

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Staffing Committee

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
<b>Report:</b>	Head of Strategic HR
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Code of Conduct for Employees
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Paul Findlow

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### 1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Following a recent Internal Audit inspection, minor amendments are proposed to the Code of Conduct for employees to strengthen the requirement employees to declare any interests.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Staffing Committee recommend to Constitution Committee approval of the following minor changes highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1.
1. All employees are required to complete an annual declaration of interest return, to confirm that they have nothing to declare, and to then report issues as and when they occur.
  2. In Adult's and Children's Social Care no gift should be accepted under any circumstances.

### 3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 In this era of greater public scrutiny and the need for transparency, implementing these changes will demonstrate the Council's commitment to upholding the values expressed in the Code of Conduct and its desire to ensure transparency.
- 3.3 Small insignificant gifts of a value of less than £5, such as pens, diaries, calendars, mouse-mats or mugs may be accepted. However, this is not the case for those working in Adults and Children's Social Care, where no gift, of however little the value, should be accepted under any circumstances. This is to reflect stricter guidelines introduced following the Care Act 2015.

### 4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Not applicable

## **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 Not applicable.

## **6.0 Policy Implications**

6.1 As stated.

## **7.0 Implications for Rural Communities**

7.1 Not applicable

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 Not applicable

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

9.1 None

## **10.0 Risk Management**

10.1 The changes will reduce organisational risk of an interest not being reported, a report of an interest not being duly authorised and recorded, and not being able to demonstrate corporate knowledge of employees' interests.

10.2 In addition the changes will increase employees' awareness of the rules on interests permitted and the need to report them, thereby reducing the incidence of non-reporting and remove the defence of ignorance of the need to report any interest

## **11.0 Background and Options**

11.1 Currently, the Code of Conduct for Employees places the duty of reporting any of the 3 following interests on each individual employee:-

- Approval for outside employment (for those who are you are Grade 7 or above)
- An Interest or Connection
- An offer of Gifts or Hospitality

11.2 These declarations are currently authorised by the Head of Service and then held locally, so this information is maintained in discrete areas throughout the Council.

11.3 A report by Internal Audit recommended these 2 changes:-

1. That each employee should be asked to complete a Declaration of Interests each year
2. That the process of compiling and maintaining these annual returns should be centralised, so that a full picture of the interests of all employees is easily available to Council Members and Officers.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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