

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee Thursday, 22 September 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Register of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Quarterly Update	

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

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 23 June 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 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 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 Following the elections in May, all newly elected and returning Members were required to complete a declaration of interests.
- 3.2 From the total of 46 elected Members, 45 were returned within the 28 day deadline. The remaining declaration was received after the deadline. A reminder about updates was sent in August and will be sent again in November. The outcome will be reported to the December meeting of the committee.
- 3.3 A number of Co-opted members were recently recruited and will be taken through the requirements of the Code of Conduct during their induction. Any outstanding Register of Interest forms will be completed at that time.
- 3.4 All other Co-opted members were reminded about updating their Register of Interests with any changes within 28 days.
- 3.5 A number of members' declarations were published online sometime after they were received. In these cases, either councillors or the Monitoring Officer had some queries or there was a need for further information. Some of these included requests to withhold home addresses from the website.
- 3.6 A separate report is listed which looks at the issue of members' safety and publishing home addresses, following the LGA's call for evidence of abuse and intimidation of councillors in October 2021, and their subsequent report titled 'Debate Not Hate: The impact of abuse on local democracy'.

Gifts and Hospitality

- 3.7 During the period 1 June – 31 August 2022, 1 declaration was received. The details are set out in the table below.

Name	Date offered	Type	Accepted/ Declined	Date declared	On time	Provided by	Estimated value	Description
Cllr Maium Talukdar	24/06/2022	Hospitality	Accepted	20/07/22	Yes	Odgers Interim & Odgers Connect	£280	Municipal Journal Awards Dinner

- 3.8 The declaration was received within the 28 day deadline.
- 3.9 Members were reminded of the need to declare any offers of gifts and hospitality, via an article in the Members' Bulletin on 26 August 2022 which included a link to the online form for ease of reference.
- 3.10 An email was also sent to all Members asking them to confirm that either all declarations were up to date, or that they had nothing to declare. At the time of the report responses had been received from 6 Members. We will continue to chase for responses and update the Committee at the meeting.

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 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

- 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