

Item

UPDATED SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES 2017/18 AND THE MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE



To:

Civic Affairs Committee 14/2/18

Report by:

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Wards affected:

None directly affected

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council (at its meeting on 13 July 2017) agreed a new Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) scheme. It also requested that the Independent Remuneration Panel review a small number of councillor roles which had not been covered and to recommend whether any should receive a [modest *sic.*] SRA.
- 1.2 Separately, it had been requested by the Executive Councillor for Strategy and Transformation (the Executive Portfolio responsible for democratic services) that this committee receive a short report on the Mayoral allowance and the budgets allocated to it.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To determine whether to agree with the IRPs recommendations, or to amend them, for Council decision.
- 2.2 To agree that the statements on the Mayor's Allowance which will be included in the Mayor's Handbook.

2.3 To agree that the IRP's remit will cover the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Allowance (including all hospitality budgets) with any changes in time for implementation for the 2019/20 Mayoral year.

3. Background

Special Responsibility Allowances

3.1. The IRP met on 6th September 2017 to consider the Council resolution of 13th July 2017 which was:

“To assess and report by November 2017 on appropriate and modest remuneration for other external Council representatives on: the Combined Authority including as Cabinet Member (1), Scrutiny (2) and Audit (1), the Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly (3), the Police and Crime Panel (1)”

3.2 The Panel met Councillors Herbert and Bick on 20th December 2017 on its report.

3.3 The IRP's report is attached. The Panel has made two recommendations. Any decision on amending the Allowances Scheme is for the Full Council. The Committee can recommend, amend, or reject the Panel's proposals. The Panel has been invited to attend the Committee.

The Mayoral Allowances

3.4 The Committee received a report in June 2017 which explained that the Mayor's Allowance had not been reviewed since 2004. The Committee agreed with regard to the appropriate level of allowance:

“that a second report should be presented at a future meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee for consideration so that members of the Committee and the Democratic Services Manager consult with previous Mayors to obtain their opinion. “

3.5 Subsequent to that report there have been two instances where the guidance given on the purpose or use of the allowance has been found to be ambiguous, relating to what happens to any underspend on the budget and what can be claimed for by a Mayor under hospitality. The Executive Councillor for Strategy and Transformation requested a short item to this Committee for clearer advice on the budget provided to the Mayor.

3.6 The report to this Committee on 28 June 2017 explained that the Mayor gets an allowance (£4,550 this year), paid direct into the Mayor's personal bank account and is expected to be used to cover for example:

- Money spent at any event must be paid from the allowance (charity donations at events, raffles)
- Entertaining guests away from the Guildhall (eg. at a restaurant) and impromptu entertaining/hospitality
- Clothing/grooming costs which can be considerable eg. on clothing the Mayoral Chain makes holes in jackets/tops
- Personal car mileage
- Taxi tips, ie. when the Mayor is taking a taxi to engagements rather than using the Mayor's Car or personal car.

The way the Allowance is used is up to each Mayor and it is not audited.

3.7 There is a budget for hospitality (£5,070), managed by officers, which in consultation with the Mayor is used for:

events in the Mayor's Parlour/Mayoral hosted events in the Guildhall,
Remembrance Sunday and other ceremonial/church events,
Christmas cards,
floral tributes,
visitor gifts,
personal guests to the outgoing Mayor's dinner.

In addition there is a separate budget set aside for the civic reception held at the Guildhall in November and the Reach Fair held in May of £8,300.

Although not specified in Mayoral duties which the allowance is expected to cover above, it should be noted that the Mayor performs a high profile (and challenging) task of chairing the Council. Under the scheme for special responsibilities other chair roles are recognised.

3.7 For the avoidance of doubt (and this is no change to practice since 2005) any underspend at financial year end on the proportion of the budget held by officers will return to Council reserves, not to the incumbent Mayor.

3.8 The Mayor will receive regular reports so that hospitality can be planned appropriately and informed by the latest budget information.

3.9 Going forward, it is recommended that the Independent Remuneration Panel's Terms of Reference should include the Mayor and Deputy Mayors' Allowances and the budget for hospitality, with any changes to be in place for May 2019/20. This will supersede the Committee's proposal from June 2017 for a second report on the Mayor's Allowance from the officers.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

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The IRP recommendation would mean an additional £1,120 which for 2017/18 can be funded from underspends in Democratic Services budgets.

(b) Staffing Implications-none

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The IRP have equality considerations within its terms of reference and informed its work on the basic and special responsibility allowances in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

(d) Environmental Implications

(e) Procurement Implications

(f) Community Safety Implications

None of the above.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Not applicable.

6. Background papers

The background information the Panel had is listed in its report.