

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

19 April 2013

Report of: Service Manager, Democratic Services

Title: Threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality by members

Ward: n/a

Officer Presenting Report: Ian Pagan, Service Manager, Democratic Services

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers increasing the current threshold at which members must register any gifts and hospitality which they receive.

Summary

This report recommends the Committee to consider increasing the threshold at which members must register any gifts and hospitality received by them, following consideration of the discretionary elements of the current Members Register of Interests by the Scrutiny & Governance Member Working Group.

The significant issues in the report are:

Set out below

Policy

Not applicable

Consultation

Internal

Discussed at Scrutiny & Governance Member Working Group on 10 April.

External

Not applicable

Context and Proposal

1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of changes to the previous standards regime which included giving council's the freedom to adopt their own codes of conduct for members and the replacement of personal and prejudicial interests with a new category of disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI's). The requirement for members to register their interests at the start of their term of office, and to keep their registration up to date by notifying the proper officer of any changes within 28 days remains, although the register need only contain details of members disclosable pecuniary interests.
2. However, local authorities have to option to include other categories of interest in the registration, and at Bristol the decision was taken to include membership of organisations, and registration of gifts and hospitality.
3. At its meeting on 11 April the Scrutiny and Governance Member Working Group considered the current arrangements for registration and considered that it remains appropriate for the Council to include these additional categories within the Register. However, they thought that the £25 or more threshold for registering gifts and hospitality was particularly low and that this should be increased. A figure of £100 was thought to be more realistic.
4. It was agreed that the Audit Committee should be asked to consider a change.

Other Options Considered

Not applicable

Risk Assessment

None undertaken

Legal and Resource Implications

None

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None