

## Hospitality Policy

### 1. Scope of this policy

- 1.1. The policy is designed to safeguard the use of public funds, and to protect and enhance the reputation of SELEP and the South East region. All gifts or hospitality must uphold the SELEP integrity and meet the highest standards of public life.
- 1.2. This Policy shall apply to all Strategic and Accountability Board members (The Board members) and any subsequent committee or panel established by the Strategic Board from time to time.
- 1.3. This policy is not applicable to officers employed on behalf of the SELEP; they are required to comply with the respective policies of their employing organisation.
- 1.4. The Board members may engage in hospitality or may receive gifts as a result of their role within the SELEP, provided it is in accordance with 4 below.

### 2. Approved duties

- 2.1. An "approved duty" is:
  - a) attendance by, or on behalf of, the Chair/Deputy Chair at any of the following meetings;
    - i) SELEP committees or sub-committees as may be established from time to time;
    - ii) Federated Boards;
    - iii) Federated committees or sub-committees as may be established from time to time;
    - iv) any working group within the SELEP area;
    - v) any spatial groups (including Coastal, Rural and Thames Gateway);
    - vi) any Sector Groups (including U9 (HE) and Creative);
    - vii) any Local Authority or Business Partners;
    - viii) Central Government and its departments;
    - ix) Secretariat;
    - x) Accountable Body;
  - b) an activity in connection with the discharge of any function of the SELEP; or
  - c) any other duty where the reasonable attendance is;
    - i) in pursuance of the role and duties of Chair/Deputy Chair; and
    - ii) to conduct business relevant to the work of, and necessary to further the objectives of the SELEP.
- 2.2. Attendance at a Strategic Board or Accountability Board meeting does not constitute an approved duty for the purpose of this policy.

### 3. Non-Claimable expenses

- 3.1. Public funds should not be used to purchase gifts of any kind. For example, the following must not be claimed:
  - a) Christmas or other greetings cards;
  - b) staff or Member entertaining, including Christmas lunches and other parties;
  - c) gifts to members of staff or other Members or ex-members of staff or ex-Members;
  - d) gifts, gratuities or donations of any nature to external bodies or individuals;

- e) prizes to staff members or Members rewarding special work efforts or good business ideas, other than through the approved corporate scheme – the costs of which would not be met through the expenses claim system;
- f) cards for those officers sitting exams, or "get well" cards;
- g) leaving gifts;
- h) long service awards; and
- i) flowers in respect of bereavements.

#### 4. Hospitality

- 4.1. Public funds should not be used for offering hospitality to third parties. If it is likely that a 'typical' member of the public would think that using public funds to offer hospitality, or the acceptance of a particular offer of hospitality is inappropriate, then it probably is and should therefore not be offered.
- 4.2. In exceptional circumstances the Chair may be in a position where they are required to provide hospitality. The need to incur such expenses must be approved in advance by the Accountable Body of the SELEP, where the value of the hospitality provided is greater than £20.00.
- 4.3. In obtaining approval there must be appropriate supporting information provided which sets out the reasons for the need to offer hospitality, and the names of those involved (both those of the external body offered the hospitality, and any SELEP member or officer present).
- 4.4. It is expected that the subsistence rates set out in paragraph 5.9 would normally apply. However, in exceptional circumstances there may be occasions when a higher level of hospitality is appropriate. In these cases, a maximum of £40 per head, may be paid, and prior approval must be obtained from the Accountable Body.
- 4.5. Catering may be provided for formal meetings with external bodies in certain circumstances, for example, if meetings take place outside of normal office hours.
- 4.6. The SELEP is funded entirely through public funds and everyone's conduct is expected to be of the highest standard. It is essential that all individuals are seen to be open and honest in any dealings with outside individuals and organisations. These relationships are examined in detail through formal and regular channels, such as auditors. They are also of great interest to the public through Freedom of Information requests and other ad hoc channels.
- 4.7. However, the role of Board Members incorporates an element of networking, which by their very nature will include an expectation of their attendance at formal hospitality events. Such offers of hospitality from third parties may be accepted if:
  - a) the invite is as a direct result of the Board Members role in the SELEP; and
  - b) it will provide a platform within which the Board Member will be able to actively pursue the SELEP's objective and further networking to the benefit of the SELEP.
- 4.8. In the interest of openness and transparency, all offers of hospitality made over the value of £25 should be declared, indicating whether it has been declined or accepted, using the Declaration form within 28 days of receipt of the offer. The register of hospitality declarations made will be published on the SELEP website.

The declaration form can be found [here](#).