

Agenda Item No: 6
Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 20th October 2015
Report Title: Review of changes made to the Mayoralty following the O&S review in 2010
Report Author: Member Services and Scrutiny Manager



Summary: Following a review of the Mayoralty in 2010 some amendments were made to its day-to-day functioning. These amendments were introduced at the start of the municipal year in May 2011. An update report on the effect of these changes was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25th September 2012. At that meeting the report was noted subject to it being acknowledged that the Committee would not wish to see the Mayor restricted by the budget in their role as Ambassador to the Borough and that the effect of changes be further reviewed in three years' time. This report presents information for the 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 Mayoral years.

Key Decision: NO
Affected Wards: N/A
Recommendations: **The O&S Committee is asked to note the report.**
Policy Overview: None
Financial Implications: None
Risk Assessment N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment N/A
Other Material Implications: N/A
Exemption Clauses: N/A
Background Papers: None
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Report Title: Review of changes made to the Mayoralty following the O&S review in 2010

Purpose of the Report

1. Following a review of the Mayoralty in 2010 some amendments were made to its day-to-day functioning. These amendments were introduced at the start of the municipal year in May 2011. An update report on the effect of these changes was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25th September 2012. At that meeting the report was noted subject to it being acknowledged that the Committee would not wish to see the Mayor restricted by the budget in their role as Ambassador to the Borough and that the effect of the changes be further reviewed in three years' time. This report presents information for the 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 Mayoral years.

Background

2. One of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny of the council's 2010/11 budget was that the O&S Committee should review the corporate objectives of the Mayoralty prior to the 2011/12 budget.
3. In response to this recommendation the O&S Committee set up a task group to review all aspects of the Mayoralty with a view to making financial savings and details of the recommendations adopted by the Council in December 2010 are set out in the Appendix attached to the report.
4. The changes agreed were implemented from the start of the 2011/12 municipal year and were reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25th September 2012.

Mayoral Budget

5. Throughout the period since the initial review the budgets for the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowance, Entertainment Allowance and Transportation have been maintained at their 2011/12 levels being:-

Mayor's Allowance	£3,460
Deputy Mayor's Allowance	£1,370
Mayoral Entertainment Allowance	£5,800
Transportation	£12,050

The other elements of the budget include employee costs, civic regalia, insurance and internal recharges, and the overall budget for the current year is £57,830.

Engagements

6. The following table shows information in respect of engagements undertaken for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Engagements	Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
In the borough		246	167	181
Ticket cost £		210	517	539
Out of the borough - total		54	37	50
Civic		32	28	36
Charity		22	9	14
Ticket cost £		1,223	927	1,333
Total Engagements		300	204	231
Total ticket cost £		1,433	1,444	1,872

Expenditure from Mayor's Allowance

7. The totals set out below details a breakdown of expenditure from the Mayor's Entertainment Allowance for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15

The expenditure figure includes the cost of any tickets for events, charity donations, expenses for hosting events, flowers, wreaths etc. The sort of events hosted by the Mayor include visits by students/schoolchildren, local groups and guests from other Boroughs/Districts to the parlour/chamber/other venue.

Year	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £
Entertainment Allowance	5,800	5,800	5,800
Expenditure	4,784	3,736	3,808

The figures above show that the expenditure on this allowance has always been well within budget.

Transport

8. Prior to the changes being implemented, the Council had a car and a full time attendant/chauffeur for the Mayor.
9. Following the adoption of the review recommendations in 2010, it was decided to relinquish the lease on the Mayor's car and to employ a private hire company to transport the Mayor as and when necessary.
10. There is no obvious trend in the level of transport costs incurred from one mayoral year to the next. Factors that influence the cost include the number of engagements, how many are in/out of the borough, where the Mayor lives, if the Mayor drives him/herself to many engagements and, if so, how much

mileage was claimed for this. As can be seen from the table below, transport costs have been kept within the budget of £12,050.

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Transport costs £	7,275	11,452	11,852

Mayor's attendance at Events out of the Borough

11. Before May 2011 there was no restriction imposed on what events the Mayor could attend. Many invitations and requests for attendance of the Mayor, for events both in and out of the Borough, are received every year. Some Mayors had previously decided to concentrate their events and engagements within the borough, whilst others attended events which were more widely spread (mainly within Kent but with some in London).
12. The restricting of events that the Mayor can attend out of the borough (see recommendations (vii) and (viii)) has ensured that the amount spent on transport and tickets (where applicable) for those events has been kept within the respective budgets, and at the same time has not restricted the Mayor in their role as Ambassador to the Borough. Under the revised arrangements the Mayor is still able to attend certain prestigious events such as the Queen's Garden Party and others detailed within the guidelines. For other events outside the Borough consent would have been obtained either by Precedent, i.e permission given to previous Mayors, or via the Leader or Chief Executive.

Conclusion

13. The Committee is asked to note that the revised arrangements introduced in 2011 are working well and are being kept within the overall Mayoral budget.

Portfolio Holder's Views

14. This is a progress report that confirms that the new arrangements have worked well and within the budget provisions and I commend the report to the Committee.

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Recommendations Adopted by Council – December 2010

- (i) the selection procedure for choosing a Mayor should remain unchanged but nominations be discussed by Group Leaders prior to discussion within the Groups themselves followed by the Group Leader reporting them to the informal Group Leader meeting which would consider the nominations.
- (ii) the Mayor's Parlour be used more often for internal meetings and for those meetings of visiting dignitaries with the Leader/Chief Executive.
- (iii) the Mayor's Guidance Notes be amended as below and as necessary to reflect any other changes:-

The Borough Duties part of the "Responsibilities" section, to be amended to read:

"To promote the Borough as a place to visit through external contacts, and tourism events; the Mayor to attend engagements only within the Borough of Ashford with the exception of the Queen's Garden Party, the High Sheriff of Kent's Inauguration Service and events hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, other events should be regarded as exceptional. If the Mayor wishes to attend other engagements outside of the Borough, unless his/her attendance has been agreed, the total cost (ie ticket and travel) would have to be funded personally or from the Mayor's Allowance."

An additional duty to be added to this section:

"To be involved in events marking the achievement of major milestones in Ashford's growth".

- (iv) the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Entertainment Allowances be combined and reduced from (combined total) £7,390 to £5,800 and re-named "Mayoral Entertainment Allowance".
- (v) the Personal Allowance of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be unchanged.
- (vi) if the Mayor's Allowances are used up before the year end, no further funding be made available.
- (vii) the majority of the Mayor's engagements should be in the Borough of Ashford with only a few exceptions: the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, the Inauguration Service for the High Sheriff of Kent and events hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent. Other events should be regarded as exceptional.
- (viii) the Mayor could attend any engagement that fell outside of these guidelines but would be expected to fund the total cost of that

engagement (ie ticket and travel cost) either personally or from the Personal Allowance.

- (ix) the lease on the current Mayoral car be terminated and when the Mayor needs transport, this is to be provided by a private hire company.**
- (x) the accompanying of the Mayor on “walkabout” when wearing the Civic regalia be regularised. On occasions when it is not possible for the Mayor to be accompanied, the Mayor to wear the badge only.**
- (xi) on occasions when the Mace is required, these duties be covered by an employee of the Council, other duties be covered by an employee of the Council on an ad hoc basis.**
- (xii) it be noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a progress report in September 2012.**