

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Standards Advisory Committee</p> <p>Thursday, 15 October 2020</p>	
<p>Report of: Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Register of Gifts and Hospitality - Quarterly Update</p>	

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

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the declarations of gifts and/or hospitality received from Members since the previous report to the Committee on 30 July 2020.

Standards (Advisory) Committee are receiving this report as it monitors compliance with the requirement in the Council Code of Conduct for Members to register and gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

Recommendations:

The Standards (Advisory) Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and note the declarations of Gifts and/or Hospitality offered as reported in Appendix 1.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Council 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 The Council's Code of Conduct (paragraph 3.6) requires a Member to register any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 and the person from whom it is received.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 This is a noting report.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Appendix 1 provides a copy of the Register of Gifts and Hospitality declared from 1 July to 30 September 2020. A total of 3 declarations were made during this period; two were declared on time within the 28-day notification period and one was late. This is a similar figure as for the previous reporting period.

3.2 When reviewing the declarations, the Committee are encouraged to consider whether they think decisions around specific gifts, for example whether they were kept, refused or donated to the Speaker's Fund, were appropriate in those cases.

The Impact of the Pandemic

3.3 As would be expected, the current COVID-19 pandemic has much reduced the number of events and occasions that Members might attend and so also reduced the number of related declarations of gifts and hospitality.

Ethics and Probity Training – Gifts and Hospitality

3.4 The recent Ethics and Probity Training sessions attended by many Members were used as an opportunity to highlight the issue of gifts and hospitality and to remind Members of the various scenarios which could result in the need to make a declaration.

Internal Audit on Corporate Governance

3.5 As set out in the last report, Gifts and Hospitality is an area also being considered in a current audit on the Council's Corporate Governance. Issues it is likely to consider include:

- Total number of declarations
- The value of individual gifts and whether higher value gifts should always be refused or donated (e.g. to the Speaker's Charity).
- The role of the Standards Advisory Committee in scrutinising gifts and hospitality.

Communications

3.6 As reported to the July meeting of the Committee, the Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee wrote to all Members in July asking them to confirm that they had no further gifts or hospitality to declare. This process did not result in any further declarations being made.

Next Steps

3.7 The next opportunity to highlight gifts and hospitality will be in January when the next regular reminders are sent to all Members asking them to confirm their Registers of Interest. This will include a new field where Members will be

required to actively confirm that they have no further gifts or hospitality to declare.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no 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.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 None arising from this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 This report recommends that the Standards Advisory Committee note the declarations of Gifts and/or Hospitality offered as reported in Appendix 1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 Act provides that the Council's Monitoring Officer must establish and maintain a register of interests of Members of the Authority.

7.2 Section 30 of the 2011 Act requires Members to register disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days. Otherwise it is for the Council to determine what is entered in the register of interests and as indicated in this report that includes gifts and hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Previous update reports to Standards (Advisory) Committee meetings.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Register of Gifts and Hospitality declared – 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020.

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

Appendix 1

Gifts and Hospitality Accepted 1 January 2020 – 30 June 2020

Name	Date offered /event	Type	Accepted / Declined	Date Declared	On Time?	Provided By	Value Estimate	Description
Cllr Kyrsten Perry	18 Jan 2020	Hospitality	Accepted	2 Aug 2020	Yes	Canary Wharf Group	£50	Jim Fitzpatrick farewell event, Canary Wharf
Mayor John Biggs	25 Sept 2020	Gift	Accepted	2 Oct 2020	Yes	London Communications, WC1V		Art frame of the new coat of arms
Mayor John Biggs	30 Sept 2020	Hospitality	Accepted	2 Oct 2020	Yes	Yang Xiaokun – Minister Council		Mid-Autumn Festival / Moon Festival