

# **Report to Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 1 December 2015**

**Subject: Chairman's Expenditure and Allowances**

**Officer contact for further information: Tom Carne  
(01992 56 4039)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To review Civic Ceremonial expenditure and the current levels of member allowances in respect of payments made to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council.
- (2) To consider whether the Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's Allowances should be referred to the Member Remuneration Panel for review; and
- (3) To recommend revisions to current levels of Civic Ceremonial expenditure as members consider appropriate.

## **Report:**

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council receive special responsibility allowances in recognition of the particular expenses incurred by the Civic and Ceremonial role. An anomaly in recompense for transport costs was addressed by the adoption of a motion (Minute 31 – 28 July 2015) at Full Council that:

2. That section (5)(1) of the Members Allowances Scheme be amended to include payment of mileage and public transport claims for approved civic duties carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council including Schedule 2 of that scheme which shall include a further subparagraph (p) for which payment can be made, as follows:

‘(p) Attendance at any civic event to which the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is attending in that capacity (or representative) for which Council funded transport is not provided’

3. That payment of such claims be met from the within the existing members allowances budget; and

4. That the budget for Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council be reviewed and referred to the Governance Select Committee.”

## **Reason for decision:**

5. Full Council requested that a review be conducted into the current levels Civic Ceremonial budget by the Governance Select Committee.

6. In addition to the discharge of the task specifically placed upon Governance Select Committee by Full Council, Members of the Governance Select Committee may wish to consider the potential role of the Member Remuneration Panel in respect of the personal allowances received directly by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman separately from officer controlled elements of the Civic Ceremonial budget.

7. Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's allowances are contained with the Civic Ceremonial Cost Code DR140. Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's Allowances are managed directly by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

8. In addition to the Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's individual allowances, 'spending' budgets designed to directly support the work of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman amount in total to £22,530. These budgets are maintained under the supervision of the Public Relations Officer as follows:

(a) Vehicle Leasing Charges (Hire cars and Taxis)	£4,000
(b) Civic Hospitality (including catering at Full Council)	£2,620
(c) Other Miscellaneous Expenses (such as Community Services Medals and Awards)	£2,270
(d) Other Miscellaneous Expenses (Civic Awards Reception, Carol Service, Chairman's Lunch)	£14,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£22,530</b>
(e) Chairman's Allowance	£7,760
(f) Vice-Chairman's Allowance	£3,040

9. For further reference, the fully itemised budget sheet is reproduced at the end of the report as Appendix 1:

10. In order to assist members of the Governance Select Committee, officers conducted a survey of Civic Ceremonial expenditure by other Essex and neighbouring councils. Returns were received from;

- (i) Southend
- (ii) Chelmsford
- (iii) Rochford
- (iv) East Herts
- (v) Braintree
- (vi) Essex County Council

11. Differing budget structures make direct comparisons with Epping Forest District Council difficult. Some councils weight expenditure towards allowances directly administered by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Other councils weight expenditure in favour of officer controlled budgets with less direct member control.

12. Officers conducted additional online research to establish levels of Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's allowances.

13. The following table summarises the main points of comparison.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Chairman's Allowance</b>	<b>Vice-Chair Allowance</b>	<b>Other Civic Budgets</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Epping Forest District Council	£7,760	£3,040	£22,530	£33,330	
Southend Unitary	£14,00	£7,000	£7,900	£28,900	
Chelmsford City	£17,000	See comments	£54,000	£71,000	Mayor and Deputy combined
Rochford District	£8,500	N/A	£11,000	£19,500	
Braintree District	£3,810	£1,030	£12,500	£17,340	
East Herts	£6,500*	£1,450	£22,250	£30,200	*Net after tax

District					and NI
Essex County Council	£30,000	£10,856	£25,000	£65,856	
Colchester Borough	£11,800	£2,700			Source Essex Chronicle
Harlow District Council	£2,500	£500			Source Online
Castlepoint Borough	£6,137	£2,888			Source Online
Brentwood Borough	£3,300	£750			Source Online
Maldon District Council	£4,590	£459			Source Online
Uttlesford District	£4,000	£2,000			Source Online

14. Each council will hold different expectations of the Civic Ceremonial role. Epping Forest District Council hosts three major events each year, the Civic Awards, Civic Carol Service and the Civic Lunch (for the chairmen and mayors of neighbouring authorities). Each Chairman carries out a wide range of additional engagements. The scope and volume of such engagements will vary from year to year depending on the number and type of invitations accepted.

15. Levels of staff-support also vary considerably between different councils. Following the Phase 2 Structural Review of Epping Forest District Council the part-time (21.5 hours per week) Chairman's Officer transferred from the Democratic Services Section to the Public Relations Section. Further support is provided by officers of the Public Relations and Democratic Services teams ranging from technical advice and assistance through to event management and support.

16. External factors such as family, work and voluntary commitments have an impact upon the time each Chairman can devote to Civic Ceremonial duties. Each Chairman also adopts their own personal approach to the Chairman's Charity with different levels of commitment and support from outside organisations.

17. Fundraising for the Chairman's Charity is also dependent upon the voluntary support and goodwill of many people including other councillors and staff. In the last ten years the Chairman has raised £14,500 per year on average for the Chairman's Charity. Awareness-raising can be equally or more important to work on behalf of the Chairman's Charity than fundraising. For example, previous Chairmen have worked hard to promote issues as diverse as mental health awareness and the personal benefits of volunteering for newly retired people.

18. The Vice-Chairman can also play an important part in supporting the Civic Ceremonial role of the Chairman. Custom and practice has dictated that in most instances the Chairman of Council has previously served a year as Vice-Chairman. Most Chairmen find the experience gained during their year as Vice-Chairman to be invaluable preparation.

19. At times, the role of the Vice-Chairman has taken on additional prominence, for example where the Chairman has become unavailable due to illness or family commitments.

20. Taken over the last ten years, the Chairman of Epping Forest District Council accepted approximately 120 to 140 invitations per year (some more and some less). These engagements are in addition to civic duties such as chairmanship of Full Council and Local Councils Liaison meetings.

21. The chairmanship of the Council is an honoured position reserved to Members who have earned the respect and admiration of colleagues across the Council Chamber. The Chairman holds the unique position of representing the whole Council and all its Members.

22. The Chairman is the public representative and face of the Council to local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. The Chairman is also the representatives of the everyone who lives and works within the District to the wider world.

23. The Chairman is the Council's foremost ambassador and promoter of the District. Unlike most other roles within the Council, the Civic Ceremonial role of the Chairman is defined to a large extent by the character and interests of the individual Chairman. Each brings their own personality and style to the role with varying degrees time and personal resources.

#### Appendix 1 Civic Ceremonial Budget 2015/16

Class	Type	Code	Job Cost	Budget
Transport Related Expenses	Vehicle Leasing Charges	2310		£4,000
Supplies And Services	Members Allowances	A OC001	Chairman's Allowance	£7,760
Supplies And Services	Members Allowances	A OC002	Vice-Chairman's Allowance	£3,040
Supplies And Services	Civic Hospitality	3840		£2,620
Supplies And Services	Other Miscellaneous Expenses	3850		£2,270
Supplies And Services	Other Miscellaneous Expenses	3850 OC003	Chairmans Award	£14,000
Support Services	Managerial & Professional	A		£36,990
Support Services	Office Services	A		£500
Support Services	Print Operations Internal	A		£970
Internal Recharges	Other Recharges	A OC025	HRA Corporate Recharge	(£15,870)
Total				£56,280

**Resource implications:** Existing resources shown at Appendix 1

Legal and Governance Implications: None

Safer, Cleaner Greener Implications: None

Consultation Undertaken: Survey of neighbouring and Essex councils for comparative data. Online desktop research. Referral to Overview and Scrutiny – Governance Select Committee

Background Papers: Minutes of Full Council (Minute 31 – 28 July 2015), survey returns, online research printouts, Spending Control Budget Book

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management: N/A

Equality: N/A