

 Brent	Audit and Standards Advisory Committee 31 March 2021
	Report from: Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations
Standards Report (including quarterly update on Gifts & Hospitality, 01.10.20 -31.12.20 and mandatory training)	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One 1) Appendix A – Brent’s response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life Standards Matter 2 Review
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	(1) Debra Norman, Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations (ext. 1578) (2) Bianca Robinson, Senior Constitutional & Governance Lawyer (ext. 1544)

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on gifts and hospitality registered by Members, and the attendance record for Members in relation to mandatory training sessions.
- 1.2 The report also updates the committee in respect of the appointment of Independent Persons for the purposes of Code of Conduct complaints and the appointment of co-opted Independent members to the committee, and in respect of a Committee on Standards in Public Life review.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the contents of the report.

3.0 Detail

Gifts & Hospitality

- 3.1 Members are required to register gifts and hospitality received in an official capacity worth an estimated value of at least £50. This includes a series of gifts and hospitality from the same person that add up to an estimated value of at least £50 in a municipal year.
- 3.2 Gifts and hospitality received by Members are published on the Council's website and open to inspection at the Brent Civic Centre.
- 3.3 During the third quarter (October to December 2020) one gift and hospitality entry has been recorded as follows:

Councillor	Date of gift	Gift received	Value £	From
Cllr Ketan Sheth	24.12.20	Book: Fast Forward - An Autobiography of Andy Cole	£20.00.	Andy Cole/The Jason Roberts Foundation

Member Training Attendance

- 3.4 The Committee will be pleased to note that all Members have now undertaken and completed all mandatory training with exception of the Unconscious Bias and Data Protection/GDPR training.
- 3.5 The Committee will recall from its last meeting that Unconscious Bias training (which includes anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) is delivered in a workshop format and is not recorded. The session was attended by 42 members, and a list of members who were not able to attend was summarised and attached as an Appendix to the December Committee meeting report. Since that time, the Chief Executive has asked that these development sessions be put on hold, with a view to re-commencing mid-April or after the Annual General Meeting in May 2021.
- 3.6 The Data Protection/GDPR e-learning for elected members is presently being undertaken. This is an e-learning module with a flexible completion date at present. We can confirm that over 40 Members have completed this e-learning course to date.
- 3.7 The committee is reminded that at the recent full Council meeting the Members Code of Conduct was amended to formally record that Equality training and Data Protection training are mandatory.

Independent/Co-opted members

- 3.7 The Committee will recall that a recruitment process for the Independent/Co-opted members commenced in December 2020. This process has now concluded.
- 3.8 As the Committee knows, Independent Members must be chosen in a fair and open manner; and although the role of Independent Co-opted Member is not defined in the Localism Act (The Act), the role of Independent Person by virtue of section 28(8) of the Localism Act 2011 is. Further, the council also applies the independence standards in The Act to the co-opted member role as the same considerations apply. These considerations being, the person:
- has not been a member or employee of the Council within the five years before the date of appointment;
 - is not a Member or officer of that or any other relevant authority;
 - is not a relative or close friend of a Member or employee of the Council;
 - has submitted an application for the appointment;
 - has been approved by a majority of the members of the Council.
- 3.9 The Committee is asked to note that at its meeting in May 2021 Full Council will be asked to approve the provisional appointments, in accordance with a) and b), below
- a) Independent Persons (Standards focused) William Goh, Kier Hopley and Nigel Shock;
- b) Independent Co –opted Member (Standards focused) Javed Ansari and Mark Mills.

Nigel Shock had intended to stand down but has agreed to stay on for an extended period while we undertake a further recruitment exercise to find a third Independent Person for the longer term.

Committee on Standards in Public Life launches Standards Matter 2 review

- 3.10 The Committee will recall that in September 2020, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) launched its Standards Matter 2 review, which involves a landscape review of the institutions, processes and structures that are in place to support high standards of conduct. The review assess best practice and highlight any themes and gaps in the way the Seven Principles of Public Life code of conduct are promoted and maintained. The Committee Chair, Jonathan Evans, stated: *‘As well as sharing any lessons learned and best practice, we will consider whether there are gaps or issues that require further work. We want to check whether the Nolan principles are well understood, properly embedded and that they continue to reflect the standards expected by the public of those that serve them.’*
- 3.11 The public sector survey element of the consultation closed on the 29.01.21 and the Committee is presently undertaking online evidence sessions. A copy of the Council’s response to the consultation questions is attached as Appendix A. CSPL aim to report their findings to the Prime Minister in September 2021 with their recommendations and best practice guidance. We will keep the Committee informed of the reviews progress.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council, individual Members and co-opted Members are required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct in accordance with s27 of the Localism Act 2011. The attendance at mandatory training sessions is a means to achieve this and a requirement pursuant to the Brent Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Part 5, of the council's Constitution.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 There are no equality implications arising out of this report.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 Not applicable.

<p><u>Report sign off:</u></p>

<p>Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations</p>
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