

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	7 JULY 2023
Report Title:	GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	To consider the harmonisation of gifts and hospitality thresholds so as to ensure consistency across Wales

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Committee to consider the harmonisation of gifts and hospitality thresholds to ensure consistency across the Welsh local authorities.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Members' Code of Conduct, Members are required to register the receipt of any gifts, hospitality or other benefits where the value of the item or the benefits exceeds a threshold determined by the Council. In Bridgend, the current threshold is £25.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales (Penn Review), noted that the Members' Code of Conduct does not specify a threshold for Members' declarations of gifts and hospitality. It noted that the threshold set by individual authorities across Wales varies from £21 to £50. The Report recommended that the Members' Code of Conduct should be amended to specify a threshold in order to ensure consistency across Wales.
- 3.2 All Monitoring Officers across Wales have been asked to seek the views of their Standards Committees on whether a standard threshold value should be voluntarily agreed by all Welsh local authorities, and if so, what that threshold should be. The table below shows the thresholds for the local authorities and Members will note that the average threshold is £25.

Local Authority	Threshold (£)
Blaenau Gwent	20
Bridgend	25
Caerphilly	25
Cardiff	25
Carmarthenshire	25
Denbighshire	25
Gwynedd	25
Merthyr	All must be registered
Monmouthshire	No specific threshold
Neath Port Talbot	All must be registered
Pembrokeshire	25
Powys	25
Rhondda Cynnon Taff	25
Swansea	25
Torfaen	25
Vale of Glamorgan	50 for gifts and 25 for hospitality
Wrexham	25
Ynys Mos	25

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee support the proposal that local authorities in Wales should voluntarily harmonise their thresholds for the registration of gifts and hospitality.

Background documents:

None