

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

15 January 2014

Subject Heading:

HAVERING'S MAYORALTY –
REDUCTION IN ACTIVITY PROPOSAL

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

With continued pressures on the Council budget the activity profile of the Mayoralty and its associated support arrangements requires reviewing.

Financial summary:

The cost of the Mayoralty in 2013-2014 is estimated at £190,000. The proposals contained within the report could see a reduction in the annual costs of the Service

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

The cost of the Mayoralty is contingent on the activity preferences of the office's incumbent which can therefore mean that there is on occasion a wide variation in expenditure.

This report details a series of options for implementing defined parameters for the role and activity profile of the Mayor. With continued pressure of public finances, a

number of suggestions are proposed which would reduce the overall cost of delivering the Mayoralty in Havering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee indicate its preferences from the list of savings options as detailed in the report.

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 The Mayor of Havering currently has full discretion to accept any invitation he or she receives from any local authority for any event. This also extends to invitations from Havering's twinned towns. There is no restriction on the activity parameters of the Mayor. The formal duties of the Mayor extend to presiding over meetings of Council and the signing of Council ordinance.
- 1.2 The current estimated figure for 2013/14 is approximately £190,000. This cost is comprised of staff salaries (including overtime), transport, the Civic Purse and Special Responsibility Allowances. The breakdown of costs is as follows:
 - Staff salaries: £107,000
 - Staff overtime: £35,800
 - Member Allowances: £22,068
 - Civic Purse: £14,120
 - Transport: £10,000
- 1.3 Amongst the public there is an appreciation for the work of the Mayor, particularly for events within the borough. Indeed, since April 2013 the Mayor will have attended over 300 engagements in Havering. There is however, not a wider understanding about what the Mayor does outside of the borough. There is also little in the way of guidance about what type and the number of events the Mayor is expected to attend out of the borough.
- 1.4 Members will note that an estimated figure of approximately £35,800 will be spent on staff overtime costs. The vast majority of this cost is absorbed by the significant volume of work undertaken by the 2 Mayoral Support Officers who play a critical role in escorting the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to the majority of events which they attend. The Support Officers are employed on an annualised hours' contract. Once the annualised hours are exceeded, an increased rate of pay is awarded. The high volume of

work undertaken by successive Mayors and Deputy Mayors has increased the workload of the 2 Support Officers, much beyond the level of work accommodated for within the annualised hours' contract. By reducing the activity of the Mayoralty, this will in-turn reduce the workload of the Support Officers thereby lowering the overtime costs paid to those members of staff.

- 1.5 With continued pressures on public finances, there are demands to curtail all non-essential activity and this report presents a range of options which aim to reduce modestly the cost of the Mayoralty.

2. Reduced activity to neighbouring boroughs

- 2.1 Mayoral activity is very much driven by the officeholder and there has been a wide variation between different years in terms of the type and setting of events attended. Each year, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will attend approximately 600 events. Of these, some 80-100 are held in boroughs which do not neighbour Havering and which, it can reasonably be argued, have little or no connection to this borough.

- 2.2 What is proposed is to reduce the activity of the Mayoralty through restricting the activities and events the Mayor can engage in to those of the outer east London boroughs; namely Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Newham; and also the 3 adjoining boroughs in Essex, namely Brentwood, Epping Forest and Thurrock District Councils, and events at the County Council offices at Chelmsford. Pan-London events such as the Lord Mayor's Show would continue to be attended.

- 2.3 Based on previous years' expenditure a cost savings projection can be determined. The majority of the savings would come from the reduction in overtime, particularly for the Mayor's support officers. Whilst it is difficult to give a precise estimate of the level of savings due to the operation of the Support Officer annualised contract, a conservative estimate would be in the region of £6,000-£8,000 per annum. There would also be a saving in fuel costs associated with the reduction in activity.

3. Reduced weekend activity

- 3.1 In the current municipal, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have attended 114 weekend engagements, a mixture of in-borough and out of borough activities. For each of those events, a Mayoral Support Officer will also have been in attendance, accruing over 350 hours of work, some of which will be paid through overtime at a higher rate given the unsociable working hours.

- 3.2 In order to reduce the excessive weekend activity, a limit could be placed on the number of weekend engagements the Mayor and Deputy Mayor could attend. If the number of events were reduced to a limit of 40 per year, coupled with the restriction reducing activity to in-borough and neighbouring boroughs as set out in the previous section of this report, this would contribute towards a similar level of overtime staffing cost savings as identified in the previous option.

4. Reduction in Civic Purse

- 4.1 Were Members minded to pursue the options as set out above, there could also be a small reduction in the annual budget for the Civic Purse.
- 4.2 The budget for 2013/14 was set at £14,120. With less activity and reduced costs associated with attending events and other engagements, the budget could be reduced to around £10,000. Any expenditure over that could be charged to the mayoral allowances to act as a disincentive for excessive activity.

5. More cost-efficient Mayoral car

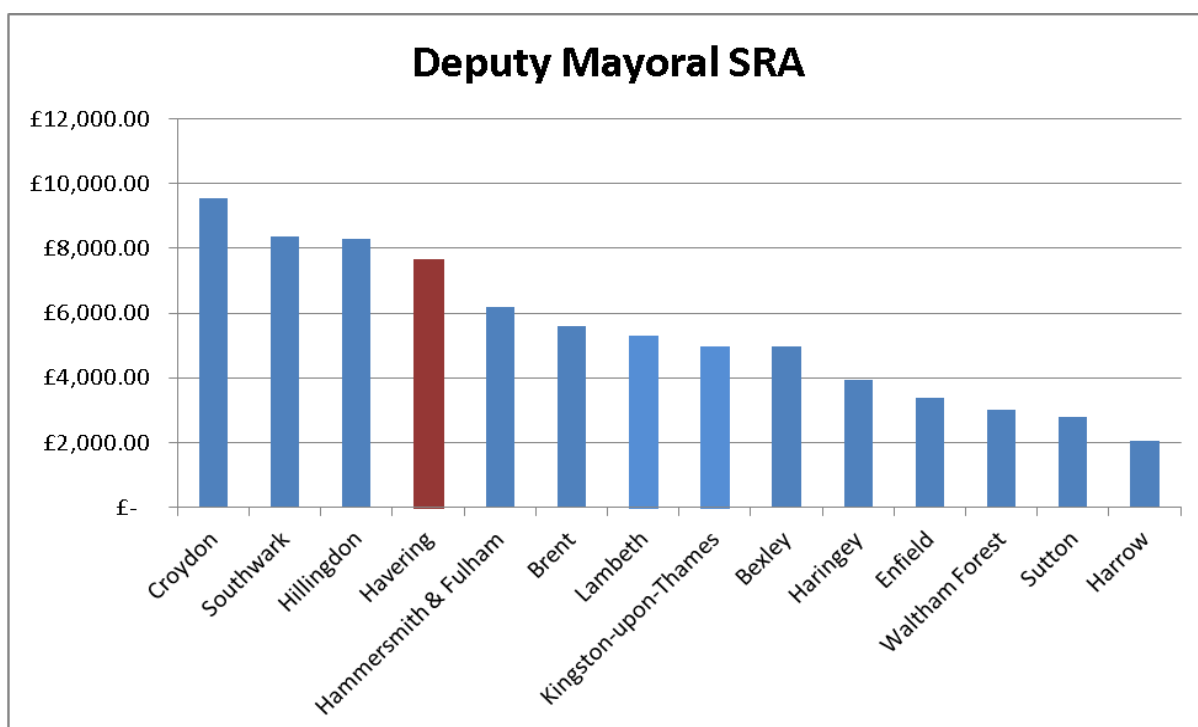
- 5.1 A Mayoral car is provided to convey the Mayor and Mayoress/Escort or, if appropriate, the Deputy Mayor and Escort to and from official Mayoral engagements.
- 5.2 The annual hire cost for the Mayor's car (Mercedes S-Class) is £3,770, with annual fuel costs of approximately £2,500.
- 5.3 For access reasons, the current Mayor has made use of a Ford Galaxy from the Council's Passenger Transport Service. The annual cost for this vehicle is approximately £1,000 (with additional staff support costs in the absence of the Mayoral Support Officers). The use of the Ford Galaxy demonstrates that through hiring a more cost-efficient vehicle additional savings could be found.
- 5.4 In addition, there is the option of going to market to source a less expensive hire car, or utilising the Council's car pool.

6. Review of Deputy Mayor SRA

- 6.1 The role of the Deputy Mayor is to deputise for the Mayor when he/she is unable to chair a meeting of Council or attend a designated event. The year in office for the Deputy Mayor is viewed as a training exercise for when he/she takes over from the outgoing Mayor. However the level of activity of a Deputy Mayor is dependent on decisions of the Mayor. In most years the Deputy Mayor undertakes only a handful of engagements.

6.2 The Deputy Mayor role receives an annual special responsibility allowance of £7,650, compared to that of the Mayor who receives £14,418.

6.3 The graph below shows a comparison of Deputy Mayor SRA's with those London Boroughs who operate the Leader and Cabinet model of governance. The graph illustrates that Havering is in the upper quartile for its Deputy Mayor SRA. Additionally, 11 London Boroughs, including the neighbouring boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge, have chosen not to award an SRA for the role of Deputy Mayor.



6.4 Members could consider reducing the level of the SRA to a rate more comparable to other outer London Boroughs or remove the SRA altogether.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a series of options for reducing the overall cost of the Mayoralty whilst maintaining a high public profile within Havering and neighbouring boroughs.

7.2 A projected breakdown of savings costs, were Members minded to pursue the range of options as set out in this report, is detailed in the table below.

Potential Savings Profile over a 4 year period:

Item	Current Cost (projected)	Potential Cost	Savings
Mayoral Support Officers' Overtime Costs:	£132,000	£75,000	£56,000
Replacement for Mercedes with Ford Galaxy (or equivalent):	£15,000	£8,000	£7,000
Civic Purse:	£56,480	£40,000	£16,480
Fuel costs (for Mercedes):	£10,000	£6,000	£4,000
Deputy Mayor SRA	£30,600	£0	£30,600

In essence, the role of the Mayor would remain largely unchanged and as such would still face the same expectations from office holders and the public about the type of activity profile.

Specifically the role would continue to include:

- Presiding over meetings of Council;
- Signing Council ordinance;
- Opening new facilities;
- Visiting schools and other public facilities;
- Providing a non-partisan civic face for the authority in the community;
- Visiting community groups;
- Representing the borough at external events and engagements in a pre-approved list of local authorities;
- Dispensing civic awards;

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

The cost of Havering's Mayoralty is in the region of £190,000 per annum, which over a term equates to £760,000. The report contains a number of options which aim to reduce the annual cost of the Mayoralty.

Legal implications and risks:

None

Human Resources implications and risks:

There is no reduction in staffing levels proposed. There will however be a reduction in the level of overtime claimed by the Mayoral Support Officers as a result of the reduced activity of the Mayoralty.

Equalities implications and risks:

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None