

Item

THE MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE



To:

Civic Affairs Committee 24/7/19

Report by:

Democratic Services Manager, Gary Clift

Tel: 01223 - 457011 Email: gary.clift@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

None directly affected

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee is being asked to consider the report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Allowances (including all hospitality budgets) with effect from 2019/20. This report was intended for the January 2019 committee but was deferred.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree with the IRPs recommendations, or to amend them.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Committee agreed at its meeting in February 2018 that the Independent Remuneration Panel's remit should cover the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Allowance (including all hospitality budgets) with any changes agreed to be in time for implementation in the 2019/20 Mayoral year.

- 3.2 The Panel interviewed in November 2018 the then Mayor and two former Mayors and the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships, the relevant portfolio holder for policy and budgetary purposes of democratic services.
- 3.3 The IRP's report is attached as appendix 1. The Committee can agree, amend, or reject the Panel's proposals. The Panel has been invited to attend the Committee. Officers could implement the Panel's recommendations.

The Mayoral Allowances

3.4 The Mayor receives an allowance (£4,570), paid through payroll. It is expected to be used to cover incidental expenses incurred by the Mayor to include, among other things, the following examples:

- Money spent at any event (charity donations at events, raffles)
- Entertaining guests away from the Guildhall (e.g. at a restaurant) and impromptu entertaining/hospitality
- Clothing/grooming costs which (these can be considerable e.g. the Mayoral Chain can make holes in jackets/tops)
- Personal car mileage
- Taxi tips (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 the Mayor and it is not audited. This also applies to the payment and use of the Deputy Mayor's Allowance (£1,690).

3.5 There is a budget for hospitality (£5,310), 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.

In addition there is a separate budget (£8,630) set aside for the annual Civic Reception held at the Guildhall and the Reach Village Fair.

3.6 Any underspend at financial year end on the budget held by officers will continue to be returned to Council reserves. It does not pass to the incumbent Mayor.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Page: 3

The IRP recommendation would mean an additional £1,590 in total which should be funded within democratic budgets. Broken down, the recommendations would mean the Mayor's Allowance increases by £336, Deputy Mayor £27 and there is a separate allowance for chairing Council of £1,227. This would be paid to whoever chairs the council meetings for the year (recognising in exceptional circumstances this may not be the Mayor).

These values are to be linked to the national living wage.

(b) Staffing Implications

None

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The IRP have equality considerations within its terms of reference and informed its work.

(d) Environmental Implications

(e) Procurement Implications

(f) Community Safety Implications

None of the above.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships has been consulted on the contents of this report.

6. Background papers

The background information provided to the Panel was:

The City Council's Civic Handbook 2018-19

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/3888/2.pdf>

Extract from "Civic Ceremonial"-Paul Millward 5th edition

Reports and Minutes Civic Affairs Committee 28.6.17 and 14.2.18

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=179&Year=0>

Questions from Panel to Mayors (appendix 2)

Officer contact: Gary Clift Democratic Services Manager 01223 457011

Gary.clift@cambridge.gov.uk

Background

The Civic Affairs Committee has asked the IRP to review allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. These allowances do not fall within the remit of the IRP. However, we are happy to undertake this review for two reasons:

1. there has not been a comprehensive review since 2004
2. part of the mayoral responsibility is to chair Full Council meetings. This meshes with other responsibilities within our remit.

Cambridge City has had a Mayor for over 800 years. Thus, there are aspects of the role which must uphold this ancient tradition. Each incumbent puts his or her own stamp on their mayoral duties so there is also progress and modernity. The role today is in two distinct parts – the civic duty as ‘first citizen’ and chairing the full council. (More detail can be found in the Cambridge City Council Civic Handbook.)

The mayoral allowance is divided into two parts – the personal allowance which is to be used by the mayor for incidental expenses (£4,550) and the proportion retained by officers for the mayor’s hospitality and certain civic events, eg the costs associated with the Council’s twinning arrangements, (Civic Hospitality £5,070, Civic Receptions £8,300). The Deputy Mayor’s allowance is £1,610.

Principles

The principles that guided our report on SRAs still apply, ie that mayoral allowances should:

- be perceived by everyone to be fair,
- be logical and coherent
- be transparent, efficient and easy to administer,
- encourage councillors to fill the roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor,
- encourage scrutiny in order to augment the effectiveness of the democratic process,
- be adaptable to future changes.

Method

We have requested information from several similar councils. Our main criteria in choosing these comparators were that they are city councils of similar size to Cambridge with a long history and a university. This includes the nearest statistical neighbour (Oxford). We have also requested information about the SRA paid for chairing full council meetings from authorities which are geographical neighbours. We have received only partial information from those approached. See Tables 1 and 2 below.

We interviewed three present and former Mayors and the Leader of the Council.

Findings

From the oral evidence, we conclude that the mayoral role carries significant responsibilities. Each Mayor carries out approximately 400 civic duties per year together with the task of chairing five full council meetings.

The interviewees all took the civic duty extremely seriously, seeing the mayoral role as representing Cambridge City Council to both residents and visitors. All had had experience of chairing council committees and all described chairing the full council as more arduous than chairing any of the committees including Planning.

Because the personal allowance is not audited in any way, it is difficult to know whether it is sufficient. The disbursements from this allowance include buying raffle tickets, cakes and incidentals at events attended, thus making official auditing difficult if not impossible. One interviewee had opened a separate bank account so could specify a 20% overspend on the personal allowance.

In 2015 the number of support hours for the mayoral role was reduced. As a result, there has been an increase in use of taxis rather than the mayoral car. This trend is set to continue. Difficulties of various kinds were reported to us about the reliability of taxis.

Although the Deputy Mayor role is seen as an apprenticeship to that of Mayor, it is extremely rare for the Deputy Mayor to deputise for the Mayor.

Clothing is a big outlay as the mayoral chain destroys clothing. Gender differences were reported as it is assumed that 'the public' require a greater diversity of clothing for women than for men.

There was some confusion among interviewees as to the ‘pots’ of money within the authority which support the mayoral roles.

Table 1 Information from similar Authorities

Local authority	Mayor Allowance paid direct	Additional allowance for chairing full council	Deputy Mayor allowance paid direct	Events Budget	Average number of engagements	Population	Electorate
Cambridge	£4,470		£1,580	£8,300 + £4,980	420	136,000	91,013
Oxford	£5,016		£1,254	£43,450	300	154,000	103,176
York	£4,960	£2,600	£2,420			208,000	145,115
Norwich	£6,588				300	141,300	99,625
Durham	£3,500	£6,650	£1,500				
Chester	£14,000	£5,800				118,000	77,160
Gloucester	£3,496		£1,165			129,000	79,361
Lincoln	£3,948		£750			97,500	60,520
Peterbor'gh	£12,000					198,000	137,700

Neighbouring councils allocate a Chair's allowance within their Allowances Scheme.

Table 2

Council	Allowance for chairing full council meetings	Population
South Cambs	£4,002	157,900
East Cambs	£4,200	88,900
Huntingdonshire	£3,763	176,900
Fenland	£4,116	100,800

Recommendations

With regard to the principles outlined above we recommend:

For Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's personal allowance

1. That the Mayor's personal allowance be set at 100% of the Basic Allowance and be linked, as is the Basic Allowance, to the National Living Wage.
2. That the Deputy Mayor's allowance be set at 35% of the mayor's allowance with the same linkage.
3. That, for both, it is required that the payments are put into a separate bank/building society account set up by the incumbent for this purpose to enable them to track costs and help them to account for spending, if it were requested by the Council.
4. That a separate mayoral chairing allowance be initiated for chairing the full council at 25% of basic allowance.

For centrally held monies

5. That all the different budgets that support the mayoral role be identified and listed together.
6. An annual report is provided for the information of the Civic Affairs Committee and Executive Councillor covering the expenditure under the headings in recommendation 5.

In addition

Problems with taxis formed an underlying theme. As the council continues the move away from a mayoral car, the reliability of taxis will become of greater importance. They are charged to the City Council account. If the problem continues, a reminder to the taxi firm that the account could go elsewhere might be appropriate.

Questions from the Independent remuneration Panel (Wednesday 28 November 2018)

- 1) In your Mayoral year, did you consider the level of allowance (both parts):
personally received
retained by the officers for hospitality
sufficient for you to undertake your duties in the way that you wanted to
and how the Council sets out the expectations of the role in the Mayor's Handbook?
- 2) We know the monthly allowance is not audited. Can you tell us how you keep an account for yourself so you know if you have under or overspent?
- 3) Do you think it should be necessary, for audit purposes, to provide evidence of how that allowance is used?
- 4) Can you summarise and/or give examples of what you used the monthly allowance for?
- 5) Is there additional expenditure related to disability? Does the monthly allowance adequately cover this?
- 6) Are there gender differences in relation to the adequacy of allowances?
- 7) Do you think the Council should recognise Chairing the Council Meeting separately?
- 8) If you have chaired another committee, can you tell us how it compares in time and weight of responsibility with chairing full council?
- 9) Do you have any comments on the resources provided for the
Mayor's Reception
Reach Fair
- 10) Is there anything else you would like to add?