



## **Nottinghamshire County Council**

### **Councillors and Co-Opted Members - Protocol in relation to Gifts and Hospitality**

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE OFFERED A GIFT**

1. It is reasonable to accept a modest gift of a promotional character given to a wide range of people, and not uniquely to you, such as calendars, diaries, pens and other articles of use in the office. Modest gifts at the conclusion of any courtesy visit to a factory or firm of the sort normally given by that firm may also be accepted.
2. From time to time, Councillors and Co-Opted Members may be offered other higher value or personal gifts. You need to consider why you have been offered the gift. If you are in doubt as to the motive behind the gift, you should seek advice from Democratic Services as to whether it is appropriate to accept it. No gift worth over £xx should be accepted under any circumstances. Any gift offered, whether accepted or refused, should be recorded in the gift and hospitality register held by Democratic Services, which is available for public inspection.
3. If it is impractical to return a gift, or to do so would cause undue offence, in circumstances where it would otherwise be inappropriate to accept the gift, the gift can be donated to raise money for the Chairman's Charity.

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE OFFERED HOSPITALITY**

4. Councillors and Co-Opted members should only accept offers of hospitality if they are invited in their role as a Council representative. Offers to attend events should be accepted only when these are significant for Nottinghamshire, relate to business that is currently relevant to Nottinghamshire, or where the Council should be seen to be represented. Acceptance of such invitations should be recorded in the gift and hospitality register.
5. When hospitality has to be declined, the third party offering the hospitality should be courteously informed of the reasons for the requirement to decline.
6. When receiving hospitality, Councillors and Co-Opted Members should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.

7. There may be circumstances where it will not always be possible, or even desirable, to reject offers of hospitality on a modest scale. Acceptable examples would include official hospitality at a function organised by a public authority; overseas civic twinning arrangements and similar events; refreshments following a site visit; or a working lunch of a modest standard to enable the parties to continue to discuss business. The decision whether to accept or not must depend on the circumstances in each case. These circumstances will also determine whether the hospitality needs to be entered in the register. If in doubt Councillors and Co-Opted Members should err on the side of caution and enter the appropriate details in the register.

## **FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

8. Councillors and Co-Opted Members should give the same consideration to offers made to members of their family, or friends, which could be viewed as securing an indirect benefit to themselves.