

# Standards Advisory Committee



Thursday, 22 June 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160

Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ

## Agenda

**Chair:** To be elected at the meeting

### Members

Vice-Chair: To be elected at the meeting

John Pulford MBE, Fiona Browne, Mike Houston, Elizabeth Marshall MBE, Councillor Shafi Ahmed, Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Councillor Amin Rahman, Councillor Sirajul Islam and Councillor Abu Chowdhury

### Observers (Independent Persons):

Amanda Orchard ((Independent Person)) and Rachael Tiffen (Independent Person)

### Substitutes:

Councillor Amina Ali, Councillor Leelu Ahmed and Councillor Asma Begum

[The quorum for Standards Advisory Committee is 3 Members including one Councillor and one Co-optee]

### Further Information

Reports for consideration, meeting contact details, public participation and more information is available on the following pages.



## Public Information

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### Meeting Webcast

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<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

### Contact for further enquiries:

Joel West, Democratic Services,,  
Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ

Tel: 020 7364 4207

E-mail: [joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Web:<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

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Tower Hamlets Town Hall  
160 Whitechapel Road  
London E1 1BJ

## Standards Advisory Committee

Thursday, 22 June 2023

6.30 p.m.

PAGE  
NUMBER(S)

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

5 - 6

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, please see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded to declare the nature of the interest and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it's the Members' responsibility to declare any interests and to update their register of interest form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of your interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services

#### 2. TO ELECT A CHAIR FOR 2023-24

To elect a Chair of the Committee from amongst the Co-opted Members for the 2023-24 municipal year.

#### 3. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIR FOR 2023-24

To elect a Vice-Chair of the Committee from amongst the Co-opted Members for the 2023-24 municipal year.

#### 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

7 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 18 April 2023.

## 5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1	<b>Standards Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings 2023/24</b>	13 - 28
5.2	<b>Member Attendance Update</b>	29 - 42
5.3	<b>Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update</b>	43 - 50
5.4	<b>Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011</b>	To Follow
5.5	<b>Proposed revised Member Officer Protocol</b>	To Follow
6.	<b>WORK PLAN</b>	51 - 56

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

To consider any other unrestricted business that the Chair considers to be urgent.

## 8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

### **NOTE: EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL SECTION (Pink Papers)**

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

## 9. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

To consider any other exempt/ confidential business that the Chair considers to be urgent.

### **Next Meeting of the Committee:**

Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in the Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ



# Agenda Item 1

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

### **(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)**

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

**DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests.** In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

### **(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)**

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

### **(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.**

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

### **Guidance on Predetermination and Bias**

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

### **Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting**

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

**Further Advice** contact: Janet Fasan, Divisional Director, Legal Services and Monitoring Officer,  
Tel: 0207 364 4800.

## **APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either—  (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or  (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2023**

**COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWER HAMLETS TOWN HALL, 160 WHITECHAPEL  
ROAD, LONDON E1 1BJ**

**Members Present in Person:**

Councillor Shafi Ahmed  
Councillor Sabina Akhtar  
Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Councillor Abu Chowdhury

**Co-optees Present in Person:**

John Pulford MBE  
Fiona Browne Vice Chair  
Mike Houston

**Apologies:**

Councillor Amin Rahman

**Others In Attendance Virtually:**

Amanda Orchard (Independent Person)  
Rachael Tiffen Independent Person

**Officers Present in Person:**

Agnes Adrien (Head of Litigation, Legal Services)  
Patricia Attawia (Democratic Services Team Leader, Civic &  
Members, Governance)  
Jill Bayley (Head of Legal Safeguarding)  
Janet Fasan (Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer)  
Matthew Mannion (Head of Democratic Services)  
Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

### **3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **3.1 Standards Advisory Committee Annual Report to Council**

Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding, introduced the report that set out the Committee's annual report to Council. The report covers the activities of the Committee over the last year as well as being an opportunity to highlight any relevant issues to Council.

The Advisory Committee welcomed the report. The Chair suggested several minor amendments including:

- Inclusion of former co-optee Saied Uddin.
- Updating complaints information.
- Various minor format and style amendments, to be notified to officers separately.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The activities of the Standards Advisory Committee for the municipal year May 2022 – May 2023 as set out in the Annual Report of the Standards Advisory Committee attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be agreed for presentation to Council, subject to minor amendments as detailed above.

#### **3.2 Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update**

Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Member Support) introduced the report that updated the Committee on the Members' Register of Interests and declarations of gifts and hospitality submitted by Members since the previous report to the committee on 15 February 2023.

The Advisory Committee noted and welcomed that Democratic Services officers are thorough in prompting and chasing members to complete gifts and hospitality submissions, including issuing regular reminders in the members bulletin. The Chair indicated he would welcome readership stats of the bulletin once available.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The report be noted.

#### **3.3 Code of Conduct for Members - Complaint Monitoring**

Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding introduced the report that updated the Advisory Committee on the quarterly monitoring information for complaints and investigations relating to alleged breaches Council's Code of Conduct for



Members. Jill explained that the Council has chased the external agency for one of the complaints, but no response had yet been received. She was in communication with the Independent Persons (IPs) regarding the outstanding complaints.

The Committee sought clarification of the reason why one of the complaints was not being progressed pending receipt of an online form. Jill and Janet Fasan, Director Legal and Monitoring Officer explained that a completed complaints form had been deemed necessary to ensure sufficient relevant information and to allow members who were subject of the complaint to effectively respond to any accusations. Exceptions could and had been made to this requirement where a need had been demonstrated (e.g. for complaints with a relevant disability) but this was not the case for this complainant.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The report and the information contained in Appendix 1 to the report is noted.

### **3.4 Code of Conduct for Members - Annual Review**

Janet Fasan introduced the report invited the Committee to review and identify any changes they considered should be made to the current LBTH Code of Conduct for Members.

The Advisory Committee noted there were some minor amendments to be made to style and formatting and to remove repetitious sections of the code.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The Code of Conduct for Members as set out in Appendix 1 is noted, subject to the minor amendments referred to above.
2. Authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Advisory Committee, to make changes to the Code prior to submission to Council.

### **3.5 Update on review of Member Officer Protocol**

Agnes Adrien, Head of Litigation, introduced the report that summarised and reflected the review of the Member /Officer Protocol by the Deputy Monitoring Officer and Chair and the Vice Chair of the Standards Committee and sought the views of the Advisory Committee on the draft updated protocol.

The Chair noted and agreed the reasons for urgency as set out in the report.

The Advisory Committee made the following suggestions for amendments:

1. Strengthen the section detailing roles and responsibilities of political assistants to clarify behaviour that would be deemed unacceptable (for example, demonstrating political preference at a public meeting).

2. Formatting and style changes, to be notified to officers separately.
3. Adding a reference to the Code of Conduct for Members under paragraph 6.4 (reference to guidance on predetermination)
4. Addition of reference to possible complaints for improper use of Council Facilities (paragraph 8.4)
5. Deletion of the word 'severally' from paragraph 10.17, which the Advisory Committee felt to be superfluous.
6. Deletion of the phrase 'It is self-evident that' from paragraph 3.17, which the Advisory Committee felt to be superfluous.
7. Amending paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 to ensure consistent wording on private/informal discussion/resolution.

The Advisory Committee also asked that the general tone of the Protocol be reviewed to improve readability/accessibility, remove repetitions and employ a language style consistent with the Code of Conduct for Members, which members felt was more friendly in tone.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The draft updated Member /Officer Protocol be noted, subject to the recommended amendments above.
2. The Advisory Committee will receive further updates on the draft Member /Officer Protocol at a meeting in the next municipal year.

**4. WORK PLAN**

The Advisory Committee noted the final submission of the 22/23 work plan and noted that some items would be carried forward into 23/24.

Further to a query from Advisory Committee members, Officers advised that recruitment for the currently vacant co-optee position had not yet commenced, but it was hoped to start this shortly. Janet Fasan urged members of the Advisory Committee to promote and publicise the opportunity to their networks to maximise interest in the role, which had sometimes been disappointing in the past.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the work plan be noted.

**5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

**6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

A resolution to exclude the press and public was not required.


**7. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR  
CONSIDERS URGENT**

None.

The meeting ended at 6.10 p.m.

Chair,  
Standards Advisory Committee

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Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Standards Advisory Committee</b>  22 June 2023	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)
<b>Standards Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	(All Wards);

### Executive Summary

This report is presented to the first meeting of each municipal year and sets out, for noting, the Committee’s Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings for the year.

The report also asks Members to approve the establishment of its Sub-Committees to consider complaints relating to breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.

### Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and dates/times of meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report.
2. Agree to establish the following sub-committees for the municipal year 2023/24, to be convened as required on an ad-hoc basis with membership drawn from amongst the Members of the Standards Advisory Committee, including in each case a minimum of three members:-
  - Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-Committee
  - Hearings Sub-Committee

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The decisions are required to enable Members to be aware of the arrangements of the Committee and to establish its Sub-Committees so that complaints against members can be investigated and where necessary answered.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 There are no alternative options applicable to this report.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Standards Advisory Committee has been established by the Council to oversee the Member Code of Conduct, complaints against Members (including investigations and hearings) and other related matters.
- 3.2 The Committee procedure rules set out in Appendix 4 provide a good summary of the work the Committee undertakes.
- 3.3 New Members of the Committee are encouraged to read the committee procedure rules as a good background to the work of the committee.

### **Annual Establishment, Terms of Reference, Quorum and Dates of Meetings**

- 3.4 At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the full Council held on 17 May 2023, the Authority approved the proportionality and establishment of the Committees and Panels of the Authority, including the SAC and appointment of Members thereto.
- 3.5 It is customary that, following the Council AGM, the committees that have been established note their Terms of Reference (TOR), Membership and Quorum for the duration of the Municipal Year. The TORs are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The membership is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The dates of SAC meetings for the remainder of the Municipal Year, agreed by the full Council are set out in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.7 It should be noted that the 'usual' start time for Standards Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings has been set as 6.00pm. Changes to the permanent agreed start time for the Committee can be reviewed at the meeting and alternatives suggested by Members should they wish.

## **Membership**

- 3.8 Full Council has agreed that the SAC shall comprise:
- Members of the Council (not including the Mayor or more than one Cabinet Member), appointed by the full Council in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality.
  - Up to five persons who are not Members or officers of the Council or any other relevant authority (i.e. Co-opted members) who will be entitled to vote at meetings.
  - Co-opted members may serve as many terms of appointment as the full Council considers appropriate. A person may not be appointed as a co-opted member of the SAC or one of its sub-committees unless the appointment is approved by full Council.
  - Current co-optees, Mr John Pulford MBE, Mr Michael James Houston, Ms Fiona Browne and Ms Elizabeth Marshall were previously appointed by Council.
  - Syed Uddin was appointed by Council in November 2022, but has since stepped down. This co-opted position is currently vacant and expected to be advertised imminently.

Observers:

- 3.9 With respect to the 'Independent Person' (IP) role introduced nationally under the standards regime resulting from the Localism Act 2011, 2 appointments were made in January 2022. Amanda Orchard was appointed to her first term as Independent Person (expiring 20 January 2026) and Rachael Tiffin was appointed to her second term (also expiring 20 January 2026).
- 3.10 Council has agreed that the IPs should be invited to all SAC meetings in the capacity of observers.

Chairing the Committee

- 3.11 The full Council has agreed that the Chair and the Vice Chair of the SAC will be appointed from the co-opted members of the SAC.

## **Quorum**

- 3.12 The quorum of the SAC and for each of its sub-committees is three of the total membership and this must include at least one Councillor and one Co-opted Member. A Co-opted Member shall Chair the meeting.

## **Sub-Committees**

- 3.13 SAC Sub-Committees are established at the beginning of each municipal year. Their function is to consider allegations and the outcome of investigations into misconduct made against elected and co-opted Members and, where necessary propose sanctions. Following implementation of the Localism Act 2011, the compulsory arrangements for standards committees in England were withdrawn. However, Tower Hamlets Council has chosen to

maintain these arrangements to ensure that robust ethical arrangements for standards in public life are in place.

- 3.14 Sub-Committee membership is drawn from the membership of the parent committee and meetings can be convened as required on an ad hoc basis.
- 3.15 Procedures relating to the Sub-Committees, and the complaints process more generally are set out in the Member Code of Conduct at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None specific to this report.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 In regard to risk management, the terms of reference for the Standards Advisory Committee and the accompanying appendices provides a means of ensuring the work of the Committee and its sub committees is noted.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 Matters brought before the Committee under its terms of reference during the year will include comments on the financial implications of decisions provided by the Chief Finance Officer. There are no specific comments arising from this report.

#### **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. The contents of this report demonstrate the Council's compliance with that duty.

- 7.2 The information provided for the Committee is in accordance with Part B, Section 19 of the Council's Constitution.



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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Standards Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 – Appointments to Committee
- Appendix 3 – Dates of Meetings
- Appendix 4 – Procedure Rules

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A

## **Standards Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference**

**Summary Description:** The Committee performs a number of functions to maintain high standards of conduct in public life including promoting the Members Code of Conduct and considering potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee may establish Sub-Committees to consider certain matters as set out in the 'Functions' below.

The Committee and any of its sub-committees may meet in private in accordance with relevant legislation as advised by the Monitoring Officer. Any meeting or part of a meeting that considers whether or not a complaint should be referred for investigation or, following an investigation should proceed to hearing, shall be held in private and all papers relating to that consideration shall remain confidential.

**Membership:** 5 elected members of the Council (not including the Mayor or more than 1 Cabinet member),

### **Co-opted Members**

Plus up to 5 independent co-opted members.

Co-opted members will be entitled to vote at meetings under the provisions of section 13(4)(e) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Standards Advisory Committee (SAC) shall be chaired by an independent co-opted member.

Independent Co-opted members shall be appointed by full Council on the recommendation of the Monitoring Officer. The term of appointment shall be 4 years unless otherwise determined by Council. Co-opted members may serve as many terms of appointment as the Council considers appropriate.

### **Note – Independent Persons**

The Council has appointed two statutory Independent Persons to assist in dealing with complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011. They are not co-opted member of the SAC but may attend and observe any meeting of the Committee or a sub-committee established by it.

<b>Functions</b>	<b>Delegation of Functions</b>
<p>Full details are set out in the Committee's Procedures in Part D of the Constitution, but in summary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, councillors and co-opted members of the Council.</li> <li>2. Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Members.</li> <li>3. To monitor and advise the Council about the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members in light of best practice and changes in the law.</li> <li>4. Advising, training or arranging to train the Mayor, councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to ethics and probity and the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>5. To appoint sub-committees for the purpose of discharging any of the Committee's functions including the consideration and determination of complaints of breach of the code of Conduct for Members.</li> <li>6. As requested by the Monitoring Officer, to establish a Dispensations Sub-Committee to advise on any applications for dispensations in relation to participation at a meeting by a member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.</li> <li>7. To deal with any reports from the Monitoring Officer on any matter relating to standards of conduct.</li> <li>8. Other functions relating to the standards of conduct of members under any relevant statutory provision or otherwise.</li> <li>9. Report to the Council on the work of the Committee and any other matters as appropriate</li> </ol>	None

**Quorum:** A meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees shall only be quorate where at least three members of the Committee or Sub-Committee are present for its duration and such quorum must include at least one councillor and at least one independent co-opted member.

**Additional Information:**

- Constitution Part A, Section 11 (The Standards Advisory Committee and the Code of Conduct for Members)
- Constitution Part C, Section 31 (The Code of Conduct for Members)
- Constitution Part D, Section 53 (Standards Advisory Committee Procedures)

## **Appendix 2 – Membership**

### **Co-optees**

- John Pulford MBE
- Michael Houston
- Fiona Browne
- Elizabeth Marshall
- 1 Vacancy

### **Councillors:**

- Councillor Shafi Ahmed
- Councillor Sabina Akhtar
- Councillor Sirajul Islam
- Councillor Amin Rahman
- Councillor Abu Talha Chowdhury

### **Substitutes**

- Councillor Amina Ali
- Councillor Asma Begum
- Councillor Leelu Ahmed
- (Note – more substitutes to be confirmed)

### **Independent Persons**

- Amanda Orchard
- Rachael Tiffin

### **Appendix 3 – Dates of Meetings**

1. 22 June 2023
2. 21 September 2023
3. 7 December 2023
4. 21 March 2024

## **Standards Advisory Committee Procedures**

### **1. Composition**

1.1 The Standards Advisory Committee shall be comprised of 5 Members of the Council (not including the Mayor or more than 1 Cabinet Member) and each political group may appoint up to 3 substitutes, appointed by the Council in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality; and up to 5 persons who are not Members or officers of the Council or any other relevant authority (i.e. Co-opted members).

1.2 The Co-opted member(s) will be entitled to vote at meetings under the provisions of section 13(4)(e) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Standards Advisory Committee shall be chaired by a Co-opted member.

1.3 The Committee shall establish Hearings and other Sub-Committees in accordance with its terms of reference and these procedures.

### **2. Appointment of Co-Opted Members**

2.1 A person may not be appointed as a Co-opted member of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees unless the appointment is approved by Full Council. The term of appointment shall be for 4 years unless otherwise determined by Council or the Co-optee does not continue to fulfil any required conditions as may be determined by the Authority from time to time. Co-opted members may serve as many terms of appointment as the Council considers appropriate.

### **3. Roles and Functions**

3.1 The Standards Advisory Committee has the following roles:

(a) To recommend to the Monitoring Officer whether or not any complaint of a breach by the Mayor, a Councillor or a co-opted member of the Members Code of Conduct should be referred for investigation by the Monitoring Officer or an investigator appointed by the Monitoring Officer; and where a complaint has been subject to such investigation, to recommend whether or not the complaint should proceed to hearing. Where the Monitoring Officer considers that a complaint should not be subject to investigation or should not proceed to hearing, they shall convene an Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee comprising at least 3 different Members of the Standards Advisory Committee (comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor) which shall make the final decision on the matter;

(b) To receive regular quarterly reports from the Monitoring Officer on the numbers of complaints of the Code received, the decisions taken by the Monitoring Officer (in

consultation with the Independent Person) on such complaints and investigation outcomes where the investigation determines there was no evidence of a failure to comply with the code or where the investigation outcome recommends a local resolution;

(c) To convene a Hearings Sub-Committee of 3 Members of the Standards Advisory Committee comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor to consider any matter where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code and a local resolution is not possible or appropriate;

(d) To make such recommendations to Council in respect of the matter as the Hearings Sub-Committee considers appropriate as a result of any matter referred including;

(i) Reporting its findings to Council for information;

(ii) Recommending to the member's Group Leader (or in the case of ungrouped members, recommend to Council or to Committees) removal from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;

(iii) Recommending to the Mayor removal from the Executive, or from particular Portfolio responsibilities;

(iv) Recommending the Monitoring Officer arrange training for the member;

(v) Recommending removal from outside appointments to which they have been appointed or nominated;

(vi) Recommending withdrawing facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;

(vii) Recommending excluding the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Executive Committee and Sub-Committee meetings;

(viii) Recommending the Member to contact the Council via specified point(s) of contact;

(e) To convene a Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee of at least three different Members of the Standards Advisory Committee (comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor) to consider any appeal against a finding of, or sanction recommended by, the Hearings Sub-Committee;

(f) To receive reports on compliance with any recommendation(s) made for sanctions to be applied in respect of any member;

(g) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, Members of the Council, co-opted members including church and parent governor representatives and where the Committee considers that there may be issues of concern recommending that the Monitoring Officer considers and reports on the issues raised;



(h) Assisting the Mayor, Members of the Council, co-opted members including church and other faiths and parent governor representatives to observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Members;

(i) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Members;

(j) Monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members;

(k) Advising, training or arranging to train the Mayor, Members of the Council and co-opted members including church and other faiths and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Code of Conduct for Members;

(l) To act as an advisory body in respect of any matters referred to the Standards Committee by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) or Community Forums in respect of probity issues arising out of the codes and protocols applicable to relevant members of the LSP and Community Forums as set out in the Community Forum handbook and as may be amended from time to time;

(m) To advise on allegations of Member breaches of the Protocols set out in the constitution as may be referred to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer and to make recommendations with regard to such allegations as maybe so referred;

(n) Advising on local protocols for both Officer and Member governance;

(o) To monitor and review Member and Officer Procedures for registering interests and declaring gifts and hospitality;

(p) To receive periodic reports on the Council's Ethical Governance arrangements, on whistle blowing arrangements and complaints; and

(q) As requested by the Monitoring Officer, to establish a Dispensations Sub-Committee to advise on any applications for dispensations in relation to participation at a meeting by a member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

#### **4. Validity of proceedings**

4.1 A meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees shall only be quorate where at least three members of the Committee or Sub-Committee are present for its duration and such quorum must include at least one councillor and at least one co-opted member.

4.2 Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 applies in relation to meetings of the Standards Advisory Committee or its Sub-Committees as it applies to meetings of the Council.

## **5. Hearings Sub-Committee and Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee**

5.1 Any Hearings Sub-Committee or Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee shall comprise a minimum of three Members of the Standards Advisory Committee at least two of whom shall be co-opted members.

5.2 The Hearings Sub-Committee shall consider complaints referred to it that the Mayor, an elected or co-opted Member of the Council may have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members or local protocol where the complaint has been subject to an investigation arranged by the Monitoring Officer and shall make recommendations accordingly. The Hearings Sub-Committee shall decide at the outset of the meeting whether it is in the public interest that the Hearing is held in a public or private session in accordance with relevant statutory guidance as advised by the Monitoring Officer.

5.3 The membership of the Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee shall not include any member who served on the Hearings Sub-Committee that considered the same complaint.

5.4 The Independent Person, or if that person is unable to act a reserve Independent Person, shall have the right to attend all meetings of the Hearings Sub-Committee or Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee as an observer but may not vote or participate in the decision making.

## **6. Attendance Requirements**

6.1 In the event that any Member of the Committee does not attend three or more consecutive meetings of the Committee, the Committee may draw the attention of the Council to such non-attendance and may recommend that the member concerned be replaced on the Committee.

6.2 The Committee shall not do so without first giving the absent Member an opportunity to make representations (which may be made in writing) as to their non-attendance and any matters they wish the Committee to take into account.

## **7. Procedures**

7.1 The Committee shall maintain these procedures to enable it to discharge the arrangements under its Terms of Reference.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 The Committee and any of its Sub-Committees may meet in private in accordance with the relevant legislation as advised by the Monitoring Officer. Any meeting or part of a meeting that considers whether or not a complaint should be referred for investigation or, following an investigation should proceed to hearing,

shall be held in private and all papers relating to that consideration shall remain confidential.

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Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Standards Advisory Committee</b>  Thursday, 22 June 2023	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Member Attendance Update 2022-23</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Member and Co-optee attendance at formal Council and Committee meetings.

### Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the report.

#### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This is a noting report to enable the Committee to undertake its role monitoring Member behaviour in relation to the Code of Conduct.

#### 2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is a noting report.

#### 3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Councillors and Co-optees will attend a number of formal Council and Committee meetings as part of their different roles. The number of meetings will vary significantly depending on the role of each Member with some required to attend many Committees, whilst others may only be on Council.
- 3.2 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a Member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor.

- 3.3 This requirement can be overcome through a report to Council which can agree an extension for one or more Councillors for any appropriate reasons. Over the last year, no such extension has been granted.
- 3.4 As agreed by this Committee, there is now a new attendance requirement for Co-opted Members who must attend in person, at least half the ordinarily scheduled meetings of their Committee in each municipal year.
- 3.5 Member attendance details are set out in the minutes to the meeting. They are also listed on the website under each meeting as well as being available through individual status reports for each Councillor/Mayor/Co-optee.
- 3.6 A number of status indicators are used in relation to Member attendance:
- Expected – the Member is expected to attend this meeting (usually a meeting which has not yet taken place)
  - Present as Expected – the Member attended the meeting
  - Present as Expected, virtual – the Member attended the meeting virtually (note – see explanation below)
  - Present as Substitute – the Member attended as a substitute for the regular attendee
  - In Attendance – the Member has attended a meeting where they are not on the Committee itself. This could be to give evidence/make a submission or simply to observe.
  - In Attendance, virtually – the Member has attended virtually a meeting where they are not on the Committee itself. This could be to give evidence/make a submission or simply to observe.
  - Apologies – apologies for absence were received on behalf of the Member either in advance or at the meeting
  - Absent – the Member did not attend and no apologies were received

#### Virtual Attendance

Note – the Local Government Act 1072 does not allow Members of Committees to formally join the meeting virtually. To be considered as formally present (and to be able to vote) a Member must be there in person.

#### **Attendance Recording 2022-23**

- 3.7 A summary of Member attendance is set out in Appendix 1 to this report for the period May 2022 to May 2023. This period is chosen as it fits with the normal municipal year of a local authority. Detailed information on attendances of individual Councillors can be found on the Council's website.
- 3.8 A summary of co-optee attendance is set out in the Appendix 2 to this report for the period May 2022 to May 2023. This follows its decision, in February 2023, to introduce an attendance rule for co-optees as explained above. The new rule will apply from the 2023-24 municipal year and all existing co-optees will be informed of the new rule.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None specific to this noting report.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 None specifically arising from this report although monitoring by the Standards Advisory Committee helps ensure statutory rules are being effectively followed.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

6.1 This report recommends that the Standards Advisory Committee note Member attendance for the period May 2022 to May 2023 as reported in Appendix 1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced arrangements to govern the Standards of Conduct for local authority members and co-optees. Seven guiding principles of conduct are set out:- selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.

7.2 The information in this report supports these guiding principles and, in particular, enhances performance and openness in relation to members' performance of their Council duties.

7.3 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.

7.4 The Council's Constitution requires elected members to attend at least one relevant meeting during a period of six months in order to remain qualified to hold office. Co-opted members are not currently covered by this requirement but the Constitution is due to be amended on this point.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None.



## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Councillor attendance statistics 2022-23
- Appendix 2 – Co-optee attendance statistics 2022-23.

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A

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Appendix 1  
Councillor Attendance 2022-23

Councillor	Expected	Present	Present %	Present, virtual	Present, virtual %	In attendance
<a href="#">Councillor Abdal Ullah</a>	19	12	63%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Abdul Malik</a>	32	20	63%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Abdul Mannan</a>	33	29	88%	2	6%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Abdul Wahid</a>	41	37	90%	1	2%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Abu Chowdhury</a>	31	28	90%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Ahmodul Kabir</a>	33	27	82%	3	9%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Ahmodur Khan</a>	34	34	100%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Amin Rahman</a>	33	28	85%	1	3%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Amina Ali</a>	23	9	39%	3	13%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Amy Lee</a>	23	17	74%	0	0%	0

Councillor	Expected	Present	Present %	Present, virtual	Present, virtual %	In attendance
<a href="#">Councillor Ana Miah</a>	11	11	100%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Asma Begum</a>	20	15	75%	2	10%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Asma Islam</a>	26	23	88%	2	8%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Ayas Miah</a>	13	6	46%	3	23%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Bellal Uddin</a>	15	14	93%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Bodrul Choudhury</a>	23	21	91%	0	0%	2
<a href="#">Councillor Faroque Ahmed</a>	23	16	70%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury</a>	41	40	98%	0	0%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Harun Miah</a>	7	7	100%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Iqbal Hossain</a>	39	36	92%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Jahed Choudhury</a>	10	9	90%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor James King</a>	26	23	88%	1	4%	0

Councillor	Expected	Present	Present %	Present, virtual	Present, virtual %	In attendance
<a href="#">Councillor Kabir Ahmed</a>	35	32	91%	2	6%	2
<a href="#">Councillor Kabir Hussain</a>	38	30	79%	0	0%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Kamrul Hussain</a>	38	29	76%	2	5%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Leelu Ahmed</a>	20	16	80%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Maisha Begum</a>	29	16	55%	3	10%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Maium Talukdar</a>	30	30	100%	0	0%	5
<a href="#">Councillor Marc Francis</a>	24	23	96%	0	0%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury</a>	11	9	82%	1	9%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Mufeedah Bustin</a>	17	13	76%	1	6%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Musthak Ahmed</a>	30	29	97%	1	3%	4
<a href="#">Councillor Nathalie Bienfait</a>	11	11	100%	0	0%	4
<a href="#">Councillor Ohid Ahmed</a>	25	22	88%	0	0%	0

Councillor	Expected	Present	Present %	Present, virtual	Present, virtual %	In attendance
<a href="#">Councillor Peter Golds</a>	25	23	92%	1	4%	8
<a href="#">Councillor Rachel Blake</a>	23	14	61%	3	13%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Rebaka Sultana</a>	18	18	100%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Sabina Akhtar</a>	28	23	82%	4	14%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Sabina Khan</a>	20	18	90%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Saied Ahmed</a>	39	36	92%	0	0%	2
<a href="#">Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled</a>	14	13	93%	0	0%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Shafi Ahmed</a>	12	11	92%	1	8%	1
<a href="#">Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain</a>	26	20	77%	4	15%	0
<a href="#">Councillor Sirajul Islam</a>	11	8	73%	3	27%	6
<a href="#">Councillor Suluk Ahmed</a>	48	41	85%	1	2%	0
<a href="#">Mayor Lutfur Rahman</a>	24	24	100%	0	0%	2



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**Appendix 2**  
**Co-opted members attendance 2022-23**

<b>Coopted member</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Present %</b>	<b>Present virtual</b>	<b>Present virtual %</b>
Charlotte Webster	Audit Committee	4	3	75%	0	0%
Halima Islam	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12	12	100%	0	0%
Jahid Ahmed	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12	12	100%	0	0%
Abena Adeji	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	4	0	0%	1	25%
Ashraf Zaman	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	5	3	60%	1	20%
Nafisa Ahmed	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	3	1	33%	1	33%
Shiblu Miah	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	4	2	50%	0	0%
Joanna Hannan	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	5	3	60%	1	20%
Dr Phillip Rice	Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	5	4	80%	0	0%

<b>Coopted member</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Present %</b>	<b>Present virtual</b>	<b>Present virtual %</b>
Mahbub Anam	Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee	4	4	100%	0	0%
Susanna Kow	Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee	4	4	100%	0	0%
John Pulford	Standards Advisory Committee	4	4	100%	0	0%
Fiona Browne	Standards Advisory Committee	4	4	100%	0	0%
Elizabeth Marshall	Standards Advisory Committee	2	1	50%	0	0%
Mike Houston	Standards Advisory Committee	4	1	25%	1	25%
John Jones	Pensions Board	3	3	100%	0	0
David Stephen Thompson	Pensions Board	3	3	100%	0	0

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Standards Advisory Committee</b>  Thursday, 22 June 2023	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)
<b>Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members)
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on the Members’ Register of Interests and declarations of gifts and hospitality submitted by Members since the previous report to the committee on 18 April 2023.

The Standards Advisory Committee is receiving this report as it monitors compliance with the requirement in the Council Code of Conduct for Members to register and disclose their interests, and to declare any offer of a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

### Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review, comment on and note the report.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council is required by statute to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members. For the purpose of the Code, a Member includes the Mayor, elected Councillors and Co-opted Members of the Authority.
- 1.2 A Member is required under the Council’s Code of Conduct (paragraph 50) to register and disclose their interests. This must be done within 28 days of becoming a member or being re-elected to office.

- 1.3 Members must ensure their register of interests is kept up to date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4 A Member is also required under the Council's Code of Conduct (paragraph 59) to register the offer of any gift or hospitality, whether accepted or not, with an estimated value of at least £25. They must include the person from whom it is received.
- 1.5 Repeated smaller gifts and hospitality which, when combined, would likely exceed £25 within any three-month period should also be declared.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 This is a noting report.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

### **Register of Interests**

- 3.1 It is important that Members maintain an up to date Register of Interests, in line with the Code of Conduct. To support this Democratic Services send quarterly reminders via the Members' Bulletin that any changes should be notified to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.
- 3.2 A reminder was sent via the Members' Bulletin on Friday 2 June 2023.
- 3.3 Twice a year (roughly six months apart), a request is sent by email to all Members and Co-opted Members asking them to confirm that their current register of interests remains accurate.
- 3.4 Following the request that was sent in January 2023 all registers of interests were either confirmed as accurate or updates were provided. The next request will be sent in July.

### **Audit of the Management of Members' Interests and Related Parties Interests**

- 3.5 The audit of the management of Members' interests and Related Parties interests has now been completed, with the systems and controls in place having been assessed, and the full summary can be found at [Appendix B. Summaries of Final Audits. 2022.23.May 2023.pdf \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)
- 3.6 A number of good practices were highlighted:
  - a. The requirement for the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests for Members is clearly set out in the Council's Code

of Conduct for Members, and the Members' Hub website contains useful information and guidance in relation to Members Registers of Interests.

- b. The Members Register of Interests and registered gifts and hospitalities is published on the Council's website and audit testing confirmed that there was a completed Declaration of Interest (DOI) form for each of the 45 Members and the Mayor.
- c. Completed DOI forms received from Members, are reviewed by the Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members) to ensure their accurate completion. Any contentious or potentially 'sensitive information' is raised by Members with the Head of Democratic Services and forwarded to the Monitoring Officer to provide a view with regards to publication.
- d. Regular reminders are issued by Democratic Services to members so that they should update their declarations of interests for any changes that have taken place since their original/most recent declaration. Twice a year the Member Support team proactively contact each Member to confirm their register is up to date.
- e. As part of Cabinet's and Committees' standard agenda, there is an item covering declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests. There is also guidance to members set out in the committee from the Monitoring Officer advising members what types of interests need to be declared at the meeting.
- f. Members are reminded to declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and the agenda item it relates to. Therefore, members are reminded at each committee meeting of the requirements with regards to declarations of interests.
- g. The Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer produces a quarterly report to the Standards Advisory Committee covering members register of interests and details of gifts and hospitality. This requirement forms part of the Standards Advisory Committee's Work Plan.

### 3.7 Key issues, risks and findings from the audit were:

- a. The procedure covering Members Declarations of Interests was reviewed in 2020 but not finalised and the proposed updates/amendments remain in draft form. In addition, they do not cover the work undertaken by Democratic Services (on behalf of Finance) in issuing the Related Party Interests returns required from Members.
- b. Delays were noted between the date a DOI was submitted and the date it was published on the website, ranging from between 9 to 31 working days and covered 15 out of 45 DOIs which had been updated

between August and September 2022. Audit were advised that in these cases either councillors or the Monitoring Officer had some queries or a need for further information to be considered.

- c. Testing highlighted differences in the information held on appointments to outside bodies and membership of voluntary organisations between the Member’s Register of Interests and the more up to date information published on the member’s webpage.
- d. Members are reminded at each committee meeting of the requirements with regards to declarations of interests. Although the Democratic Services team endeavours to conduct checks between the committee minutes and the Register of Interests, this process has not been formalised.
- e. Finance has no documented procedures in place for managing the Related Parties Transactions process and the information which feeds into the Council’s annual accounts process. This increases the risk that not all Related Party transactions and processes are picked up during the final accounts stage and a complete audit trail is not present, leading to delays and incomplete records. Gaps were found in 30 cases for one year and further information had to be obtained from previous or subsequent years records.
- f. A review of the published Final Accounts for 2020/21 showed that there was a Related Parties Note for 2020/21 and 2019/20, but the testing of the 2019/20 published Related Party note with the corresponding paper on Members Interests showed that the two did not reconcile.
- g. Audit have recommended that although there is no requirement to report to Audit Committee on the progress made by members in completing their annual declarations for Finance, this should be included in the work plan for the Audit Committee.

3.8 Table 1 below provides an update on the actions taken/proposed by Democratic Services to address these issues, risks and findings.

Item	Description	Action
3.7a.	Procedure for Members’ declarations of interests not updated and does not include reference to Related Party Interests	Procedure has been updated and finalised and now includes a section on Related Party interests.
3.7b.	Delays between submission and publication of Members’ declarations of interests	Noted and will be monitored. A higher number at that time due to the large number of new councillors
3.7c.	Difference between information on the website and in Members registers of interests relating to appointments to outside bodies	Noted and will be monitored. As Members have 28 days to notify the MO of any changes, at any one time it is possible there will

		be differences between the website and a Member's register of interests.
3.7d.	No formal process for conducting checks between Members' declarations recorded in committee minutes and their register of interests	A process has been implemented whereby committee services will produce a report fortnightly, detailing declarations made at meetings, which will be checked against the Member's current register of interests.

Table 1

3.9 In view of the weaknesses in the finance controls for managing the Related Party Transactions process and the information which feeds into the Council's annual accounts process, Audit provided Limited Assurance to this Audit. However, a Reasonable level of assurance was provided to the Member Interests portion of the review.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

3.10 The quarterly reminder to Members to declare any offers of gifts and hospitality they may have received was circulated via the Members' Bulletin at the beginning of June.

3.11 During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023, one declaration was received. The details are set out in Table 2 below.

Name	Date offered	Type	Accepted/declined	Date declared	On time	Provided by	Estimated value	Description
Cllr Rachel Blake	18.4.23	Hospitality	Accepted	3.5.23	Yes	Embassy of Morocco	60.00	Dinner at the residence of the Moroccan Embassy

Table 2

3.12 The declaration was received within the 28 day deadline.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None specific to this report.

## **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,

- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

The requirements on the authority and responsible financial officer in respect of reporting related parties transactions are set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires a local authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. To this end, local authorities are required to adopt a Code of Conduct dealing with the conduct of members and co-opted members. Section 28 of the same Act requires the Code of Conduct to demonstrate compliance with the principles of (a) selflessness; (b) integrity; (c) objectivity; (d) accountability; (e) openness; (f) honesty; and (g) leadership. The Code of Conduct must include a requirement to register and disclose pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests.
- 7.2 The Code of Conduct for Members is set out in the Council's Constitution. It requires Members to disclose their interests. It also sets out the requirements for Members to register any gifts or hospitality they may have received in their capacity as Members, and the circumstances under which they may accept them.
- 7.3 This report demonstrates the Council's compliance with the above requirements.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- NONE

### **Appendices**

- NONE

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.



- NONE

**Officer contact details for documents:**  
N/A

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**TOWER HAMLETS**

# **STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN and ACTION LIST 2023/24**

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Contact Officer:	<b>Joel West</b> Democratic Services <a href="mailto:joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk">joel.west@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a>
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Website:	

Agenda Item 6

# ACTIONS LIST

Action number	Title	Action Owner	Originating Meeting/Item	Due Date / Comment
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

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**N.B. once concluded** - actions should remain on the list marked 'complete' for the remainder of the municipal year.

## WORK PLAN

REPORT TITLE	BRIEF SUMMARY	LEAD OFFICER	OTHER CTTEE MEETINGS
<b>22 JUNE 2023</b>			
1. Annual Administrative Reports	To note the Committee's terms of reference, membership and meetings for 23-24.	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
2. Member Attendance Statistics	Report on Member attendance for the previous year.	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
3. Proposed revised Member Officer Protocol	To review the next iteration of the revised protocol following consideration in April 2023.	Agnes Adrien, Head of Legal Enforcement and Litigation & Deputy Monitoring Officer	
4. Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Declarations Update	Quarterly update report	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
5. Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011	6-monthly update on any dispensations granted under the Act and any related matters.	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	

**SAC WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>21 SEPTEMBER 2023</b>			
1. Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Declarations Update	Quarterly update report	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
2. Code of Conduct for Members – Complaint Monitoring and Associated Matters	6-monthly update report	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	
3. Update - Guidance and training for Members serving on Outside Bodies	To update on progress implementing actions from the Advisory Committee’s review of the guidance provided to Members who are appointed to serve on outside bodies.	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	

**SAC WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>7 DECEMBER 2023</b>			
1. Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Declarations Update	Quarterly update report	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
2. Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011	6-monthly update on any dispensations granted under the Act and any related matters.	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	

**SAC WORK PLAN 2023/24**

<b>21 MARCH 2024</b>			
1. Annual Report to Council	To review the draft Annual Report to Council	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Council 15 May 2024
2. Annual Review of the Code of Conduct	To conduct the annual review of the Council's code of conduct for Members	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	
3. Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Declarations Update	Quarterly update report	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	
4. Code of Conduct for Members – Complaint Monitoring and Associated Matters	6-monthly update report	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	