

Standards Advisory Committee



Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160

Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ

Agenda

Chair: John Pulford MBE

Members

Vice-Chair: 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)

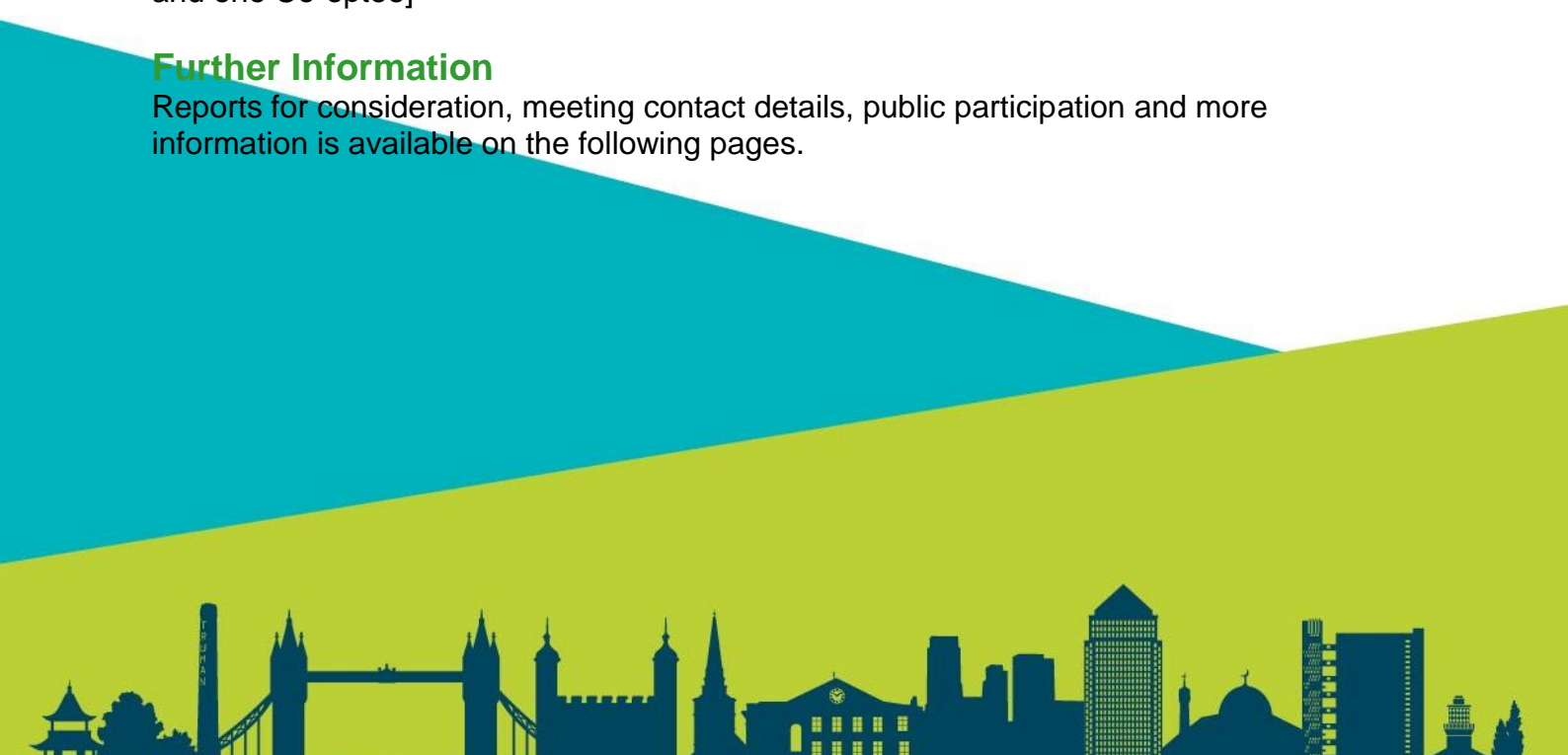
Substitutes:

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

Viewing or Participating in Committee Meetings

The public are welcome to view this meeting through the Council's webcast system.

Physical Attendance at the Town Hall is not possible at this time.

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.

<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

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

Electronic agendas reports and minutes.

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

To access this, click www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas are available on the Modern.Gov, Windows, iPad and Android apps.

Scan this code for an electronic agenda:



The best of London in one borough

Tower Hamlets Council
Tower Hamlets Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1BJ

Standards Advisory Committee

Thursday, 7 December 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. 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 21 September 2023.

3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4. WORK PLAN

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

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

5.1 Member Learning and Development Yearly Update

5.2 Achieving the LGA Member Learning and Development Charter Mark

Tower Hamlets Council
Tower Hamlets Town Hall
100 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1BJ

- | | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| 5 .3 | Code of Conduct for Members - Complaint Monitoring and Associated Matters | 69 - 88 |
| 5 .4 | Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update | 89 - 92 |
| 5 .5 | Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 | 93 - 96 |
| 6. | 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.

7. 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 March 2024 at 5.30 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 6.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

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

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Shafi Ahmed
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Abu Chowdhury

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Sabina Akhtar

Co-optees Present in Person:

John Pulford MBE	Chair
Fiona Browne	Vice Chair

Officers Present in Person:

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)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. URGENCY AGREEMENT

The chair announced that due to an administrative oversight, the agenda and reports for this meeting were not published on time, but the oversight was rectified soon after and the agenda with all reports had been published the next morning.

The Advisory Committee agreed they had had sufficient time to review the reports and were content to continue this meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 be approved as a correct record of proceedings, subject to including Councillor Sabina Akhtar as present remotely.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Examples of Code of Conduct Complaints from Other Authorities

Janet Fasan, Director Legal and Monitoring Officer introduced the report that provided the Committee with a number of examples of Code of Conduct Complaints dealt with at other Local Authorities. Janet suggested the Advisory Committee may wish to discuss the examples to better understand approaches to standards matters from other local authorities.

In discussing th examples in the report, the Advisory Committee made the following observations:

- Member training could help to prevent occurrence of some of the behaviour identified
- Establishing the 'closeness' of any relationship of an elected member with another individual was complicated. The daily lives of councillors will inevitably involve relationships with many residents. However, when in doubt, declaring the relationship is always a reasonable approach.
- The Council's social media policy addressed some of the behaviours that were identified in th examples.
- Recognised that political groups could and did take action to sanction councillors whose behaviour fell below acceptable standards.
- Councils could take informal action to draw councillors' attention to poor behaviour even where a formal sanction was not considered appropriate. However, that may not address public confidence as public could conclude the council had simply taken no action. The Council should consider whether some form of public communication would be appropriate in such circumstances.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the example code of conduct cases set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

4.2 Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update

Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Member and Civic) introduced the report that updated the Committee on the Members' Register of Interests and declarations of gifts and hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 submitted by Members since the previous report to the committee in June 2023.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.

4.3 Guidance for Members and Officers on Outside Organisations

Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer introduced the report that presented the current Guidance for Members and Officers on Outside Organisations and invited members to review the Guidance and consider whether it is content to approve the draft final version attached to this report.

Further to questions from Advisory Board members, Janet provided further information on the measures and protections for Councillors serving on outside bodies who may come under attack from members of the public. The Advisory Committee asked that the Guidance include a cross reference in to such measures and protections.

Councillor members of the Advisory Committee noted the unfamiliarity of the role and obligations that are imposed on Members appointed as directors of outside bodies and indicated dedicated training on this matter would be welcome.

RESOLVED that:

1. The draft amended Guidance for Members and Officers on Outside Organisations at Appendix 1 to the report is noted, subject to the minor points above.

5. WORK PLAN

The Advisory Committee noted the work plan and asked that the following matters be added:

- LGA Member Learning and Development Charter
- Complaint monitoring – an earlier update than March 2024 would be welcome
- Lessons and feedback from Co-opted members training sessions.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted subject to the additions noted above.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

6.1 Complaint monitoring

The reasons for urgency were noted and agreed.

Jill Bayley, Head of Safeguarding, introduced the report which 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 the current status of all complaints listed in the report, including explanations for where there were delays. The Advisory Committee noted that the list included some very serious allegations. Jill explained that she could not advise whether individual cases were likely to proceed to a hearing as she would first need to discuss with the Independent Person (IP).

Further to questions from the Advisory Committee, Jill explained:

- The process for dealing with significant delays or non-compliance of Councillors with requests in initial stages of investigations. Failure to respond would not mean an investigation could not be progressed.
- The process for the initial response to complaints including thresholds for determining whether a hearing of the SAC should be held and the role of the IP.
- That if the MO cannot reach a view on whether an investigation should be held after consulting the IP, the matter can be referred to the SAC to determine this matter.
- How a decision is made as to whether there is sufficient evidence to progress a complaint.
- Explained that in most cases, prima facie breaches of the code are not found.
- That whilst historically very few complaints from monitoring reports had been referred to the SAC for a hearing, there was a possibility that one or more of the complaints in the current report could be.

Further to questions to officers, the Advisory Committee requested:

- Clarification on provision 3.1a of the Standards Advisory Committee Procedures in Part D of the Council's Constitution which some members felt may not fully align with the investigation process as outlined by officers.
- Clarification of the different roles and process of the Hearings Sub-Committee and the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-Committee as referred to in the Standards Advisory Committee Procedures.

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the report and the information contained in Appendix 1 to the report.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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

None.

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.

Chair,
Standards Advisory Committee

This page is intentionally left blank

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee Thursday, 7 December 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Member Learning and Development Yearly Update	

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

Executive Summary

The Learning and Development Programme is the Council's professional development programme for Members. It provides access to training in relation to personal skills, professional development, council policies and local issues.

The Standards Advisory Committee is provided with annual updates to allow it to review and comment on the programme as part of its role in ensuring Members are able to properly undertake their role as set out in the Member Code of Conduct.

This report looks at the Member Learning and Development Programme from 1 January 2023 onwards and the Committee is asked to review and comment on this update report.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the report.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Member Learning and Development is provided to enhance a Councillor's knowledge and skills to ensure they are equipped to undertake their role.
- 1.2 The Council's Constitution notes that the Standards Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring high standards of Member conduct which is facilitated by the provision of a good quality Member Learning and Development programme.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is a noting report. The committee may wish to propose alternative learning and development programme arrangements.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council's ongoing Member Learning and Development Programme continues to provide opportunities for Members to expand on their knowledge and keep up to date with changes.

- 3.2 These opportunities are generally in the form of:

- Committee or specific training targeted at certain councillors such as those on development or licensing committees, or Scrutiny.
- Training and development sessions scheduled as part of the annual learning and development plan, or identified as a training area during the year, offered to most/all Members.
- Member briefing sessions on policy areas/developments usually offered to all Members and provided ad-hoc when required.
- Programmes run by the LGA (or other external bodies) for councillors, often free of charge covering a variety of areas. These are advertised in the Members' Bulletin so Members can let us know if they are interested in attending.

- 3.3 This report looks back at the Member Induction Programme over the previous year from 1 January (which is when the last reporting period finished). The report also briefly notes plans for the next year although those are linked to the work to achieve the LGA Member Learning and Development Charter Mark discussed in a separate report.

Member Learning and Development 2023-24

- 3.4 In December 2022, a survey of Members provided feedback and suggestions for potential training for the 2023-24 municipal year. These suggestions (and other discussions) then formed the basis of the Plan for this year. The suggested items were:

- Public Speaking
- Chairing Skills
- Managing Casework / resident issues
- Community Leadership/Influencing/Engagement skills
- Dealing with abuse and intimidation
- Computer Skills
- Effective Scrutiny

- 3.5 All of the above have been run by now (in relation to Community Leadership/Influencing/Engagement skills – LGA Community Engagement training and LGA Leadership training for Executive Members have been provided).
- 3.6 The biggest in year change to the programme has been the initiation of the work to achieve the LGA Member Learning and Development Charter Mark (as set out in a separate report). Also, the team have worked hard to publicise external training offered to Members by organisations such as the LGA and there has been an increased uptake in some opportunities such as Leadership Courses and those on Member Safety.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 to the report sets out the Learning and Development Programme that has so far been completed or is scheduled for 2023-24. This includes additional training to those listed above where issues arose throughout the year or were planned for particular Committees. Note that where training happens during a Committee meeting (e.g. Pensions Committee) it won't be included in the list. Note that this list also doesn't include Member Briefings.
- 3.8 Appendix 1 also doesn't list training requested by individual councillors in relation to their specific roles (see Appendix 2).

Full Training record and attendance

- 3.9 Appendix 2 to the report sets out the full list of training sessions and Member briefings and attendance at those sessions. It should be noted that although all the training listed was open to everyone to attend, some will have been targeted to particular groups of Members e.g. Committee training.
- 3.10 Appendix 3 to the report sets out the training arranged for individual Members provided by the LGA. Most of the training listed is part of the LGA's ongoing programme of training for Executive Members (Cabinet).

Co-optee Get Togethers

- 3.11 A new feature of the Member Learning and Development Programme has been the get togethers arranged for Co-opted Members. The first of these was run in October 2022 and two further sessions have taken place during 2023/24.
- 3.12 The theme for the recent sessions has been Ethics and Probity with Co-optees being taken through a summary of the training provided to Councillors as well as highlighting how the Code of Conduct applies to them as Co-optees.
- 3.13 However, the sessions also provide a general opportunity for Co-optees to meet other Co-optees from different Committees and discuss issues of general interest. Feedback so far is that they find these sessions valuable and the current intention is to continue offering these get togethers approximately every six months.

- 3.14 The main take-away for consideration from the sessions has been that, although Co-optees generally felt supported in being inducted onto their own Committee (although that could still be challenging), they would really welcome a pack of more general information about the Council, how it was organised, key contacts and the like. As most of the Co-optees were on the Council's Scrutiny Committees this is something that officers will need to consider alongside colleagues from the Scrutiny Team.

Member Learning and Development Programme for 2024-25

- 3.15 The biggest influence on the programme for the third year of the electoral cycle is likely to be feedback from the recent LGA Peer Challenge. The final report is expected to be published in December and any actions from that will be used to target priorities for 2024-25. There is also likely to be a further push to encourage Members to take up individual skills training.
- 3.16 Individual Member Training Budgets – one idea up for discussion as part of the Charter Mark work is to provide each Member (Mayor/Councillor) with their own training budget. This must be used on courses that are relevant to their work as a Mayor/Councillor but it emphasises the importance that the Council places on every Member's training. It is expected that this will lead to an increase in Members taking on skills-based training more specific to their needs.
- 3.17 One event which is planned for the start of the 2024-25 programme is a repeat of the Directorate 'Speed Dates' evening which was one of the very first sessions ran as part of the Member Induction Programme in 2022.
- 3.18 In the Speed Dates, small groups of Councillors are taken round to meet each Directorate Leadership Team in turn to hear from officers on their priorities and to ask questions. Given there have been a large number of changes to senior management within the Council and that new priorities are emerging from the Strategic Plan and from the Council's Transformation Programme, it was thought that a repeat of the Speed Dates would be very beneficial to both Members and officers.
- 3.19 A date has not yet been set but the target is for it to take place shortly after the Annual Meeting of Council.
- 3.20 The Committee are asked to review this report and the initial planning for 2024-25 set out and comment as appropriate.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None specific to this report, however, balancing equalities needs is an important factor when providing a Member Learning and Development Programme.

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 specific to this report, however, a good Member Learning and Development Programme helps provide Members with the skills and knowledge to support the Council in meeting its statutory responsibilities in relation to Council services.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 In the current year there is a dedicated Member training budget of £15k to fund the costs of training.

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.

7.2 Advising, training or arranging to train the Mayor, Members and co-opted Members is included in the Roles and Functions of the Standards Advisory Committee set out in Part D of the Constitution.

7.3 The matters proposed in this report comply with the above legislation and with the Constitution.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Summary Member Learning and Development Programme 2023 to date
- Appendix 2 – Attendance at Learning and Development Sessions
- Appendix 3 – Attendance by Members on specific LGA Leadership and similar courses

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

Member Learning & Development Plan 2023-2024

This Plan is for Year 2 of the 4-year electoral cycle. Initial training sessions and date ranges will be agreed at the start of the year and the Plan will be updated throughout the year with progress, completions and any newly identified training.

Included below are the remaining sessions planned for 2023-24. This list does not include training planned for individual Members or any regular committee training.

If there is any training not listed that you would like us to arrange, or if you have any queries about the sessions below please contact Democratic Services.

Training	Trainer	Date	Status
Appointments sub-committee	External – LGA, Suzanne Hudson & Peta Newlin	25 May 2023	Completed
Licensing	Internal	1 June 2023	Completed
Public Speaking	External – Gill Ornstein	8 June 2023	Completed
Advanced Computer Skills	Internal – Ram Namagiri	14 June 2023	Completed
Effective Community Engagement	External – Pascoe Sawyers, LGA Associate	22 June & 5 July 2023	Completed
Planning	External – Peter Ford, LGA	10 July 2023	Completed
Co-opted Members Get together and Ethics and Probity Training	Internal – Matthew Mannion	10 July 2023 and 30 October	Completed
Chairing Skills	Eternal - Cllr Liz Green, LGIU	13 and 18 July 2023	Completed
Managing Casework/resident issues	External online – LGIU External in person – Duncan Enright	28 September and 28 November 2023 (online) 22 November (in person)	Completed
Evaluating reports/speed reading	External online – LGIU	20 September and 22 November 2023	Completed
Public Speaking	External – Gill Ornstein	31 October and 14 November	Completed
Scrutiny Essentials	External – Sunita Sharma	14 November 2023	Completed
Dealing with abuse and intimidation	External online – LGA	12 October 2023	Completed
Ethics and Probity for Councillors	Internal – Janet Fasan	April/May 2024	Scheduled
Licensing Committee	External	To be scheduled	Scheduled
Audit Committee	External	To be scheduled	Scheduled

This page is intentionally left blank

This page is intentionally left blank

This page is intentionally left blank

<p>Standards Advisory Committee</p> <p>7 December 2023</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Achieving the Member Learning and Development Charter Mark</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion (Head of Democratic Services)
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report updates the Standards Advisory Committee on the Council’s intention to work towards the Local Government Association Charter Mark for Member Learning and Development.

The report in particular asks the Committee to:

- Endorse the work to achieve the Charter Mark.
- Review and comment on the draft Member Development Strategy.
- Agree to be champions of Member Learning and Development.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee are asked to:

1. Review and endorse the proposal to seek Member Learning and Development Accreditation.
2. To review and comment on the draft Member Learning and Development Charter.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Member Learning and Development provides vital support to all Members in their various roles on the Council. It is particularly valuable for those in key decision-making positions.
- 1.2 Under the direction of the Chief Executive, the Council is seeking to achieve Local Government Association Charter Mark accreditation for its Learning and Development work.

- 1.3 The benefits of this are two-fold. Firstly, it provides the Council and Members with assurance that the Learning and Development Programme provided to Members is of good quality and comparable to the best in local government. Secondly, it demonstrates to local residents that the Council takes the support of their elected Members seriously and understands their value to the organisation.
- 1.4 The recent LGA Peer Challenge informal feedback talked about Member Learning and Development and achieving the LGA Charter Mark will go towards demonstrating the necessary commitment to Learning and Development at the Council.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council could decide not to adopt the Member Learning and Development Charter. This would not necessarily have a direct impact but would mean the Council lost a key opportunity for external endorsement.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Member Learning and Development is the Council's professional development programme for Members. It provides training in relation to personal skills, professional development, council policies and local issues.
- 3.2 The Programme consists of four main parts:
- The Member Induction Programme which follows the local elections.
 - General Learning and Development available to all Members – mainly sessions taking place in year's two to four of the electoral cycle.
 - Member Briefing Sessions, usually organised by Services, to highlight or discuss key issues and service challenges.
 - (Usually external) training, development and conferences booked for individual Members where it is appropriate for their Council Role or for an identified training need.
- 3.3 Member Learning and Development is overseen by the Council's Standards Advisory Committee and supported administratively by Democratic Services.
- 3.4 A busy programme of training and development sessions are usually held each year and feedback is usually positive (for example the Member Induction Programme 2022 achieved an average score of 4.25/5 on the feedback survey forms).
- 3.5 However, as the Council undertakes its transformation journey, ensuring we provide the very best Member Learning and Development is crucial in equipping Members to play their vital role in this project. Whilst the current training programme has received good feedback it has not been evaluated externally to ensure it is offering the best support to Members and it is

recognised that not all Members currently engage and more needs to be done to widen this engagement.

- 3.6 In addition, the LGA Peer Review has recommended that Member Development should be strengthened to increase its focus on individual Councillors and roles in addition to the general training offered to all Members.
- 3.7 The Local Government Association Member Development Charter Mark has been designed to provide this evaluation and assurance to the Council. Key benefits of achieving the Charter Mark (as stated by the LGA) include:
- Councillor development needs are better understood and supported.
 - Demonstrates the value placed on councillors carrying out important, demanding and complex roles.
 - Councillors are more knowledgeable, skilled and effective.
 - Strengthens relationships with officers, residents and partners.
- 3.8 Support and evaluation services are carried out by South East Employers on behalf of the LGA and the cost is £3750 for each three-year evaluation.
- 3.9 In discussion with Members and officers it is being proposed that there is a significant value to the authority in achieving the Charter Mark for the reasons set out.

Member role in supporting their Learning and Development and the Learning and Development Steering Group

- 3.10 As well as having a responsibility for their own personal development, Members also have an important role to play in helping steer the content and style of the overall training programme.
- 3.11 This happens through a number of mechanisms, the main ones being completion of survey forms after individual training sessions, responses to wider surveys (for example on the overall Member Induction Programme) or through informal discussion with the team.
- 3.12 In addition, the Standards Advisory Committee oversees Member Learning and Development and receive a report each year on the training which has taken place and the plans for the next year to allow Members to comment formally should that be required.
- 3.13 In relation to the Member Induction Programme, this was signed off by both the Standards Advisory Committee and the General Purposes Committee (as well as CMT).

Member Learning and Development Steering Group

- 3.14 A requirement under the Charter Mark is that Members are provided with a more specific feedback mechanism to use throughout the year in the form of a

Learning and Development Steering Group. In particular, this forum can support the creation of the Member Development Strategy and Yearly Training Programmes (see below) before final versions are presented to the Standards Advisory Committee.

- 3.15 In consultation with the political groups on the Council, an initial informal steering group has therefore been formed. The group consists of two core Members from each political group but it is open to all Members to contribute should they wish. It is also the intention that this group will be formalised and added to the 'Other Bodies and Panels' section of the Council's Constitution as a further method of signifying the importance placed on Member Learning and Development. The Group met for the first time on Friday 1 December and verbal feedback will be provided to the Committee if necessary.
- 3.16 The forum is purely for consultation purposes and has no decision-making directive powers and it is intended it will be an entirely non-political forum where all Members are free to help support their own collective Learning and Development. The Standards Advisory Committee will continue to undertake its public role of monitoring Member learning and development through yearly reports and any further updates as required.

Member Learning and Development Strategy and Programme Plans

- 3.17 Another key requirement of the Charter is to create an overarching Member Learning and Development Strategy setting out the Council's aims and objectives. This Strategy should be agreed in consultation with Members and senior officers.
- 3.18 A draft strategy has been developed and is attached to this report. The Strategy is also being reviewed by the Steering Group and the final draft version will also be presented to the Standards Advisory Group for review.
- 3.19 Following the framework set out in the Strategy, yearly Member Development Programmes must be agreed and presented to Members. This will consist of the Member Induction for the year immediately following an election and then three regular Learning and Development Programme Plans based on expected mandatory/required training and courses identified as valuable to Members through discussion and feedback from Members.
- 3.20 The Programme for 2023-24 (including completed and planned sessions) is set out as Appendix 2 to this report.

Achieving the Charter Mark – work from across the Council

- 3.21 As well as the core requirements around Member Learning and Development, the Charter Mark also requires the Council to demonstrate a wider commitment to the work of Members including encouraging people to stand for election (e.g. supporting the LGA's Be A Councillor Campaign), links to young people (such as through the Young Mayor/Youth Council) or articles and stories highlighting the general work of our Members.

Member Learning and Development Budget

- 3.22 Within the Member Allowances/Facilities cost code there is a £15k budget line to support Member Learning and Development. The Charter requires that the Council can demonstrate that its training budget is sufficient to meet the reasonable requirements for Member needs.
- 3.23 Historically this has been sufficient for the generalised training that the Council has provided. However, the aim to transform the Programme with more focus on individual Councillors and a related increase in external and specialist training means that the budget may need to be increased. This is being explored at the moment.
- 3.24 All training will still need to be linked to specific skills and/or roles being undertaken by the Members concerned.

Role Descriptions and Personal Budgets

- 3.25 A requirement of the Charter is that Role Descriptions are prepared to set out the demands on Members both generally and related to specific jobs (such as Cabinet Member, Committee Chair, Leader of the Opposition etc). Role descriptions will also set out expected skills and, linked to that, key training requirements. These will be used, alongside Personal Development Plans to identify training needs for each individual Councillor.
- 3.26 As a method of highlighting that the Learning and Development Programme is there for all Members, regardless of their role, the idea of Personal Training Budgets is being explored. This would mean that each Member had a guaranteed minimum amount that could be spent on their training and development each year (needs linked to the Role Descriptions and their Personal Development Plan).
- 3.27 The budget would be a minimum, with additional spend possible where it was relevant to the Role.

Timetable for achieving the Charter Mark

- 3.28 The full LGA Charter Mark Presentation is attached at Appendix 3 to this report. This sets out all the areas of work the Council needs to successfully demonstrate in order to achieve the Charter Mark.
- 3.29 It can be seen that there are an extensive set of requirements and the guidance is that the process is likely to take a significant amount of time, not least because it isn't enough to set up new bodies such as the Learning and Development Steering Group, there has to be evidence that they are embedded and are effective in their role.
- 3.30 It is therefore likely to take another year or more before the process is concluded. The Council is though looking to complete most of the changes

more quickly and then to use the remaining time to demonstrate the effectiveness of those changes.

- 3.31 The Standards Advisory Committee will have an important role to play in supporting this work and will be updated periodically.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Providing support to all Councillors is a particular target of the Charter Mark evaluation with one specific strand being to review training engagement against protected characteristics.
- 4.2 It is therefore anticipated that achieving the Charter Mark will be helpful in ensuring proper support is available to all Members.

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 Not specific to this report but Members who are well equipped to undertake their roles are in a better position to help the Council in all the above areas.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Costs of any member training that is identified will need to be met from the members' training budget.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 27(1) 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. The promoting and maintaining of high standards of conduct by the Mayor, Members and co-opted Members is set out in Part D of the Constitution as one of the roles and functions to be carried out by the Standards Advisory Committee.
- 7.2 Effective training is an essential part of the duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. The proposals set out in this report demonstrate the

Council's ambition to provide effective training, and to show that the training provided is effective.

- 7.3 The matters set out in this report comply with the above statute and with the Council's Constitution.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Yearly Member Learning and Development update reports to the Standards Advisory Committee

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Member Learning and Development Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Member Learning and Development Programme 2023-24
- Appendix 3 – LGA Member Learning and Development Charter Mark Guidance

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

This page is intentionally left blank



London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Member Learning and Development Strategy 2023-2026

Date agreed:

Version Number:

Review date:



[Contact details and ownership info go on this page]



Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. A Programme that Supports All Members	4
The Strategic Plan	4
General Skills Useful to All Members.....	5
Member Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
Mandatory Training.....	6
3. Development and Oversight of the Strategy and Member Learning and Development.....	7
Oversight of Member Learning and Development	7
Developing and Reviewing the Strategy	8
4. Provision of Member Learning and Development Training	8
Types of Learning and Development	10
Publicising Learning and Development Opportunities	11
Cancelling Member Training Sessions	12
Member Responsibilities.....	12
5. Budget and Resources	12
6. Evaluation of Member Learning and Development.....	13
4. Accessibility and Equalities.....	13
Balancing Members’ Family and Work Commitments	14
Religious and Cultural Diversity	14
Venue and Room Accessibility	14
5. Reviewing and Revising the Strategy	15
Developing and Agreeing the New Strategy	15
Developing and Agreeing the New Strategy	15

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Member Learning and Development Strategy is to set the high-level vision for Member Development.
- 1.2 The aim of Member development is to enable all Members to develop and enhance their skills, knowledge and capacity in carrying out their roles. This in turn supports the work of the Council and helps improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in Tower Hamlets.
- 1.3 The Strategy is designed to support all Members, including the Mayor, Councillors and Co-optees.
- 1.4 The Strategy is supported by a Member Induction Plan for the first year immediately following the local elections and then three yearly Member Development Plans for years 2, 3 and 4 of the electoral cycle.
- 1.5 The content of this Strategy must be accounted for when developing the Induction and Development Plans,

2. A Programme that Supports All Members

- 2.1 The Member Learning and Development Strategy will support all Members in the wide variety of roles that they perform with the Council.
- 2.2 In particular, the Strategy takes account of:
 - The Council's Strategic Plan
 - Members' different roles and responsibilities
 - General skills useful to all Members
 - Mandatory training

The Strategic Plan

- 2.3 The Strategy recognises that all Members' work takes place in the context of the Council's vision set out in the Strategic Plan. Members have a key role to play in helping the Council achieve its vision as set out in the Plan:
 - Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis
 - Providing homes for the future
 - Accelerating Education
 - Boosting culture, business, jobs and leisure
 - Investing in public services
 - Empowering communities and fighting crime
 - Working towards a clean and green future
 - A council that listens and works for everyone

General Skills Useful to All Members

2.4 The Strategy also recognises that there are many general skills that are important for all Members and that training should be available to support Members in developing these skills. Examples include:

- Community Leadership and engagement
- Chairing meetings
- Public Speaking
- Managing Casework
- Reading and evaluating reports / speed reading
- Managing physical and online safety
- ICT

Member Roles and Responsibilities

2.5 The Induction and yearly Development Plans should take account of the Council’s Strategic Plan, the electoral cycle and other issues the Plan should also take account of the different roles that Members play both at the Council and in relation to their work with partners and the local community.

Community Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak and act for all communities and neighbourhoods as a community advocate. • Be accessible to the whole of their electorate including by holding surgeries and responding to queries and issues. • Foster good working relations between service providers and communities. • Leading and mediating on issues of concern within their Ward. • Acknowledging and celebrating achievements within their ward
Partnership Working and External Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the Council on various External Bodies as appointed by the Council. • Being appointed to Partnership Bodies working with the Council’s partners to guide policy and action within the borough. • Build good working relations with the Council’s partner organisations.
Executive Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team to develop and implement Council strategies. • Communicating a shared Council vision to local people, providing clear direction and promoting understanding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging scrutiny by responding positively to feedback and challenging ideas. • Take collective responsibility for the decisions taken by the Executive. • Guide the development of, and sign off, the Council's major policies and strategies. • Undertake necessary training to become familiar with their portfolio and seek opportunities to expand on this.
Overview and Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorously and objectively, scrutinise and challenge the Council's policies, decisions and performance. • Engage with external service providers, community organisations and local people to reflect wider concerns and issues. • Examine good practice from other authorities and make rigorous, evidenced based recommendations.
Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on the Council's Committees and take decisions on the Non-Executive reports presented. • Undertake necessary training to become familiar with their role on their specific Committee such as Licensing, Planning, Appointments and Appeals. • Follow legal process and protocols, including quasi-judicial procedures where appropriate, balancing public needs and local policy.
Civic Role (inc Speaker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform civic duties in an open and inclusive manner welcoming and supporting members of all local communities. • Chair meetings of the Council in a fair and impartial way
Backbencher / Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To participate constructively in the good governance of the borough and effectively represent the interests of the Ward for which they are elected.
Co-opted Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed to specific Committees/Bodies to support the Council's work and provide external challenge.

Mandatory Training

2.6 For governance and regulatory reasons certain training is mandatory for all Members to complete. This includes:

Title	Who	When?
Ethics and Probity Training	All Members	Must attend during Member Induction plus one more session in each 4 year election cycle.

Committee specific training for Planning, Licensing, Appeals and Appointments Committees	Members appointed to the relevant Committee	Must attend training before sitting on the Committee. Further training as required (usually a yearly refresher).
Equalities Training	Mayor, Councillors	Must attend during Member Induction.
Chairing skills	Speaker and all Chairs who have not previously attended training	Sessions arranged at the start of each municipal year.
Information Governance and Data Protection	Mayor, Councillors	Must attend during Member Induction and any follow up training as required.
Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding Training	Mayor, Councillors	Must attend during Member Induction and any follow up training as required.
Personal Safety	Mayor, Councillors	Must attend during Member Induction and any follow up training as required.

3. Development and Oversight of the Strategy and Member Learning and Development

Oversight of Member Learning and Development

- 3.1 The Standards Advisory Committee receive an annual report on Member Learning and Development as part of their role to monitor Member standards. This report will include details of training over the previous year including attendance, cost and feedback as well as looking at plans for the coming year. In addition, the Standards Advisory Committee will be asked to formally sign-off each four-year Member Development Strategy and the Member Induction Plan before each set of local elections. They will then be asked to agree the Member Learning and Development Plans during each of the following three years.
- 3.2 The informal Member Learning and Development Working Group will maintain a regular review of progress against the Strategy, the Induction Plan and the Development Plans. The group will meet at least twice a year (along with online discussions where useful) and will be open to all interested Members, with a core Membership of two Councillors from each of the political groups on the Council.

- 3.3 The Standards Advisory Committee and the Member Learning and Development Working Group will be supported by Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer.

Developing and Reviewing the Strategy

- 3.4 The Strategy is developed and agreed by the cross-party Member Learning and Development Working Group working in conjunction with Democratic Services and the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer.
- 3.5 Once agreed by the Working Group, the Strategy will be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team for officer agreement and submitted to the Standards Advisory Committee for final sign-off.
- 3.6 The Member Learning and Development Working Group will then monitor the effectiveness of the Strategy and may from time to time propose minor changes to be agreed by the Monitoring Officer. Significant changes to the Strategy must be approved by the Standards Advisory Committee at its next available meeting.
- 3.7 The Strategy should be agreed before the start of each four-year electoral cycle along with the Member Induction Plan for the training and support to be provided in the year following the election.
- 3.8 The content of this Strategy and feedback from Members from the Induction period, individual training sessions, member training plans and more generally should be reviewed by the Working Group and used to guide creation of the Member Induction and Member Development Plans.

4. Provision of Member Learning and Development Training

- 4.1 Where possible, for cost and efficiency reasons, training will be provided internally. However, external trainers should be used where they have specific skills and experience that would be valuable.
- 4.2 In person training will usually take place at the Town Hall but other venues may be utilised where this adds value to the training.
- 4.3 Members will also be encouraged to undertake relevant externally held training and development opportunities, especially when directly related to their roles and the course is provided by a recognised provider such as the Local Government Association or London Councils.
- 4.4 Where Members wish to undertake training which has a fee attached, they must complete the training request form and have this signed by their group whip, leader and the Monitoring Officer. Completed forms will be accepted where possible provided the proposed training meets a required skill for

Members or is specific to their role on the Council. When agreeing these requests the Member's personal training budget and the overall training budget should be taken into account.

- 4.5 [Note – core set of skills training with automatic permission? – linked to Role Descriptions?]
- 4.6 There will be a general presumption of agreement where Members wish to undertake Local Government Association courses and training events, including the Leadership Academy, providing the training request form has been completed and agreed.

Individual Member Training Budgets

- 4.7 Each Member has a personal training budget of XXX per year to be allocated to their learning and development. Some examples of potential uses of this budget include:
- Provision of individualised training
 - Attendance at external training and events
 - A contribution to group training organised for a specific group of Members.
 - Access to online learning portals.
- 4.8 The Individual Member Budget is not necessarily a cap on training spend. Additional, or more expensive, courses can be considered where they are appropriate to the role the Member is undertaking or is agreed as a development opportunity to support future roles.
- 4.9 All training agreed as part of the Individual Member Budget must relate to knowledge or skills which are relevant to the Member's role(s) as a Mayor/Councillor.
- 4.10 A Member **must** have completed their Personal Development Plan in order to access their personal Member Training Budget.

Personal Development Plans

- 4.11 The creation of a Personal Development Plan is the Members' opportunity to set out the learning and development which would be useful to them. This information is also helpful in enabling the Council to arrange general Member Training where a large number of Members have indicated a particular training need.
- 4.12 Members will be asked to complete their PDP as part of the Member Induction Process and will be asked to review it yearly.
- 4.13 Completion of the PDP allows access to the Individual Member Training Budget.

Calendar of Training Sessions

- 4.14 The Annual Calendar of Council and Committee meetings will include a number of slots spaced throughout the year where training sessions could be held without clashing with any formal Committee meetings. This does not restrict sessions being arranged on other dates and not all calendared slots may be used.

Types of Learning and Development

- 4.15 When preparing the Induction Plan and the Member Development Plans, the Council will look to ensure that a variety of methods of training are offered to cover the different ways that different individuals learn including, in person training, hybrid and online training sessions, 'in your own time' training, and documents/guides.

4.16 In Person Learning and Development Training

- These will usually be on topics based around skills that are useful to all, or many, Members. Sessions will usually be at the Town Hall and may be run by external training where this is useful. Sessions will usually be repeated at a different time/date to encourage attendance.
- This training will usually be offered to all Members.
- Presentations from Training sessions will be added to the Members Hub for future reference.

4.17 Member Seminars

- Seminars are subject matter sessions which are provided to give Members information about important issues that the Council is currently dealing with or is preparing for in the near future. Seminars are usually requested by Council Services Areas and are run by those Services.
- Seminars must be open to all Members and will usually be offered twice (once during the day and once in the evening) and be available to attend in person and online.
- Presentations from Seminars will be added to the Members Hub for future reference.
- As Member Seminars are issue-led they will not normally form part of the main Learning and Development Plan but will be arranged ad-hoc as required.

4.18 Online and 'in your own time' Training

- There are many online courses available for Members to complete in their own time.

- These could be provided through the Council's Learning Hub or ICT suite or by many external providers.
- Democratic Services will advertise this to Members when they are aware of relevant training.
- However, Members are also encouraged to proactively look out for training opportunities.
- All Members are welcome to complete free courses. Where a cost is attached, a training request form will need to be completed and agreed.
- A number of documents and guides are available on the Members' Hub as well as links to LGA Councillor Workbooks covering a wide variety of areas.

4.19 External Training

- Provided by external organisations such as the Local Government Association.
- Usually targeted at Members nationally; either generally or those who undertake specific roles.
- Includes a variety of sessions including short training sessions through to weekend or longer courses set at specific venues.
- Usually have a fee attached.
- Members will need to complete and agree a training request form.
- Especially where the fee is significant, Members will need to show a direct benefit to their specific role at the Council.
- Also provide access to relevant Councillor Hubs and e-learning platforms.

4.20 Members Hub

- Used as a depository of presentations from training courses.
- Also used to present written guides and documents, videos and other sources of information that are useful for Members.
- Links to external organisations with training and information for Members

Publicising Learning and Development Opportunities

4.21 The primary method of communicating upcoming new Learning and Development opportunities to Members will be via the Member Bulletin email. This weekly email is sent to all Members (Mayor, Councillors, Co-Optees) and thus ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to express an interest, especially where there are limited places available (e.g. on external training).

4.22 In addition, when the Council arranges general training, an Outlook Calendar invitation will be circulated to all relevant Members. This will be used to determine levels of interest in a particular session. Members are asked to accept the invitation if they intend to come, tentatively accept if they may be able to come or decline if they are not attending. Active communication from

Members helps ensure sessions are provided appropriately (e.g. room size, refreshments etc).

- 4.23 In the week before the training session, Members will also receive a text message reminder (with a follow-up on the morning of the training session).

Cancelling Member Training Sessions

- 4.24 In general, member training sessions will only be cancelled where unexpected factors force a cancellation.

- 4.25 However, where less than 6 Members have indicated they will be attending a specific session, officers will determine whether the session will be cancelled through lack of interest. Factors to consider include:

- Whether an external training or other costs would be incurred.
- If the training is mandatory for some/all of those who have confirmed attendance.

- 4.26 Members will be informed through the cancellation of the Outlook Calendar invitation. This will be followed up by text and/or phone contact if the session is cancelled at short notice.

Member Responsibilities

- 4.27 Whilst Democratic Services will look to encourage and support Members to take up training there is also a responsibility for Members to take responsibility for their own Learning and Development. This includes:

- Reading and responding to invitations to training sessions (whether to accept, tentatively accept or decline)
- Completing training evaluation forms and providing useful feedback.
- Reading and considering the member training updates provided in the Member Bulletin and through emails.
- Proactively considering their own learning and development and taking advantage of other opportunities that come their way outside of the formal council Strategy.
- Making use of the resources available on the Members Hub.

5. Budgets and Resources

- 5.1 An annual budget of YYYY has been established to fund all internal and external Member development activities across all Members and groups including provision for the Individual Member Training Budgets.

- 5.2 Officer support is provided by Democratic Services. The Lead Officer is the Head of Democratic Services who is supported by the Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members) and the Civic and Members team.
- 5.3 The Corporate Leadership Team Lead is the Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer who will ensure that there is corporate sign-off of the Member Learning and Development Strategy and cross-council engagement on an ongoing basis.

6. Evaluation of Member Learning and Development

- 6.1 As a strategic level the cross-party Member Learning and Development Working Group will be responsible for ensuring the effective evaluation of Member Learning and Development. Regular reports to the Working Group will be provided in respect of the effectiveness of learning and development delivered, Member uptake and value for money.
- 6.2 The Standards Advisory Committee will also be provided with an annual report on Member Learning and Development which will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme over the past year and any recommendations for improvement.
- 6.3 Evaluation Forms will be provided at all Member Learning and Development sessions (and will be available from the Members Hub at all times) and Members will be encouraged to fill in the forms to ensure that any feedback can be properly recorded and considered.
- 6.4 Democratic Services will also attend all key Learning and Development Programme events to provide additional feedback on each session. Where Council Services provide Member Briefing Sessions they will be encouraged to provide their own feedback on the session in addition to providing feedback forms for Members to complete.
- 6.5 Where Members attend events, training, conferences etc at external locations (such as the LGA Leadership Academy or LGA Conference) or Member Seminars organised by the Council's Services they will be provided with a feedback form to provide comment on their experience.

4. Accessibility and Equalities

- 4.1 Member Learning and Development must be inclusive and fully accessible to all Members. This includes taking account of issues such as:
 - Types of Training

- Balancing Members' family and work commitments
- Religious and cultural events and holidays
- Venue and room accessibility (and features such as hearing loops)

Balancing Members' Family and Work Commitments

- 4.2 It is recognised that Members have family, work and community commitments and that their work/life balance is important. There are many demands on a Member's time of which Learning and Development is just one, no matter how important it is to a Member's role. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that training is offered in the most efficient way possible and that it provides flexibility to help Members balance its demands.
- 4.3 The Council will use the following strategies to support Members with these issues:
- Where possible all physical training sessions will be offered twice, once during the day and once in the evening.
 - Online/hybrid access will be made available where this is appropriate to the training session.
 - Presentations given at training sessions will be uploaded to the Members' Hub for all Members to view in their own time.
 - Where alternatives to physical training are available (such as online 'in your own time' courses) these will be publicised to Members.

Religious and Cultural Diversity

- 4.3 The Council is proud of its diverse community and recognises that Members have a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds. The Learning and Development Programme must work to ensure it is accessible to all Member.
- 4.4 The Council will therefore:
- Look to avoid scheduling training sessions which clash with major religious and cultural events and holidays.
 - Monitor attendance to try and identify any impact on engagement due to religious or cultural reasons and take mitigating actions.

Venue and Room Accessibility

- 4.5 Whilst some training is now available online, the majority of the Member Learning and Development programme will continue to feature in-person training sessions held at the Town Hall and/or other venues.
- 4.6 The Council is supportive of everyone who wishes to take on the role of Member including those who have accessibility issues. It is also recognised

that not all disabilities are visible or obvious to others and not all Members may wish to highlight their disabilities.

- 4.7 The Council will therefore by default for all in-person training look to:
- Encourage Members to highlight any relevant accessibility issues they may have.
 - Only use buildings and rooms that are fully accessible to those with mobility issues such as wheelchair users.
 - Looking to book training in rooms that provide Induction Hearing Loops or other similar technologies where possible and always where it is aware of a specific need.
 - Offering virtual/hybrid access to training where appropriate to the proposed session.

5. Reviewing and Revising the Strategy

- 5.1 The Member Learning and Development Strategy is agreed for each four-year electoral cycle.

Developing and Agreeing the New Strategy

- 5.2 The Strategy will be reviewed during the fourth year of each electoral cycle and will be revised and agreed before the end of that year. This review will include preparation of the Member Induction Plan to support Members after the elections.
- 5.3 The Strategy will also then be presented to Members immediately after the election for agreement by the new intake.

Developing and Agreeing the New Strategy

- 5.4 The Strategy will also be reviewed in Year Two of each electoral cycle to ensure it continues to meet with Member requirements.

This page is intentionally left blank

Member Learning & Development Plan 2023-2024

This Plan is for Year 2 of the 4-year electoral cycle. Initial training sessions and date ranges will be agreed at the start of the year and the Plan will be updated throughout the year with progress, completions and any newly identified training.

Included below are the remaining sessions planned for 2023-24. This list does not include training planned for individual Members or any regular committee training.

If there is any training not listed that you would like us to arrange, or if you have any queries about the sessions below please contact Democratic Services.

Training	Trainer	Date	Status
Appointments sub-committee	External – LGA, Suzanne Hudson & Peta Newlin	25 May 2023	Completed
Licensing	Internal	1 June 2023	Completed
Public Speaking	External – Gill Ornstein	8 June 2023	Completed
Advanced Computer Skills	Internal – Ram Namagiri	14 June 2023	Completed
Effective Community Engagement	External – Pascoe Sawyers, LGA Associate	22 June & 5 July 2023	Completed
Planning	External – Peter Ford, LGA	10 July 2023	Completed
Co-opted Members Get together and Ethics and Probity Training	Internal – Matthew Mannion	10 July 2023 and 30 October	Completed
Chairing Skills	Eternal - Cllr Liz Green, LGIU	13 and 18 July 2023	Completed
Managing Casework/resident issues	External online – LGIU External in person – Duncan Enright	28 September and 28 November 2023 (online) 22 November (in person)	Completed
Evaluating reports/speed reading	External online – LGIU	20 September and 22 November 2023	Completed
Public Speaking	External – Gill Ornstein	31 October and 14 November	Completed
Scrutiny Essentials	External – Sunita Sharma	14 November 2023	Completed
Dealing with abuse and intimidation	External online – LGA	12 October 2023	Completed
Ethics and Probity for Councillors	Internal – Janet Fasan	April/May 2024	Scheduled
Licensing Committee	External	To be scheduled	Scheduled
Audit Committee	External	To be scheduled	Scheduled

This page is intentionally left blank

The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus

Page 53
Supporting continuing professional
development for councillors



Produced in conjunction with the following organisations



Foreword



The environment in which we work is ever changing and if we're to continue to meet our residents' expectations we've got to keep pace with it. That means recognising that the role of the councillor is different to what it was five, 10, even 20 years ago.

We're wardens of places, leaders who represent the interest of our residents, protectors who mitigate the impact of funding constraints, facilitators who help partners and communities work together and develop new possibilities for their local areas.

Our roles are being redefined and we need to make sure we have the skills and expertise to continue delivering for our communities.

The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus has provided councils with a robust framework and has encouraged member development across the sector. This year we've reviewed the charter to make sure we're capturing current and future challenges so that councillors are able to shape debate whilst continuing to fulfil their role as the community representatives.

I would strongly encourage local areas to adopt the Member Development Charter and Charter Plus as a guide and a benchmark as part of your improvement journey. Every profession has continuing professional development at the heart of their improvement and so should we. The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus supports this continuing professional development for councillors by being a contract between the council and its councillors that commits to invest in councillors' growth and development.

Lord Gary Porter
LGA Chairman

Guidelines

There are three essential criteria to achieving the charter:

1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support
2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development
3. Learning and development is effective in building councillor capacity.

Within each of these there are a number elements and requirements to demonstrate that the criteria are being met. These do not dictate what should be in the strategy, the nature of the content or the delivery mechanisms that should be used. The emphasis is on ensuring that all councillors are appropriately developed and supported so that they can be effective in their roles.

The following lists are intended to indicate the sorts of evidence that can be used to show that the council's approach to member development meets the charter criteria. Note that:

- There is no need to show all the evidence listed.
- This does not preclude the use of other evidence that may not be listed. The emphasis is on a local approach to a national framework.
- Some are likely to be stronger indicators than others.
- Some pieces of evidence may be applicable to more than one element and criteria.

Member Development Charter and Charter Plus: examples of evidence

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.1.	Political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear commitment from the top political and managerial leadership • Established cross party councillor development task group (CDTG) that meets regularly • There is a clear councillor development strategy which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed • Named councillor(s) and officer(s) responsible for councillor development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear commitment from top political and managerial leadership to share development opportunities across local government tiers (including with parish and town councils) • Of a strategic approach to forward planning of councillor development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed commitment to achieving the charter • Councillors are included in any liP Award questioning process • Strategies are in place to support councillor development • Cross party councillor development task group showing active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.2	<p>The council actively encourages citizenship and publicises the role of councillors as community leaders as part of promoting local democracy so as to encourage under-represented groups to become a councillor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council holds a range of activities and events to encourage people to become councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council takes action to encourage people to become councillors, particularly from under-represented groups and evaluates the impact and success of the activities Council provides information on the electoral process The council builds links with local businesses and employers to promote the role of the councillor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local democracy week action plan, programme of activities and review Youth council Supports the LGA “Be a Councillor” campaign Citizenship links with local schools, colleges and universities Presentations at community forum events, and targeting under-represented groups, to promote the role of councillors Prospective councillor events, materials, role descriptions – recruitment packs ‘Day in the life of a councillor’ feature in newsletters

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.3	The council is committed to ensuring equal access to learning and development for all councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of cultural and personal circumstances • Timing of councillor development takes account of cultural and personal circumstances • All councillors have equal access to councillor development • The development programme includes a range of delivery methods to meet the different learning styles of councillors • Councillors are regularly updated on councillor development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of analysis of access is monitored, reviewed and actioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical evidence of attendance • A range of learning and development options to meet individual needs are provided and promoted • A range of communication methods eg internet/ intranet/ social media is used to inform of development opportunities • Councillors confirm that action is taken to respond and to accommodate diversity of need • The councillor development plan evidences flexibility and consideration of the timing of development events
1.4	The council has a designated budget for councillor development which is adequate to meet priority development needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget is explicit and clearly identified and monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget is properly reviewed, set and prioritised by the cross party councillor development task group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget reports • Information that informs councillors of the existence of the budget • Minutes of meetings that shows councillors' involvement in setting and monitoring the budget • Councillors confirm that the budget is sufficient to meet priority current and future development needs

Criterion 1. There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
1.5	Designated officer/s of the council have responsibility for coordinating councillor development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate and adequate officer resources are in place to support councillor development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor development and support staff have their own skills development programme Councillor development and support staff are involved in regional and national learning networks to support CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer/s job descriptions Named officer/s in councillors' handbook or other information source that is distributed to councillors and officers Councillors are able to name the officer who supports their learning and development Those responsible for planning learning and development activities for councillors are able to demonstrate their understanding of learning and development in a political context Cross party member development task group terms of reference and active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process demonstrated

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.1	The council has a councillor development strategy in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy is developed and monitored by the cross party member development task group Strategy identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with council's corporate/strategic objectives The strategy is regularly reviewed (at least once every three years) by the cross party member development task group The strategy includes an induction process that is evaluated after each election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cross party member development task group leads the evaluation of the strategy and implements improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategy is in place Notes of member development meetings showing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy Member development task group demonstrates their involvement in formulating the strategy Overview and scrutiny review of the effectiveness of the strategy Those involved in formulating the strategy can demonstrate how it links to the corporate/strategic objectives and the rationale behind stated priorities
2.2	The council has a structured process for regularly assessing councillors' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A process exists to identify individual development needs in the form of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) or Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and is working effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All councillors are offered PDPs and more than half of councillors take them up Council has a process for individual councillor reviews to reflect on strengths and support progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor role descriptions Training needs analysis Personal development plans Use of the LGA Political Skills Framework

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.3	The various councillor roles are clearly defined and outline how they contribute to the achievement of community, political and council objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their ward and council wide roles • Councillor role descriptions exist and are maintained for all key roles including the ward councillor • Councillors are clear about what the council is trying to achieve and the key role they play in this as councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role descriptions are used for the recruitment and selection of candidates and to identify and prioritise development needs • Role descriptions are used to support succession planning • Evidence that councillors are clear about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the role of partner bodies ◦ the role of other stakeholders ◦ their own role on partner bodies ◦ their own role in relation to other stakeholder bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems are in place to identify individual development and support needs • Learning styles and training needs analysis • Personal Development Plans link to function and corporate objectives • Councillors are able to describe how learning and development activities have helped them to carry out their role and contribute to the achievement of the council's objectives

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.4.	The council has a structured process for assessing current and future leadership and executive team development needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured process to assess current and future leadership development needs • A development plan is in place that supports the top political and management teams in learning about each other and working effectively together • Leadership development is used to support future succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders, cabinet members and chairs have identified and undertaken development appropriate to their responsible area • A programme to develop the next generation of leaders is in place as part of the council's approach to succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process in place to identify leadership requirements • Leadership Development Plans • 360 Degree Leadership Audits • Political leadership development programmes eg LGA Leadership Academy • Events that support councillor/officer team building • Joint events with executive and senior management • Succession planning strategies • Community leadership development programmes • The political leadership can describe actions taken to develop political leadership capacity • The political and managerial leadership can give examples of how they work together as a team

Criterion 2. The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
2.5	There is a corporate councillor learning and development plan in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor learning and development plan links to council's corporate objectives and the development of councillors The councillor learning and development plan includes individuals, committees and political leadership needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The councillor development plan clearly prioritises learning and development that supports the corporate objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate councillor learning and development plan The cross party councillor development task group are able to explain how learning and development activities are prioritised

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.1	Investment in learning and development is regularly evaluated in terms of the cost benefit and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation strategy is in place to analyse the cost and benefits of councillor development • Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities • Councillors can describe why they did certain activities, what they learnt and what difference it has made to them carrying out their various roles as councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation strategy is in place to analyse the impact of councillor development activities • Some form of impact assessment at the corporate and community level exists and is used to evaluate the impact of development (eg feedback from partners is actively sought) • Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation strategy is in place and is effective • Analysis of costs and benefits to the council from councillor learning and development • Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance • Notes of meetings, focus groups, questionnaires or interviews involving councillors evaluating the impact of their development on overall performance • Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities • Political and managerial leadership can provide examples and evidence of the impact and benefits of councillor development

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.2	Learning is shared with other councillors and where appropriate, with officers and stakeholders to encourage capacity building in the council and a learning organisation culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and learning is shared with councillors' peers, officers and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an effective process in place for disseminating, sharing and exchanging knowledge and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of reports, briefing sessions, and information exchange systems used to capture and disseminate learning programmes of joint learning exchanges Councillor formal/informal mentoring arrangements Hosting case study visits Developing councillor champions for topic areas Councillors can give examples of how they have supported and learned from the development of others

Criterion 3. Learning and development is effective in building capacity

	Elements	Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter Plus	Examples of evidence
3.3	The council demonstrates a commitment to an effective councillor learning and development programme by implementing improvements to learning and development activities as they are identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement in the approach to developing councillors is identified and implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are links to an evaluation strategy • Evaluation outcomes inform change and drive continuous improvement • A quality assurance process is in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reviews of learning and development activities with recommendations for change • Notes of meetings, reports, personal statements providing examples of improvements to learning activities • Changes to development programmes and a rationale for the changes made • Councillors can describe what has been done to improve the development activities • Quality assurance process is in place and is effective



Local Government Association


Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

© Local Government Association, December 2016

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.

REF 11.31

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee Thursday, 7 December 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer Director of Legal and Monitoring officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Code of Conduct for Members - Complaint Monitoring	
Originating Officer(s)	Janet Fasan – Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	(All Wards)

Executive Summary

This report updates the Advisory Committee on the quarterly monitoring information for complaints and investigations relating to alleged breaches Council’s Code of Conduct for Members.

Recommendations:

The Standards (Advisory) Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the content of this report and the information contained in Appendix 1.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council’s ‘Arrangements for dealing with complaints of breach of the Code of Conduct for Members’ (paragraph 11), set out at Appendix C of the Code of Conduct for Members, provide for the Monitoring Officer to report every six months to the Advisory Committee on the number and nature of complaints received and action taken as a result.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The provision of reports at least every six months relating to the number and nature of complaints assists the Advisory Committee in exercising its oversight role in terms of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

3.2 The Advisory Committee last considered a monitoring report at its meeting on 21 September 2023. Since that report there have been five new complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct.

3.3 Two complaints from the municipal year 2022-23 are still live. One of these is currently being investigated by an external investigator. The second of these is being investigated internally and the report is being prepared. Of the four complaints which were new at the time of the previous report in September 2023, three have been closed and one is approaching the end of the investigation. Five new complaints have been received, of which none have been closed. A breakdown of the complaints is contained in Appendix 1.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from 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.

5.2 The Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints of breach of the Code of Conduct for Members were revised in December 2016 to improve the transparency and efficiency of the process.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

7.1 The principal statutory provisions relating to standards of conduct are contained in the Localism Act 2011. Section 27(1) of the 2011 Act provides that the Council must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members of the authority.

7.2 Sections 27 and 28 of the Localism Act require the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct consistent with the Nolan principles of good governance and to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into account before the Council makes any decision about an alleged breach of the Code that has been investigated.

7.3 The matters in this report demonstrate the Local Authority's compliance with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

NONE.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Complaints and investigation monitoring information

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

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

NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

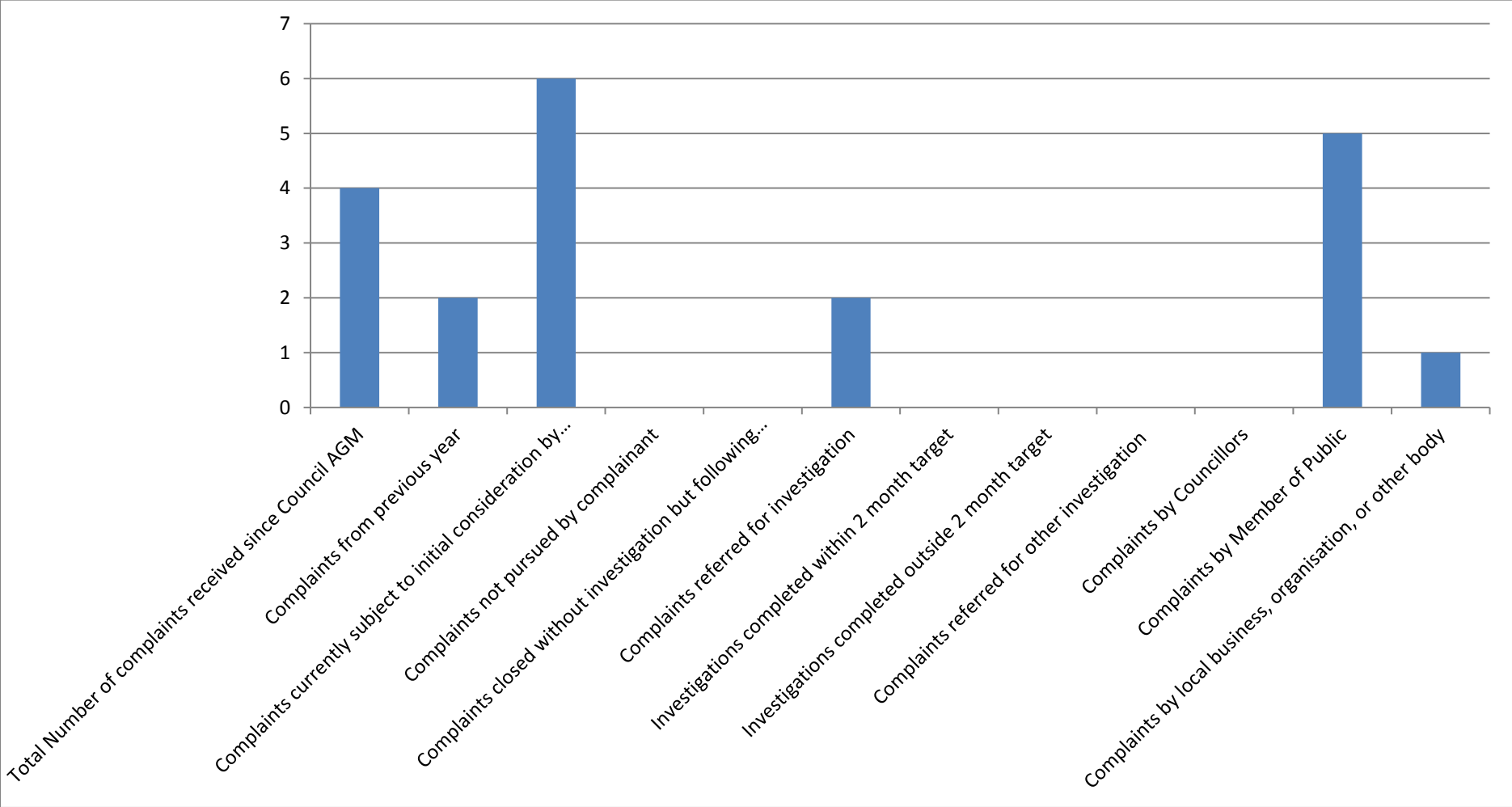
Code of Conduct for Members - complaints and investigation monitoring information – municipal year 2023

Complaints since May 2023:	09
Complaints from previous year:	02
Complaints currently subject to initial consideration by MO and IP:	04
Complaints not pursued by complainant:	01
Complaints closed without investigation but following consultation with IP:	03
Complaints referred for investigation as potential breach of the Code:	03
Investigations completed within 2 month target:	00
Investigations completed outside 2 month target:	00
Complaints referred for other investigation (police, audit etc.)	00

Complainants

Councillors:	00
Member of Public:	05
Local business, organisation, or other body:	01

Code of Conduct Complaints 2023/2024



Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
008/2022	03/02/2023	Member of the Public	Elected member	<p>Alleged complaint – Bribery, misconduct in a public office and malfeasance of a public official.</p> <p>Original complaint sent to Democratic Services</p>	<p>Target Date: 17/02/2023</p> <p>09/02/2023 - Acknowledgement email sent to complainant.</p> <p>21/02/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to confirm a complaint has been received however due to it being investigated by the Police a decision on how to proceed will follow after the Police investigation has concluded.</p> <p>22/02/2023 – IP has been made aware of the current status</p> <p>13/07/2023 – Investigation outcome provided by the Police to the frauds team.</p> <p>19/07/2023 – Update provided to complainant. Police found insufficient evidence for a prosecution. DMO to meet IP and advice on next steps.</p> <p>21/07/2023 – DMO consulted with IP. Although there is evidence of wrongdoing at this stage unable to proceed as there is a lack of evidence to link it to the Cllr. DMO to draft an email to Cllr to ask for initial response of the complaint.</p> <p>24/08/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>30/08/2023 – Cllr acknowledged the email, advised away on leave and will respond upon their return (week commencing 4 Sep 2023).</p> <p>14/09/2023 – Chaser email sent to Cllr and advised to respond before 21/09/23.</p> <p>21/09/2023 – Letter received from Paralegal/ITN solicitors acting on behalf of the Cllr.</p> <p>22/09/2023 – Acknowledgment email sent to ITN solicitors from DMO.</p>	N/A	N/A	Open	N/A

					<p>22/09/2023 – DMO to consult IP week commencing 25/09.</p> <p>02/10/2023 – DMO consulted with IP</p> <p>02/11/2023 – DMO consulting DoL&MO. IP has agreed the matter should go to an independent investigator due to the seriousness of the allegation. Awaiting approval by the Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer (DoL&MO).</p> <p>06/10/23 - DMO sent report to external investigator/DMO to chase within next 2 weeks on progress 3/11/2023</p> <p>03/11/23 - External investigators have received papers and making progress</p> <p>20/11/23 – external investigator reports making slow progress.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
011/2022	02/03/2023	Member of the public	Elected Member	Alleged complaint – mishandling of consultation paper/surveys. Cllr seen to be carrying/picking up from public.	<p>Target Date: 16/03/2023</p> <p>08/03/23 – Acknowledgement email sent to complainant.</p> <p>08/03/23 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>20/03/2023 – Chaser sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>12/04/2023 – Chaser sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>14/04/2023 – Initial response received from Cllr.</p> <p>27/04/2023 – Consulted IP – Outcome: - proceed with full investigation.</p> <p>12/05/2023 – Meeting with complainant. Additional information provided along with contact details of witnesses.</p> <p>09/06/2023 – meeting with further witness</p> <p>21/06/2023 – Seeking to consult with members of the consultation team.</p> <p>08/09/2023 - DMO is awaiting statement from consultation lead. DMO to chase.</p> <p>22/09/2023 – Email sent to Cllr from DMO to arrange an interview. Cllr to confirm availability.</p>	27/04/2023 - Full Investigation		Open	

					<p>29/09/2023 – Email sent from DMO to Cllr with an invitation to meeting on 05/10/2023 at 11am. Acknowledgment email received by Cllr.</p> <p>05/11/23 - Cllr had meeting with DMO, statement approved & report being drafted</p>				
Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
001/2023	25/05/2023	Member of the public (via advocate)	Elected Member	Alleged complaint – Cllr’s failure to acknowledge, update and lack of compassion shown with the matter raised by the complainant regarding a request made to the housing association and local council for a personalised disabled parking bay.	<p>Target date: 08/06/2023</p> <p>08/06/2023 – Acknowledgment email/letter sent to advocate to confirm complainant has requested the advocate to make the complaint on their behalf.</p> <p>16/06/2023 – Reminder email sent to advocate to respond.</p> <p>19/06/2023 – Response received from advocate that they have contacted the complainant to confirm/respond.</p> <p>03/07/2023 – Chaser email sent to advocate for an update.</p> <p>15/07/2023 – Chaser/update email sent to the advocate to confirm if they have received confirmation from the complainant.</p> <p>26/07/2023 – Confirmation received from advocate from the complainant that the advocate can act on their behalf.</p> <p>07/09/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>07/09/2023 – Cllr requesting details of complainant to refer to correspondences relating to the matter.</p>	N/A	N/A	Closed	N/A

					<p>08/09/2023 – Email sent to advocate seeking consent to share details of both advocate and complainant to the Cllr so that the Cllr can refer to correspondences relating to the matter.</p> <p>08/09/2023 – Update email sent to Cllr, DMO is seeking consent from advocate and complainant.</p> <p>18/09/2023 – Advocate and complainant confirmed they are happy to share details with Cllr.</p> <p>26/09/2023 – Email sent to Cllr with details of complainant and advocate. Cllr requested to provide initial statement for DMO to review.</p> <p>02/10/2023 – Cllr provided initial response.</p> <p>04/10/2023 – IP has been sent all the relevant correspondences to review and confirm availability to consult with DMO.</p> <p>10/10/2023 – Outcome email sent to councillor – case now concluded</p> <p>10/10/2023- Letter sent to complainant – case now concluded</p>				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
002/2023	13/06/2023	LA - Officer	Elected Member	Alleged complaint – Cllr's behaviour during a recent HR committee meeting was hostile and intimidating. The way the Cllr behaved fell below the standards expected of members when conducting themselves with officers.	<p>Target date: 27/06/2023</p> <p>16/06/2023 – Acknowledgment email sent to complainant.</p> <p>16/06/2023 - Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>23/06/2023 – Cllr requesting further information from DMO.</p> <p>03/07/2023 – DMO provided information as requested by the Cllr.</p> <p>04/07/2023 – Initial response including supporting correspondence provided by Cllr.</p> <p>21/07/2023 – DMO consulted IP.</p> <p>26/07/2023 – Complainant notified the matter will proceed to a full investigation.</p> <p>14/08/2023 – Meeting with complainant.</p> <p>08/09/2023 - DMO has received 1 witness statement and a statement from the complainant. DMO Awaiting a further witness statement before arranging a meeting with the Cllr.</p>	26/07/2023		Open	N/A

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
					<p>22/09/2023 – Email sent to Cllr from DMO to arrange an interview. Cllr to confirm availability.</p> <p>29/09/2023 – – Email sent from DMO to Cllr with an invitation to meeting on 05/10/2023. Acknowledgment email received by Cllr.</p> <p>Report written & approved by MO- draft report sent to 17/11/23 with IP for approval – Once approved to be sent out to Cllr & complainant</p> <p>20/11/23 – IP approves draft report.</p> <p>20/11/23 – draft report sent out to Cllr and complainant.</p>				
003/2023	20/06/2023	Member of the public	Elected Member	Alleged complaint – Breach of the Islamophobia Definition adopted by Tower Hamlets Council. During a recent committee meeting, Cllr showed microaggression towards Muslim members of the committee, and made unfounded accusations. Which complainant believes is in breach of the	<p>Target date: 04/07/2023</p> <p>27/062023 – Acknowledgment email sent to complainant.</p> <p>27/06/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>04/07/2023 – Cllr acknowledged the email and asked if any evidence of the allegation has been provided.</p> <p>05/07/2023 – DMO seeking further clarifications from the complainant.</p> <p>24/07/2023 – Chaser email sent to complainant.</p> <p>05/09/2023 – Chaser email sent to complainant seeking clarification of the complaint (SMSO to chase Cllr on 12 September).</p>	N/A	N/A	Closed	N/A

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
				APPG Islamophobia definition.	<p>08/09/2023 – Email sent to Cllr with current updates.</p> <p>26/09/2023 – SMSO seeking advice from DMO on next steps. No response received from complainant despite chasers.</p> <p>04/10/2023 – Email sent to IP to arrange for consultation in the view to close the matter due to no response from complainant despite multiple chasers.</p> <p>10/10/2023 – Outcome email sent to complainant -case closed</p> <p>10/10/2023 – Outcome emailed to councillor – case closed</p>				
004/2023	06/07/2023	Member of the public	Elected Member	<p>Alleged complaint – Complainant believes Cllr is not following the Equality Act 2010 or the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>Mistreatment and discriminating behaviour towards complainant because of disability.</p>	<p>Target date: 20 July 2023</p> <p>(Originally complainant complained on 6 June 2023 however on the same they wished to withdraw the complaint. Complainant sent an email to the mayors Team and cc'd in MO inbox and after emailing for confirmation if they wish to proceed, complainant asked to go ahead with the original complaint)</p> <p>24/07/2023 - Acknowledgment email sent to complainant.</p> <p>24/07/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response.</p> <p>14/08/2023 – Chaser email sent to Cllr.</p> <p>07/09/2023 – Chaser email sent to Cllr.</p> <p>08/09/2023 – DMO seeking advice from Director of Legal & Monitoring Officer on next steps on Cllr's failure to respond.</p>	N/A	N/A	Closed	N/A

					<p>25/09/2023 – Final chaser sent to Cllr to provide initial response by 5pm 29/09/2023.</p> <p>02/10/2023 – No response received from Cllr despite chaser/deadline. DMO to consult with IP.</p> <p>14/11/2023 - DMO sent email requesting contact by 4pm on Friday 17.11.23 to arrange a discussion. If no response then DMO will not be able to pursue your complaint.</p> <p>14/11/23 - DMO spoke to complainant and due to meet with IP 20/11/23</p> <p>20/11/23 - Email sent to complainant to inform complaint has now been closed</p> <p>20/11/23 - Email sent to Cllr to inform complaint now closed due to matter complained of is not the responsibility of you or of the Council</p>				
Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/ Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/ Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
005/2023	02/10/2023	Member of the public	Elected Member	Alleged complaint – Complainant witnessed Cllr assisting another person with moving a couch which was then fly tipped on complainants’ estate	<p>Target Date: 16 October 2023</p> <p>Initial complainant complained 02/10/2023</p> <p>04/10/2023 – DMO requested further information from complainant.</p> <p>04/10/2023 – Complainant provided requested information.</p> <p>05/10/2023 – Acknowledgement email sent to complainant.</p> <p>05/10/2023 – Email sent to Cllr to provide initial response</p> <p>03/11/2023 - Email sent to Cllr to provide a response and informed that DMO can still proceed with complaint if Cllr doesn’t respond</p> <p>5/11/23 - Cllr responded</p> <p>8/11/23 - Request sent to Cllr to clarify further on the complaint</p>	N/A	N/A	Open	N/A

						investigation status			
006/2023	02/11/2023	Member of the public	Elected Member	Concerns regarding incident involving Cllr and conveying the mounting frustration and dissatisfaction of our community. It is essential that immediate action be taken to address the disrespectful behaviour exhibited by Cllr, towards members of the public	Target Date: 16 th November 2023 complainant complained on 2 nd November 2023 03/11/2023 – DMO requested further information from complainant. 3/11/2023 - Email sent to Complainant for further information and to complete online complaint form 20/11/23 - email sent to complainant that complaint will now be closed due to not submitting online complaint			Closed	


Reference number	Date received by	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
------------------	------------------	-------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	--	------------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-----------

	Monitoring Officer			breach(es) of the Code of Conduct		and investigation status			
007/2023	03/2023		Elected Member	financial interests within other charity led organisations within Isle of Dogs	<p>Target date: 17/11/2023</p> <p>complainant complained on 03/11/2023</p> <p>03/11/2023 – DMO requested further information from complainant.</p> <p>6/11/2023 - Email sent to Complainant for further information</p> <p>8/11/2023 - DMO requested email sent to Cllr for a response to the complaint</p> <p>20/11/23 - Reminder email sent to Cllr for response to email sent on 8/11/23</p>			Open	

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------	----------------------------	---	--	---	---------------------	----------------	-----------

008/2023	18/2023		Elected Member	Tweets on social Media	<p>Target date: 24/11/2023</p> <p>complainant complained on 08/11/2023</p> <p>19/10/2023 – requested to log online to progress further</p> <p>25/10/2023 – DMO requested further information from complainant & to send complaint in via letter as complainant cannot upload via system</p> <p>8/11/2023 - Complaint letter/evidence received from information</p> <p>8/11/2023 - DMO requested further information & complaint logged</p> <p>13/11/2023 - Additional information received from Complainant</p> <p>13/11/2023 - Additional information sent to DMO</p> <p>14/11/2023 - DMO requested complaint be sent to Cllr for response</p> <p>20/11/23 - Initial complaint resent to Cllr as email was returned unsend</p> <p>20/11/23 – Cllr responds</p>			Open	
----------	---------	--	----------------	------------------------	---	--	--	------	--

Reference number	Date received by Monitoring Officer	Complainant	Elected/Co-opted Member(s)	Nature of Complaint and potential breach(es) of the Code of Conduct	Date and outcome of consultation with IP	Date investigation commenced and investigation status	Hearing and outcome	Current status	Follow up
009/2023	09/2023	Member of Public	Elected Member	Defamation of character and organisation	<p>Target Date: 28/11/2023</p> <p>complainant complained on 9th November 2023</p> <p>DMO – requested complainant complete online form & provide original post</p> <p>14/11/2023 - Email sent to complaint to complete online form & request of original post</p> <p>20/11/23 - Email sent to complainant to complete link by 24/11/23 if not case will be closed.</p>			Open	

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee Thursday, 7 December 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members)
Wards affected	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 21 September 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 In order to maintain an accurate register of Members' interests, Democratic Services send quarterly reminders to all Members via the Members' Bulletin to ensure that their declarations are up to date.
- 3.2 A reminder was included in the Members' Bulletin in October.
- 3.3 Fortnightly reports from Committee Services detailing declarations made by Members at meetings have been checked against each Member's register of interests to ensure it is accurate.

Sensitive Interests

- 3.4 There has been an increase in Members requesting their residential details be withheld from the website as a 'sensitive interest'.
- 3.5 The conflict in Israel and Palestine has seen a rise in tensions in the borough which has led to Members also seeing a rise in abuse on social media and by email.
- 3.6 Advice was circulated to Members about personal safety, and additional steps such as postponing surgeries were agreed as a temporary measure for those who feel vulnerable, until such times as they feel safe to resume them.
- 3.7 Two online advice sessions were arranged with the Metropolitan Police to provide additional support to Members, with an opportunity to raise concerns and ask questions.

Gifts and Hospitality

- 3.8 The reminder issued via the Members' Bulletin in October, included a reminder to ensure any offers of gifts and hospitality have been declared.
- 3.9 During the period 1 September to 15 November, 2 declarations were received. The details are set out in Table 1 below.

Name	Date offered	Type	Accepted/declined	Date declared	On time	Provided by	Estimated value	Description
Cllr Rachel Blake	13/9/23	Hospitality	Accepted	14/10/23	No	City UK, Fitzwilliam House, EC3A 8BF	£50	Dinner and briefing hosted by City UK, as a parliamentary candidate
Cllr Rachel Blake	8/10/23	Hospitality	Accepted	14/10/23	Yes	SEC Newgate, 14 Greville Street, EC1N 8SB	£50	Dinner hosted by SEC Newgate at Labour Party Conference

Table 1

*The previous report to the Committee on 21 September stated in error that Cllr Kabir Ahmed had declared hospitality to the value of £100. This should have read Cllr Kabir Hussain.

3.10 One declaration was received on time within the 28 day deadline, the other was 3 days late.

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**

6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report

7. **COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') requires local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members and co-opted Members. Section 29 of the Act requires a local authority to establish and maintain a register of members' interests. Sections 30 and 31 set out the requirements for disclosure of members' pecuniary interests. Section 32 of the Act permits the non-disclosure of the details of Members' sensitive interests.

7.2 The Code of Conduct for Members is set out in Part C of the Constitution. It sets out the requirements for Members to declare their interests.

7.3 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation and with the Constitution.

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

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Standards Advisory Committee</p> <p>Thursday, 7th December 2023</p>	
<p>Report of: Janet Fasan, Divisional Director, Legal Services and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Dispensations under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion – Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	(All Wards)

Executive Summary

This bi-annual report informs the Advisory Committee of dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's) under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the update on dispensations as set out in Paragraphs 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This is a bi-annual noting report informing members of the Advisory Committee of the dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer in relation to DPI's.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Code of Conduct for Members requires that the Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members register any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) and other specified interests in the Register of Members Interests. If a Member has a DPI in relation to any matter to be discussed at a meeting they must:

- Not participate in any discussion of the agenda item, not vote on the matter and leave the room whilst the agenda item is discussed and voted on.

3.2 However, a Member who has a DPI in a matter to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the authority may make a written request before the meeting to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation to enable them to participate in the discussion and vote.

3.3 A dispensation may be granted where the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that:

(a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;

(b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business;

(c) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or

(d) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Any grant of a dispensation must specify the duration of the dispensation up to a maximum of 4 years.

3.4 Specific Dispensation: 2 Dispensations have been granted by the Monitoring Officer since the last report on Dispensations in June 2023. The first was granted in respect of a motion for debate at Full Council in October 2022 relating to Tower Hamlets Community Housing. (8) members declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest by virtue of being tenants or members of the organisation (6 Administration and 2 opposition).

3.5 The second was granted in respect of Agenda motion Businesses in the face of Energy crisis at the Full Council meeting held in September, 2023. 11 members declared a DPI in the item by virtue of owing businesses in the Borough (9 Administration and 2 opposition). Both dispensations were for the duration of the meeting.

3.6 **General Dispensation:** There is a continuing General Dispensation to all Members for their current four-year term of office to be present, speak and vote where they would otherwise have a DPI in the following matters:

(a) Housing: where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the particular tenancy or lease of the Councillor (their spouse or partner);

(b) Council Tax: setting the council tax or a precept;

(c) Determining an allowance, travelling expense, payment or indemnity for Councillors

(d) Council Officer pay where this impacts on Member Allowances.

3.6 There have been no General Dispensations granted at meetings in the period since the last report in June 2023.

- 3.7 Guidance issued by DCLG in September 2013 (Openness and transparency on personal interests) stated the DCLG view is that Members do not need a dispensation to take part in the business of setting the council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support because this is a decision affecting the generality of the public in the area rather than Members as individuals. Nonetheless the Monitoring Officer considers it prudent for the sake of completeness to include Council Tax in the General Dispensation.
- 3.9 The dispensation for Council Tax relates to a Member's DPI and does not affect a Member's obligation under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to declare and not vote if they are 2 months or more in arrears with their Council Tax when voting on setting the Council's budget.
- 3.10 The General Dispensation set out in Paragraph 3.5 will apply until the next Mayoral and local elections in May 2026.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from 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.
- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer has introduced a standard application form for Members to complete when seeking a dispensation in order to make the process more efficient and transparent.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a Member who has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered at a meeting may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter. However, by virtue of section 33, an authority may, on a written request by a Member, grant a dispensation relieving the member from either or both of the restrictions in

Section 31(4). This is reflected in paragraph 54 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members.

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

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

- N/A