

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

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

### **Executive Summary**

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

### **Recommendations:**

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the report.

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

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

#### **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 This is a noting report.

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

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

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

#### Virtual Attendance

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

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

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

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

4.1 None specific to this noting report.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

### **Linked Report**

- None.

## **Appendices**

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

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

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

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

- None

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

N/A