

Witness Name: **Julie Norgrove**

Statement no: **First**

Exhibit: **JN13**

Date: 29 February 2012

THE LEVESON INQUIRY

Exhibit JN13 to the
Witness Statement of **Julie Norgrove**

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MPA – interests, gifts and hospitality declarations

Report: 9

Date: 14 September 2009

By: Chief Executive

Summary

This report sets out the position with regard to the reporting by MPA members and officers of gifts and hospitality and any personal or financial interests that might be relevant to the conduct of MPA business.

A. Recommendation

That the current position be noted and the future action proposed in this report to increase the effectiveness and transparency of the reporting processes be endorsed.

B. Supporting information

1. An essential part of the MPA's corporate governance policy is probity and transparency about any personal interests that might affect the business actions of either members or officers. This report addresses the position in relation to:

- Registers of interests
- The declaration of gifts and hospitality

2. Registers of interest

Member's register

2.1 As members will be aware, on taking office each member must complete a declaration of interests as set out in the MPA's Member Code of Conduct. They are then responsible for informing the Authority within 28 days of becoming aware of any change to the interests declared by them. Whilst the onus is on the member to declare any relevant interests, they are sent a reminder every six months. The register is open to the public. Up to now it has been held in hard copy form but will shortly be posted on the MPA's website. Consideration is also being given to whether it would be possible in respect of London Assembly members on the MPA to have one register common to both the MPA and the Greater London Authority, given that the types of interests that have to be declared to both bodies is broadly the same.

2.2 Declarations of interests made at Authority or committee meetings are recorded in the minutes of that meeting and the Head of Committee Services maintains a register of these declarations.

2.3 Officer's Register

Each year senior MPA staff and members are required to make a declaration in respect of related party transactions, which is a declaration of whether they have any personal or financial interests in bodies with which the MPA has entered into a contractual relationship. There is no statutory requirement for the Authority to maintain a register of

officer interests but as part of taking its corporate governance framework forward the MPA is intending to introduce such a register. Work is in hand to develop proposals, particularly in respect of what interests should be included in the register and what staff should be required to complete a declaration. The most comprehensive approach would be to require all staff to declare appropriate interests.

3. Gifts and Hospitality

3.1 Member Gifts and Hospitality

By law and as set out in the Code of Conduct, members are required to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or more received by them in connection with their official duties as a member. This has to be done within 28 days of receipt of the gift or hospitality. At meetings of the Authority or its committees a member should declare acceptance of a gift or hospitality where it represents a personal or prejudicial interest in relation to a matter under discussion. This obligation ceases three years after the registration of that particular interest.

3.2 As with the Register of Interests this is currently held in hard copy form but will shortly be posted on the MPA's website. Members are reminded every six months of their obligations to declare and gifts or hospitality.

Officer Gifts and Hospitality

3.3 Two registers of gifts and hospitality are maintained, one for the Secretariat and one for Internal Audit. Gifts and hospitality declarations made by the members of the Senior Management Team are also posted on the MPA's website.

3.4 The amount of gifts and hospitality offered to officers is generally low and directed predominantly at senior management. However, in reviewing the current position it is clear that a more proactive approach is needed to make officers aware of their obligations. The following action is therefore proposed:

1. Advice/instruction on the declaration of gifts and hospitality should be included in the staff handbook and should form part of the induction process for new members of staff. Staff should be reminded on a regular basis of the requirement to make declarations
2. A report should be made to the Senior Management Team every six months on the number and type of declarations made, and any particular issues of concern

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The MPA needs to be clear as to who is responsible for managing the processes outlined above. At present the Monitoring Officer manages the member processes and it is proposed that this continues. As part of a report on 'standards indicators' the number of declarations made by members is reported to each meeting of the Standards Committee.

4.2 With regard to officer recording of interests and gifts and hospitality, ultimately the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness and transparency of the reporting process. It is proposed that the development of the more proactive approach outlined in para 3.4 above and the ongoing management of the process should be taken forward by the Head of HR.

C. Race and equality impact

There is none arising directly from the report.

D. Financial implications

None arising directly from the report.

E. Background papers

None

F. Contact details

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