

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

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

### Executive Summary

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

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

### **Linked Report**

- NONE

### **Appendices**

- NONE.

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

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

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

- NONE

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

N/A