



Standards Committee 22nd November 2005

Report from the Borough Solicitor

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Review of the Register of Members' Interests and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates members on the activities following the audit of the Register of Members' Interests and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note the report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Members will recall the audit findings of the Review of the Register of Member Interests and the Register of Gifts and Hospitality were reported to the Standards Committee at its January meeting. The audit was undertaken as part of the 2004-05 internal audit plan. The report from the auditors identified a number of non-compliances with the rules on registering interests and possibly some failures to register gifts and hospitality. It recommended some steps to be taken to rectify non-compliances and improve the situation in the future. An Action Plan was provided.
- 3.2 Members will also recall that they felt that some of the actions recommended by the auditors were not necessary. For example one recommended action was for the Democratic Services Manager to check that all boxes on the form had been completed properly. However the Borough Solicitor felt this was unnecessary and impracticable as it would not be possible for him to say whether the

information provided was accurate or whether there were any omissions. It was agreed, instead, that he would check that all the boxes were completed.

- 3.3 Members agreed to all other recommendations and requested the Borough Solicitor to undertake those agreed actions by the stated deadline. Actions have been taken as shown in the attached Action Plan and Appendices.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Beyond the cost already expended for the audit conducted, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Brent's Code of Conduct requires that members record their financial and other interests in a register which is open to public inspection. In addition the Local Government Act 2000 contains provisions for the maintenance of a Register of Member's Interest and Register of Member's Gifts and Hospitality. Members have a duty to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of any changes or additions to their interests and the register is to be updated accordingly.
- 4.2 The initial findings showed that some register entries appeared not to be up to date. Steps have been taken to fill gaps and Members were reminded that they risk being in breach of the Brent Code of Conduct and face the risk of referral to the Standards Board for England.

5.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Officers believe that there are no specific diversity implications in this report.

6.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Register of Member Interests, Town Hall, Wembley
Register of Gifts and Hospitality, Town Hall, Wembley

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Borough Solicitor