

	Audit and Standards Advisory Committee 27 July 2026
	Report from the Director of Law
	Lead Member - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Grahl)
Standards Report (Quarter one update on gifts & hospitality)	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	1) Appendix A: Appendix A: Gifts & Hospitality Register (Qtr. 1)
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	(1) Marsha Henry , Director of Law (ext. 4078) 020 8937 4078, Marsha.henry@brent.gov.uk . (2) Pameel Crowther-Newman , Head of Law, Litigation 020 8937 4102, Pameel.Crowther-Newman@brent.gov.uk (3) Biancia Robinson , Principal Constitutional, Governance & Finance Lawyer 02089371544, Biancia.robinson@brent.gov.uk .

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 communications from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) regarding Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Inspections.

2.0 Recommendations

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

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 quarter one of 2026/27 (April – June 2026) three councillors have declared gifts and hospitality as being received. These are set out in further detail in Appendix A, together with the details of the receiving Councillors.
- 3.5 The Committee will recall that hospitality accepted by the Mayor in their civic role are recorded separately and published on the Council's website.

RIPA Inspection

- 3.6 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) gave the Council significant powers in order to investigate serious matters and offences. It enables the Council to use covert surveillance, covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) and the acquisition of service user or subscriber information in relation to communications data in a manner which is compatible with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (which governs an individual's right to respect for their private and family life). Before the Council may undertake covert surveillance, there are various criteria which must be met including approval of the application by a Magistrate.
- 3.7. Covert surveillance techniques include static surveillance (e.g. taking up an observer post to monitor the activities and movements of those suspected of having committed criminal offences); mobile surveillance (e.g. following someone to see where they are going without their knowledge) and using hidden CCTV at a crime hotspot. RIPA refers to these techniques as 'directed surveillance'. It also extends to the use of undercover officers and informants. RIPA refers to these as 'Covert Human Intelligence Sources' (more commonly referred to as CHISs).
- 3.8. The Council is periodically inspected by Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO). Inspections focus on RIPA policies, procedures and practice. The last inspection was undertaken on 9 March 2020; when the Inspector was happy with his findings.

3.9 For 2026, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner has agreed:

“each local authority should, in the first instance, provide a written update on its compliance with the legislation. This will enable us to assess whether further remote, or on-site inspection is required. This approach takes cognisance of the general decline in the use of covert powers by many local authorities, and seems the right approach for now, based upon our assessment of risk and where our resources are best directed for the coming year.”

Generally, if you have not used the powers since your last inspection, and your responses to the questions ...assure us of having maintained good levels of compliance, we shall likely require no further engagement. Where the powers have been used, or you are planning to use them, an appropriate discussion with an Inspector may be arranged to help us form a view of the approach you are taking.”

Officers have prepared a response on compliance with RIPA and in line with the report considered by this Committee, at its meeting in the 24.03.26, can confirm there have been zero RIPA Directed Surveillance or CHIS authorisations. Officer anticipate a no further engagement response, but will update the Committee once the IPCO response is received.

4.0 Financial Implications

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

5.0 Legal Implications

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.

The legislative requirements regarding RIPA are contained within the body of this report.

6.0 Equity, diversity and inclusion Implications

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

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 As set out in the body of the report.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 Not applicable.

Report sign off:

Pameel Crowther- Newman
Deputy Director of Law & Monitoring Officer

Legal Implications

Biancia Robinson,
Principal Constitutional, Governance & Finance Lawyer

Financial Implications

No financial implications arising out of this report