they have been appointed by the Council, for example the Police Authority, the Fire and Rescue Authority or Merseytravel. This issue has been discussed at the Merseyside District Secretaries meetings (attended by the Chief Legal Officers and their deputies for the constituent authorities and the joint authorities). Guidance is also being sought from the Standards Board for England.

- 2.4 It is my intention to bring a further report to this Committee at its next meeting on draft guidance to members on this issue ahead of the implementation of the new system from 1 April 2009.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

There are none arising directly from this report.

4. Local Member Support

There are no implications for individual wards arising directly from this report.

5. **Equal Opportunity Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

6. **Human Right Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

7. **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

8. **Community Safety Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

9. **Planning Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

10. **Background Papers**

There are no background papers

11. **Recommendations**

- (1) That the notes the content of this report.
- (2) That the Committee a further report on guidance to members on the declaration of gifts and hospitality and the implementation of the new system for registration.

BILL NORMAN

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

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