

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – 13 June 2024  
**Subject:** The Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members  
**Report of:** The City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

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**Summary**

This report considers the operation and efficacy of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members.

**Recommendations**

That the Standards Committee:

1. Notes the Monitoring Officer's views on the efficacy and operation of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members.
  2. Provide comments as necessary on the Monitoring Officer's views regarding the efficacy and operation of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members.
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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 As the Committee will be aware the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') forms part of the Council's Constitution. The Committee received a report about the Guidance at its meeting in June 2023. That report considered the efficacy and operation of the Guidance up until 18 May 2023. A further update about gifts and hospitality received by Members for the period between 19 May 2023 and 31 January 2024 was provided to the Committee as part of the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report in March 2024. A final version of the List of Gifts and Hospitality received by the Lord Mayor between 13 May 2022 and 18 May 2023 was also provided as part of the Annual Report.
- 1.2 This report, in respect of notifications of gifts and hospitality, made by Members generally, covers the period from 1 February 2024 to 30 April 2024 (the date when this report was written). In respect of gifts and hospitality received by the Lord Mayor, this report covers the period 18 May 2023- 30 April 2024.
- 1.3 The Guidance was last considered as part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution in May 2024 and no substantive changes were considered necessary by the Council's Monitoring Officer at that date other than to update the review date of the Guidance.
- 1.4 The current version of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **2.0 Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members**

- 2.1 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members ('the Code') requires Members to register any gifts and hospitality received with an estimated value of at least £100. This figure dates from the 2013 revision to the Code following the changes implemented by the Localism Act 2011. The Council's form for the Registration of Interests makes provision for gifts and hospitality to be recorded where applicable.
- 2.2 The Committee will be aware that whilst officers do provide advice to Councillors, if asked, on Members' Interests including gifts and hospitality it is the responsibility of individual Members to comply with the requirements of the Code. Reminders to Members regarding updating their Register of Interests and registering any gifts and hospitality are contained in the Ethical Governance Updates sent to all Members and in email reminders sent to Members during the course of the Municipal Year. As stated in the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report to this Committee in March 2024, an email reminder was sent to Members in February 2024. A reminder was also included in the last Ethical Update newsletter which was circulated to all Members on 21 March 2024.
- 2.3 The Committee is advised that two members updated their Register of

Interests form in connection with entries relating to gifts and/or hospitality for events which took place after 31 January 2024. The first entry concerned attendance at a weekend training event organised by the Local Government Association. This weekend training event, which took place in February 2024, was accepted in August 2023 which is when the Member notified the Monitoring Officer of it. Unfortunately, this was not picked up as part of the information provided as part of the March 2024 Annual Report. The estimated value of the event was recorded by the Member as being £150. The second entry relates to 2 complimentary tickets and hospitality for a football match between Watford and Preston North End in April 2024. The value of the tickets and hospitality was stated by the Member to be £400. The Monitoring Officer continues to be of the view that the level of new entries is unsurprising. It is also the Monitoring Officer's view that there is no indication that Members are unaware of the requirement to register gifts and hospitality as set out in the Guidance.

- 2.4 The Committee is further advised that there have been no refusals to accept gifts which have been notified to the Monitoring Officer during the period of this report.
- 2.5 Whilst the Lord Mayor is of course subject to the terms of the Code specific provision is made relating to gifts in guidelines for the Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor's Office has advised that with respect to gifts there is an agreed process in place where the Curatorial Manager and/or the Collections Officer of the Our Town Hall Project assesses the gifts received by the Lord Mayor approximately every 4-6 months to decide which gifts should be retained in the 'Town Hall Collection' and which gifts can be retained by the Lord Mayor. The guidance also advises that whilst undertaking engagements care must be taken by the Lord Mayor to guard against being seen to solicit gifts.
- 2.6 A copy of the List of Gifts and Hospitality received by the Lord Mayor during 18 May 2023- 30 April 2024 is attached as Appendix 2. The Committee will note that an assessment by the Curatorial Manager of gifts numbered 52- 55, 57, 60, 62 and 66 on the list is scheduled to take place in May/June 2024 and therefore an update could not be provided at the time of writing this report. Any gifts that the Lord Mayor received as a ward councillor will be on their Register of Interests.
- 2.7 The Monitoring Officer is of the view that bearing in mind the number of events the Lord Mayor has to attend in their civic capacity the level of entries is again unsurprising. In deciding which gifts can be retained by the Lord Mayor or retained in the 'Town Hall Collection,' care needs to be taken not to cause offence to the donor if they intended the gift to be for the Lord Mayor personally. In addition, gifts are sometimes engraved to personalise them or they may be given to specifically mark a particular occasion, event or visit carried out by the incumbent Lord Mayor. Gifts provided in these circumstances will either be added to the Town Hall Collection or, if the Curatorial Manager decides not to add them, dealt with in accordance with the agreed process mentioned in paragraph 2.5 above again having regard to the overarching principle of ensuring no offence is caused to the donor. The

Committee is advised that the agreed process for assessing gifts is kept under review to ensure that it is appropriate and works well.

2.8 The Monitoring Officer does not consider that any amendment of the Gifts and Hospitality Guidance for Members is required, other than to update the review date.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

3.1 The recommendations appear at the top of this report.