



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 8th July 2009

Subject: Review of the Members' Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality 2008/09

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. This report presents to the Standards Committee statistical data in relation to declarations of gifts and hospitality recorded by Members during the period 2008/09, and draws comparisons with declarations made by Members in 2007/08. The report highlights any trends that have been identified in terms of:
 - the number of gifts / hospitality received;
 - the Members receiving the largest numbers of gifts / hospitality; and
 - the organisations making the largest numbers of donations.
2. The report shows that there has been a decrease in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor in the last municipal year, and a slight increase in the number of gifts and hospitality received by other Members, however the value of both mayoral and non-mayoral gifts has decreased.
3. The Standards Committee is recommended to consider the information as set out in the report and whether they are satisfied with the assurances provided.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report presents to the Standard Committee statistical data in relation to declarations of gifts and hospitality recorded by Members during the period 2008/09, and draws comparisons with declarations made by Members in 2007/08. The report highlights any trends that have been identified in terms of:

- the number of gifts / hospitality received;
- the Members receiving the largest numbers of gifts / hospitality; and
- the organisations making the largest numbers of donations.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Details of the gifts and hospitality which Members have received since May 2007 (including details of the donor and the value of the gift) are available on the Council's website as part of each individual Members' the Register of Interests.

2.2 The Standards Committee received reports that presented them with statistical data in relation to the register of gifts and hospitality from 2002 to May 2007 in October 2007, and for the 2007/08 municipal year in July 2008. This report analyses any trends in the number, frequency and value of gifts received during the year 2008/09 in the same way, and draws comparisons with the register of gifts for 2007/08.

2.3 The top ten donors for the year 2008/09 have also been identified along with the number of gifts throughout the municipal year they account for.

3.0 Main Issues

Procedure for recording gifts and hospitality received by Members

3.1 Members are required to register any gifts or hospitality they receive worth over £25.00 and in connection with their role as a Councillor. In order to register the gift Members must provide the name of the donor, a brief description of the gift or hospitality, the date they received the gift, and its estimated value.

3.2 Members are provided with extensive guidance (available on the Council's intranet site and from their group office) on when to accept gifts and hospitality, and when this would be inappropriate. There is also a form available for Members to use when registering their receipt of a gift which prompts them to provide all the required information. This is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

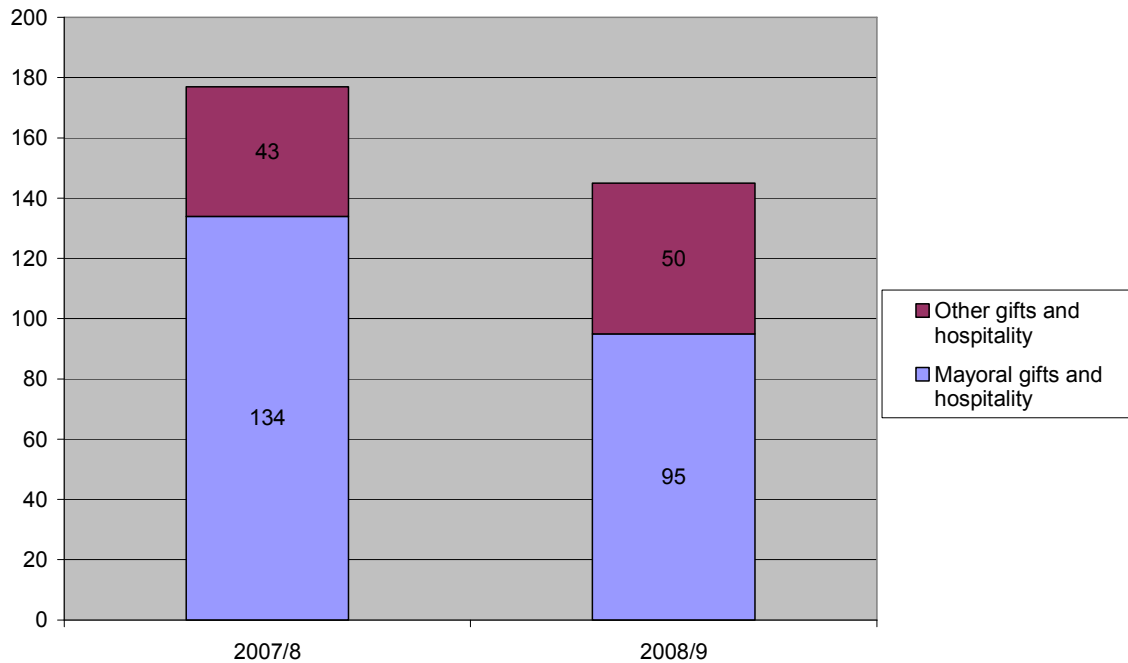
3.3 Members are reminded of the need to register gifts and hospitality through the regular quarterly reminders sent to them regarding the Register of Interests. In addition, Members who also hold special positions, such as the Leader or the Lord Mayor, have special arrangements for officers to forward details of civic engagements and gifts received on their behalf.

3.4 In addition, Members are required to declare a personal interest in any matter under consideration at a meeting if it is likely to affect a person who gave them the gift or hospitality. Members must declare the existence and nature of the gift and hospitality, the person who gave it to them and how the matter relates to that person. Three years after a Member has received a gift, their obligation to declare it at a meeting ceases, although it will remain on their register for the duration of their period as a Councillor.

- 3.5 Members are reminded of the need to declare any personal interests arising from their Register of Interests through an aide memoir sent by the relevant Committee Clerk prior to the Committee meeting.

Number of gifts

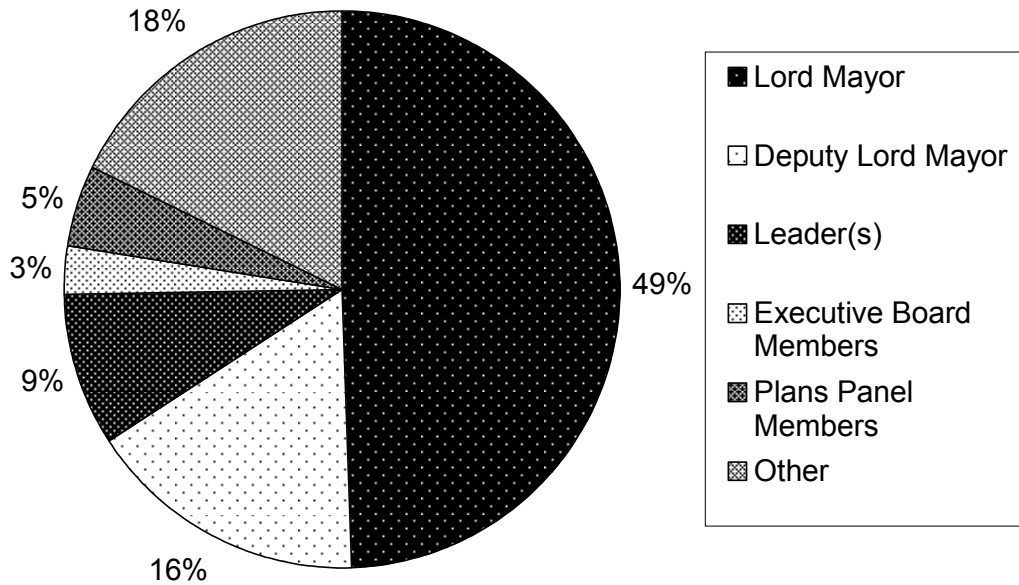
- 3.6 The number of gifts received in the last municipal year in comparison the number received in 2007/08 can be seen in the graph below:



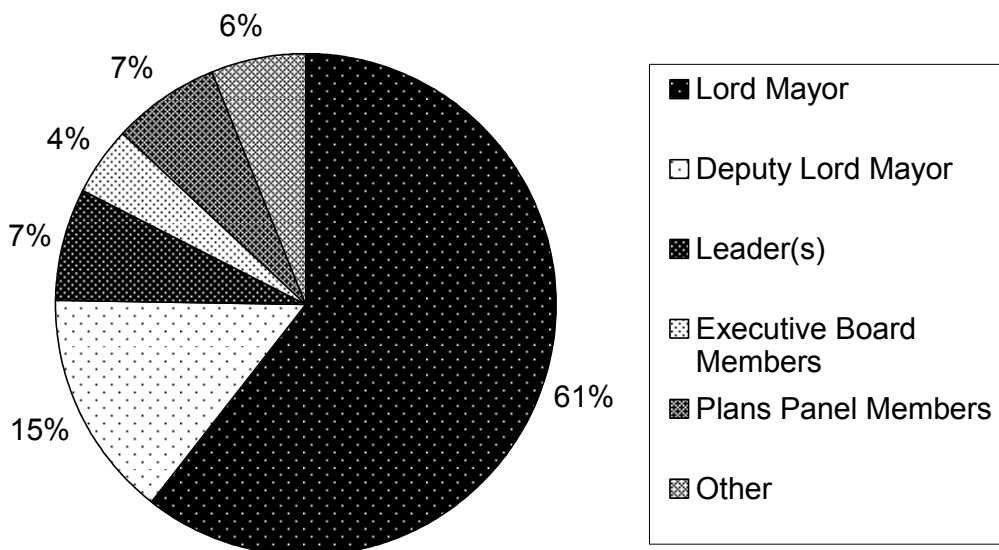
- 3.7 As can be seen in the graph, there has been a decrease in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor in the last municipal year, and a slight increase in the number of gifts and hospitality received by other Members.
- 3.8 As was reported in July last year, the Lord Mayor's Secretary is required to keep a register of civic gifts for audit purposes. These are gifts given to the Lord Mayor that are not personal gifts, but are intended for the city. These gifts are kept in the Lord Mayor's accommodation. Any personal gifts and all hospitality received are recorded in the register kept for all Members of the Council.

Position of recipient

- 3.9 An analysis of the position of the recipients in 2008/09 can be seen in the graph below:



3.10 The position of the recipients in 2007/08 can also be seen below:

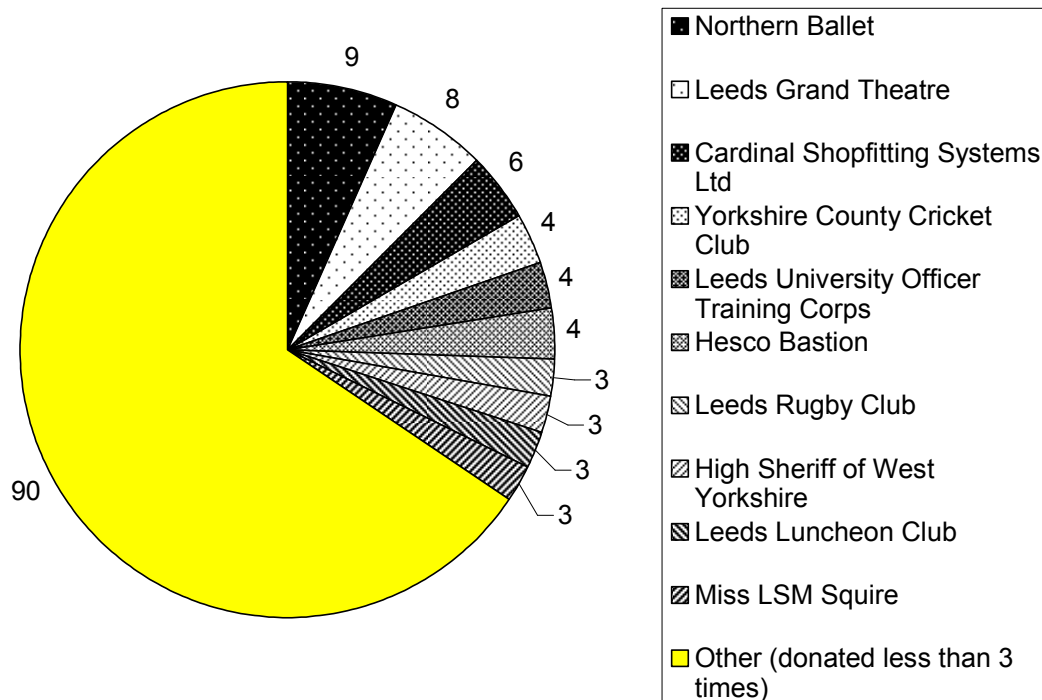


3.11 A comparison of the two graphs shows that the percentage of gifts and hospitality provided to the Lord Mayor have decreased in the past year. The percentage of gifts provided to the Leader(s) has increased slightly.

3.12 As in previous years the Leaders and the Executive Board account for a large proportion of gifts and hospitality, which could be explained by the fact that these are high profile Members who regularly feature in local media. However, they are also the Members of the Council who have the most decision making power.

Frequency of donations

- 3.13 The chart below shows the identity of the top ten providers of gifts and hospitality to Members in 2008/09:



- 3.14 Those who have donated less than three times during the year are grouped together under 'other'. This includes some bodies such as Leeds Civic Trust and Screen Yorkshire.
- 3.15 The two bodies that have provided the most frequent gifts and hospitality have close ties with the Council, such as Leeds Grand Theatre and Northern Ballet, as the Council has Members on their management boards. Therefore the provision of free tickets to shows is fairly commonplace.
- 3.16 Three of the top five donors in the municipal year 2007/08 (Cardinal Shopfitting Systems Ltd, Leeds Grand Theatre and Leeds Luncheon Club) appear in the top ten donors for 2008/09.
- 3.17 Members may be interested to know that according to the Council's records, Cardinal Shopfitting Systems Ltd have not supplied the Council in any way for at least the past three years.

Value of gifts and hospitality

- 3.18 In the municipal year 2008/09, 145 gifts and hospitality were recorded by Members. These amounted to an estimated total of £6,676.50. This comes to an average amount of £45.70 per gift, and represents a 37% decrease in the value of gifts received in 2007/08 which was £10,657.95.
- 3.19 Once the value of gifts and hospitality received by the Lord Mayor are removed from the total, £2,494.00 worth of gifts and hospitality were received in 2008/09, which represents a decrease of 15% in the value of non-mayoral gifts and hospitality received in 2007/08. The average amount per gift has also decreased since 2007/08, which amounted to £60.21 per gift.

- 3.25 The cumulative value of the gifts received in the municipal year 2008/09 can be seen in Appendix 2 to this report. As can be seen from the table, the most valuable single gift came from An Agency Called England Ltd, who provided two tickets to the Drum Awards for the Digital Industries, including drinks.

Declarations of interest arising from gifts and hospitality received

- 3.26 There have been no personal interests declared by Members in the municipal year 2008/09 relating to gifts and hospitality received. As part of the Council's monitoring arrangements in relation to declaration of interests, officers in Governance Services compare meeting agendas with the relevant Committee Members' register of interests, and alert the Member concerned if a potential interest is identified. Officers in Governance Services have confirmed that no potential interests were identified during 2008/09 in relation to gifts and hospitality.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 Undertaking the described review of the gifts and hospitality registered by Members enables to the Council to have a better understanding of the nature of gifts and hospitalities received by Members and also the effectiveness of those procedures in place to ensure that the acceptance of any such offers by Members is open and transparent.
- 4.2 The onus is on elected members to declare details of the gifts and hospitality which they receive in the discharge of their duties as a Councillor. The Head of Governance Services, having reviewed the guidance and systems available for Members to register gifts and hospitality, is satisfied that appropriate controls are in place and are operating satisfactorily.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal or resource implications to this report.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The report shows that there has been a decrease in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor in the last municipal year, and a slight increase in the number of gifts and hospitality received by other Members, however the value of both mayoral and non-mayoral gifts has decreased.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members of Standards Committee are recommended to consider:
- the information provided in this report; and
 - whether they are satisfied with the assurances provided.

Background Documents

Report to Standards Committee, Review of the Members' Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality 2007/08, 1st July 2009

Leeds City Council Members' Register of Interest Forms