



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Standards Committee

Date: 13th July 2010

Subject: Review of the Members' Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality 2009/10

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 2009/10, and draws comparisons with declarations made by Members in 2008/09 and 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 slight decrease in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, and that the number of gifts receive by other Members has remained at a fairly consistent level, however the value of both mayoral and non-mayoral gifts has increased.
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 2009/10, and draws comparisons with declarations made by Members in 2008/09 and 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 Member's 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 and 2008/09 municipal years in July 2008 and July 2009 respectively. This report analyses any trends in the number, frequency and value of gifts received during the year 2009/10 in the same way, and draws comparisons with the register of gifts for 2008/09 and 2007/08.

3.0 Main Issues

Procedure for recording gifts and hospitality received by Members

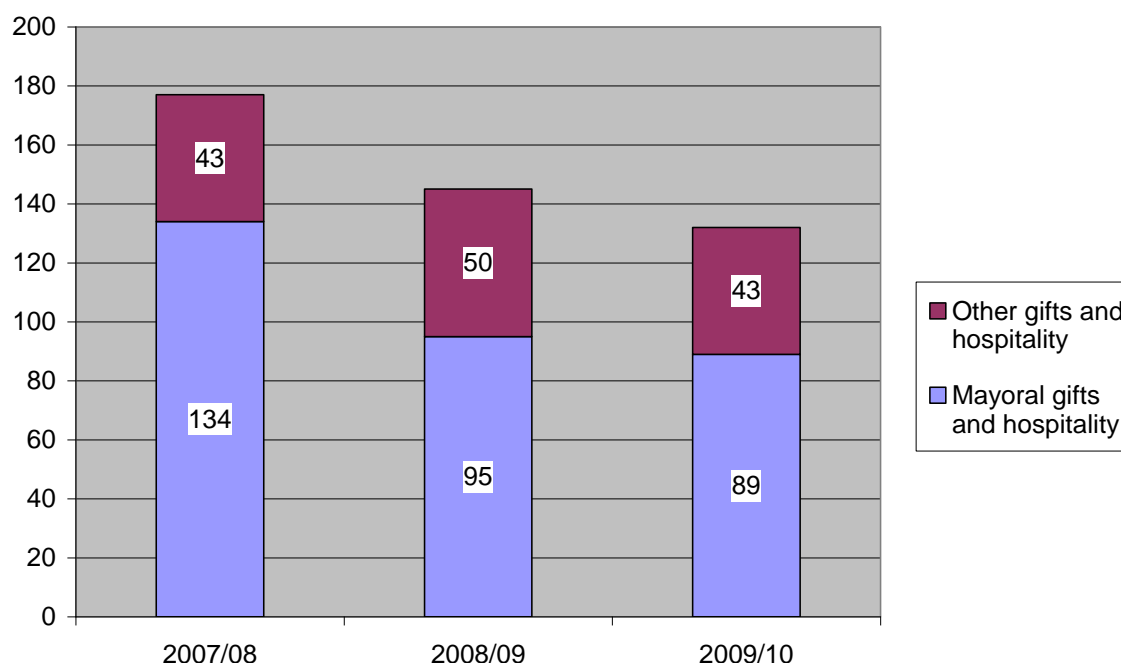
- 3.1 Members are required to register any gifts or hospitality they receive worth over £25.00 and in connection with their role as a Councillor. In order to register the gift Members must provide the name of the donor, a brief description of the gift or hospitality, the date they received the gift, 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. A gifts and hospitality briefing note has also been produced (attached at Appendix 1), which was considered by Group Whips before being circulated to Members on 5th March 2010.
- 3.3 The briefing note addresses the queries raised by Group Whips and other Members about gifts and hospitality received from Outside Bodies, and whether gifts received as part of a Member's duties on that body (for example, tickets provided by Leeds Grand Theatre in order that its Board Members can monitor performances) should be registered. Advice was sought from Standards for England on this matter, who confirmed that such gifts should be registered. This advice is included in the briefing note.
- 3.4 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 form was also updated in accordance with comments received from Group Whips, and is attached to the briefing note at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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

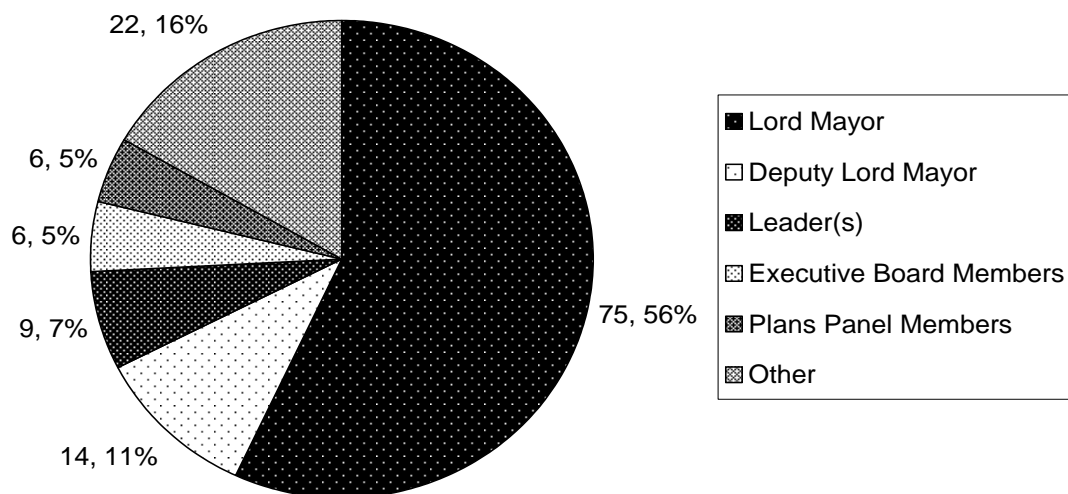
- 3.8 The number of gifts received in the last municipal year in comparison the number received in 2008/09 and 2007/08 can be seen in the graph below:



- 3.9 As can be seen in the graph, there has been a moderate decrease in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor since 2007/08, and the number of gifts received by other Members has remained at a fairly constant level.
- 3.10 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 Lord Mayor's register of interests.

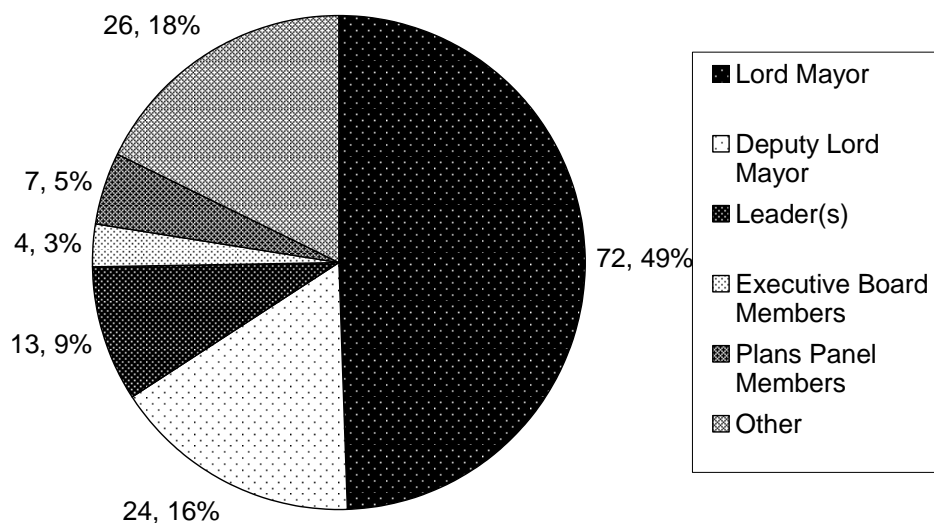
Position of recipient

3.11 An analysis of the position of the recipients in 2009/10 can be seen in the graph below:

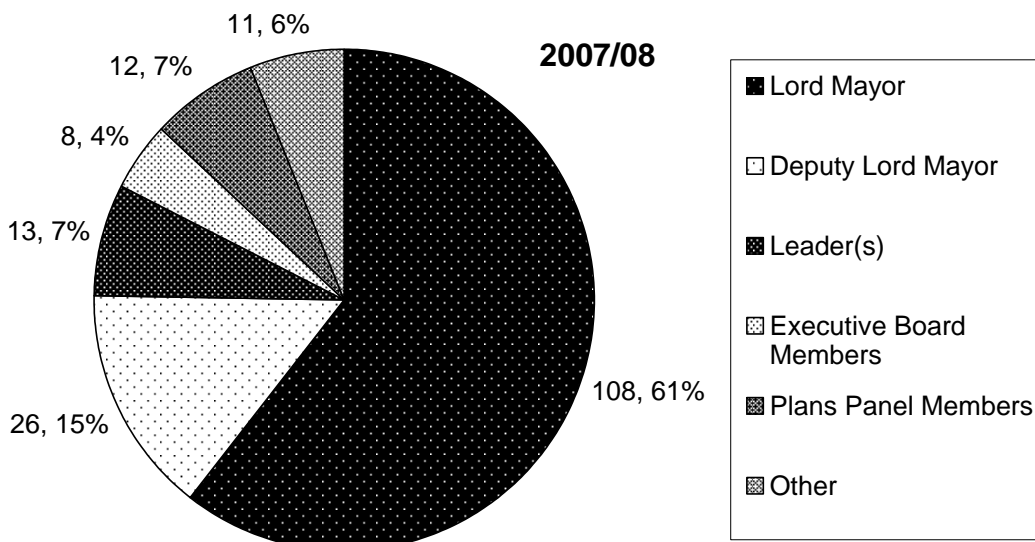


3.12 The position of the recipients in 2008/09 and 2007/08 can also be seen below:

2008/09



2007/08

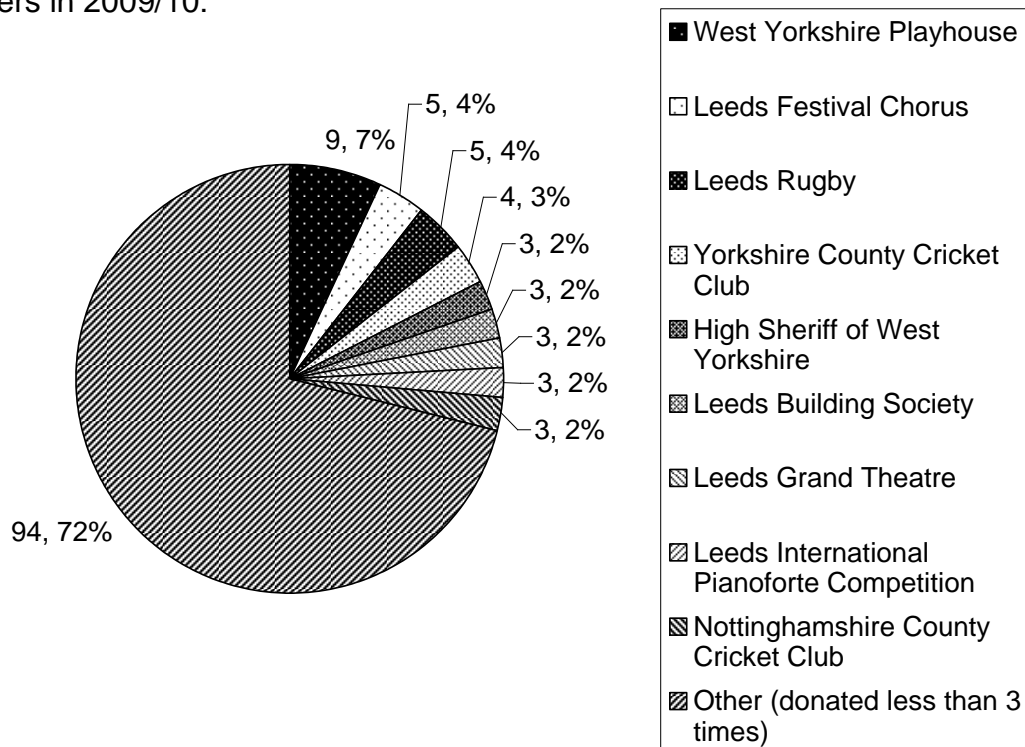


3.13 A comparison of the three graphs shows that the percentage of gifts and hospitality provided to the Lord Mayor decreased in 2008/09, but increased again in 2009/10. The percentage of gifts provided to the Leader(s) increased in 2008/09, and has remained at a similar percentage in 2009/10. However, there has been no marked increase or decrease in the percentage of gifts given to a particular type of Member over the last three years.

3.14 As in previous years the Leaders and members of Executive Board account for a fairly 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

3.15 The chart below shows the identity of the top ten providers of gifts and hospitality to Members in 2009/10:



3.16 Those who have donated less than three times during the year are grouped together under 'other'. This includes bodies such as the University of Leeds and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

3.17 The body that has provided the most frequent gifts and hospitality (West Yorkshire Playhouse) has close ties with the Council, as the Council has Members on its management board. Therefore the provision of free tickets to shows is fairly commonplace.

3.18 Three of the top five donors in the municipal year 2008/09 (Yorkshire County Cricket Club, High Sheriff of West Yorkshire and Leeds Grand Theatre) appear in the top ten donors for 2009/10.

Value of gifts and hospitality

3.19 In the municipal year 2009/10, 132 gifts and hospitality were recorded by Members. These amounted to an estimated total of £8,707.00. This comes to an average amount of £66.00 per gift, and represents an increase in the value of gifts received

in 2008/09 of £2030.50. This increase can be partly attributed to the registration of an annual Metrocard by one Member which is valued at £1,170.00.

3.20 Once the value of gifts and hospitality received by the Lord Mayor are removed from the total, £4,387.00 worth of gifts and hospitality were received in 2009/10, which represents an increase of £1,893.00 in the value of non-mayoral gifts and hospitality received in 2008/09. The average amount per gift has also increased since 2008/09, which amounted to £45.70 per gift.

3.21 The cumulative value of the gifts received in the municipal year 2009/10 can be seen in Appendix 2 to this report. As can be seen from the table, the most valuable single gift came from West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority (WYITA) who donated an annual Metrocard worth £1,170. WYITA have confirmed that a Metrocard is made available to its Members in order that they can monitor bus and rail services, and in lieu of travel expenses, however occasional private use is also permitted. It costs WYITA £262.00 to provide each Metrocard, however the value of £1,170 has been recorded as this would be the cost to a member of the public.

Declarations of interest arising from gifts and hospitality received

3.22 A number of interests relating to gifts and hospitality were declared by a total of four Members at the full Council meeting held on 18th November 2009. These related to three White Paper Motions regarding Leeds Rhinos, Yorkshire County Cricket Club and VAT Rates for Building Repairs and Maintenance.

3.23 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 apart from the above, no potential interests were identified during 2009/10 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 the guidance and processes are current and fit for purpose and have been effectively communicated to Members and the relevant support staff. Further, the Head of Governance Services confirms that where the receipt of gifts and hospitality has been notified, appropriate declarations of interest have been made by Members at meetings of the authority. In view of this the Head of Governance Services has no reason to doubt that the arrangements are embedded and are being routinely complied with.

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 decline in the number of gifts and hospitality received by the Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor over the last three years, however the number of gifts and hospitality received by other Members has remained at a fairly consistent level. There have been no significant changes in the position of the Members who receive the most gifts. The value of the gifts and hospitality received in 2009/10 has increased since 2008/09, but is still below the value of those received in 2007/08.
- 6.2 Several gifts and hospitality related interests were declared at the full Council meeting held on 18th November 2009. Officers in Governance Services have confirmed that no other potential gifts and hospitality related interests were identified during 2009/10.

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

Reports to Standards Committee, Review of the Members' Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality, 1st July 2008 and 8th July 2009

Leeds City Council Members' Register of Interest Forms