



Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

4 December 2024

**Report from
Corporate Director Law &
Governance**

**Lead Member – Deputy Leader &
Cabinet Member for Finance &
Resources**

Standard's Report (including Q2 update on gifts and hospitality)

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 Appendix A: Gifts & Hospitality Register (Qtr. 2)
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Debra Norman, Corporate Director, Law & Governance 020 8937 1578 debra.norman@brent.gov.uk Biancia Robinson, Senior Constitutional & Governance Lawyer 0208 937 1544 biancia.robinson@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report/Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on (a) gifts and hospitality registered by Members and (b) member training.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the contents of the report, in particular the action to be taken in paragraph 3.8.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1. The reviewing and maintenance of high standards of member conduct supports the delivery of the borough plan by promoting confidence in the operation and good governance of the council.

Gifts & Hospitality

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Gifts and hospitality received by Members are published on the Council's website and open to inspection at the Brent Civic Centre.
- 3.4 For the second quarter of 2024/25 there have been eight gifts and hospitality recorded as being received, these are set out in further detail in Appendix A, together with the details of the receiving Councillor.
- 3.5 The Committee will recall that hospitality accepted by the Mayor in their civic role is recorded separately and published on the Council's website.
- 3.6 Members attention is drawn to the recommendations in the Value For Money report also on the agenda in respect of gifts and hospitality received by councillors. A report will be brought to the committee following consideration of the issues at the Constitutional Working Group in due course.

Member Training Attendance

- 3.7 At this Committee's request reports updating it on the attendance records for Member's in relation to mandatory training sessions has become a standard reporting item.
- 3.8 With the exception of Data Protection (DP), all members have completed their mandatory (refresher) training. With respect to the DP training members had until Wednesday, 25.09.24 to complete this training which consists of on online recording. This deadline was extended and officers have sent emails/texts/WhatsApp messages and telephoned Councillors since September 2024 to achieve compliance. A further deadline of 11.59pm on 10th November was given together with the warning that the Information Governance team will start taking steps to restrict IT access (which includes access to Brent mobile phones and email) in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy which all members have signed and agreed to abide by. As of

Monday 25.11.25 the following councillors have not completed the mandatory DP training:

- (1) Rita Conneely
- (2) Arshad Mahmood
- (3) Tom Miller

The Committee is asked to note that if the above Councillors have not completed their training by the 04.12.24, access to their IT will need to be restricted. Officers will update the Committee at its meeting on the 04.12.24 with the current position.

3.9 The Committee will know that:

- a) It is a requirement of the Members' Code of Conduct that all members' *"must attend mandatory training sessions on this Code or Members' standards in general, and in accordance with the Planning Code of Practice and Licensing Code of Practice"*.
- b) The schedule for all mandatory sessions is ordinarily published and approved in the Council calendar at the May Annual Council meeting.
- c) All internal training sessions attended by Members are published on the Council's Website and on individual Member profile pages.
- d) For face-to-face training sessions, reminders are sent via email, calendar invitations, and text messages and, on some occasions, direct telephone calls to Members. The same reminder process is employed for re-run(s) of sessions, where applicable, to take account of personal circumstances like work commitments and childcare arrangements etc.
- e) During 2024/25 the Committee will receive regular updates on Members who have not completed the mandatory training sessions.

4.0 Financial Considerations

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

5.0 Legal Considerations

5.1 Pursuant to the Localism Act 2011, the Council has to have arrangements in place to deal with any allegations of failure to comply with the code of conduct and must appoint an Independent Person whose views are sought and taken into account by the council before it makes its decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate.

5.2 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 Additional Considerations

- 6.1 There are no a) Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) considerations, b) Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement, c) Climate Change and Environmental considerations, d) Human Resources/Property considerations (if appropriate) or e) Communication considerations arising out of this report.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman

Corporate Director, Law & Governance