

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Standards Advisory Committee</b></p> <p>Thursday, 22 April 2021</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Divisional Director, Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Register of Gifts and Hospitality - Quarterly Update</b></p>	

<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 the declarations of gifts and/or hospitality received from Members since the previous report to the Committee on 4 February 2021.

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, comment on 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 January 2021 to 31 March 2021. A total of 3 declarations were made

during this period; all were declared on time within the 28-day notification period. The impact of the pandemic can still be seen on the limited number of gifts and hospitality being received.

- 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.

#### *Register updates and guidance clarifications*

- 3.4 Members were asked at the start of 2021 to update their registers of interest and ensure declarations of gifts and hospitality were updated. The Mayor and all Councillors have provided updates, and these were recorded in their files, and published where appropriate. The guidance provided to Members on the Members Hub was also updated in respect of highlighting the advisability of declaring gifts even under the £25 limit and also encouraging the donation of gifts to the Speakers' Charity appeal.

#### *Internal Audit on Corporate Governance*

- 3.5 As set out in the last report, Gifts and Hospitality is an area considered in a recent audit on the Council's Corporate Governance. Issues it suggested the Committee should particularly consider included:
- 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).

#### *Next Steps*

- 3.6 The next round of reminders on updating registers of interest and gifts declarations will be in the summer and will be reported to an upcoming meeting as appropriate.

## **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.

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## **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 2021 to 31 March 2021.

### **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 Declared 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021

Name	Date offered /event	Type	Accepted / Declined	Date Declared	On Time?	Provided By	Value Estimate	Description
<b>Cllr Asma Begum</b>	16.01.21	Gift	Accepted	18.01.21	Yes	New City	£15	Goodie bag
<b>Mayor John Biggs</b>	26.03.21	Gift	Accepted	07.04.21	Yes	English National Ballet	£110	2 Tickets to 'Reunion: An Evening with English National Ballet
<b>Mayor John Biggs</b>	26.03.21	Gift	Accepted	07.04.21	Yes	28 Queen's Gate, South Kensington		£10 book 'Diary for golden Jubilee', £10 book 'Prison Diaries', £12.50 Book 'Unfinished Memoirs',