

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Standards Advisory Committee</p> <p>Thursday, 23 June 2022</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal 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 Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members)
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on declarations of gifts and hospitality submitted by Members since the previous report to the committee on 10 February 2022.

Standards Advisory Committee is receiving this report as it monitors compliance with the requirement in the Council Code of Conduct for Members to register 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 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 59) to register the offer of any gift or hospitality, whether accepted or not, with an estimated value of at least £25. They must also include the person from whom it is received.
- 1.3 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

- 3.1 During the period 1 February to 31 May no declarations were received.
- 3.2 The pre-election period and subsequent elections may have contributed to the lack of declarations, with reduced number of events and occasions that members might attend.
- 3.3 Following the elections on May 5, a programme of induction seminars began which included Ethics and Probity training. Members were taken through the Member Code of Conduct and (amongst other areas), the requirement to declare gifts and hospitality was explained.
- 3.4 The Members' Hub was highlighted as a resource with information and guidance for new Members. The Gifts and Hospitality page includes a guidance note and both encourage Members to declare offers of gifts and hospitality even when the estimated value is less than £25, to promote transparency.

The Impact of the Pandemic

- 3.5 With Covid-19 restrictions officially coming to an end on 24 February, it is presumed that there has been little impact remaining from the pandemic in relation to the receipt of gifts and/or hospitality.

Register updates

- 3.6 Members were reminded to review and update their Registers of Interests where necessary, via articles in the Members' Bulletin on the 4 March and 8 April. These included a link to the online form for ease of reference, which includes a field to declare any gifts and hospitality that may not have been declared separately.
- 3.7 All Members had either provided an update or confirmed that there were no changes by the end of April.
- 3.8 Following the elections on May 5, all councillors were required to complete a new Declaration of Interests, including returning councillors. All but 2 declarations have now been received. We will continue to chase for these.

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.

5.2 None specific to this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to have a code of conduct and Section 28 of the same Act sets out the matters which the code must address. The Code of Conduct for members is part of the Constitution. Paragraph 25 requires all offers of gifts or hospitality worth over £25 to be declared within 28 days, whether or not accepted.

7.2 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