



Report to:	Strategy and Resources Committee	Date:	11 April 2016
Report title:	Mayoralty Review		
Report from:	Gerald Almeroth, Strategic Director - Resources		
Ward/Areas affected:	Borough wide		
Chair of Committee/Lead Member:	Councillor Simon Wales, Deputy Leader of the Council		
Author(s)/Contact Number(s):	Alexa Coates, Head of Committee and Management Support 020 8770 5094		
Corporate Plan Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Open Council • A Fair Council • A Smart Council 		
Open/Exempt:	Open		
Signed:		Date:	29 March 2016

1. Summary

- 1.1 The civic office is an important tradition in Sutton, this report summarises the findings of the Mayoralty Review. The report and recommendations recognise the important role of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Sutton, particularly in terms of celebrating the contribution of the volunteer and charity organisations of the borough and in promoting the concepts of civic pride and democratic participation. The report sets out some proposals such as establishing guidelines for attending events and promoting the civic office for the future.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That a civic handbook and formal induction programme for new Mayors and Deputy Mayors be developed based on the principles identified in this report. This handbook will be reviewed periodically.
- 2.2 That the Committee and Management Support Service will provide support to the Mayor in promoting the civic office, including through twitter, facebook and a Mayoral blog on the Council's website.
- 2.3 That the Mayor is encouraged to focus their activities on attending events which benefit the residents of the borough.



- 2.4 The Mayor and Council Officers will no longer host or attend international town twinning events, and the town twinning grant will be removed from April 2016.
- 2.5 That the Council continues to support the Mayor's attendance at the borough's Remembrance Sunday service hosted on a rotation basis at different churches around the borough.
- 2.6 That volunteer organisations in the borough are approached to help support flag raising events in the borough.
- 2.7 That the Committee notes and supports the fact that the majority of the Mayor's charity events are supported through a Charity Committee and that the Council will provide an officer resource to help organise up to three of the Mayor's charity events per annum, with any other events arranged solely by the Charity Committee.
- 2.8 That the Committee recognises the importance of civic tradition and the Mayor is encouraged to attend significant civic events outside of the borough which may include the following: the Civic Service with the Lord Mayor of Westminster, the London Mayors' Association New Mayors' Induction Day, The Queen's Annual Garden Party and the Annual Whittington Walk, the New Year's Day Parade and the Lord Mayor's Show.
- 2.9 That the Mayor is encouraged to prioritise other Mayoral charity events in the adjoining boroughs and districts.
- 2.10 That a 1,000 hours per annum limit is set for use of hired vehicles by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor combined to be monitored on a monthly basis.
- 2.11 The number of main civic receptions organised by the civic office on behalf of the Mayor will be a maximum of 12 per annum.
- 2.12 That the Mayor will no longer invite Councillors to the Mayor's parlour following Council meetings and that alcohol will only be served at receptions on limited occasions.
- 2.13 Officers will explore whether any voluntary support to the civic office can be sought including charity administration and promotion of the civic office.
- 2.14 That the Mayor's additional expenses allowance be reduced to £12,000 per annum, £2,000 of which will be available to the Deputy Mayor.

3. Background

- 3.1 Support for the civic office (Mayor and Deputy Mayor) is provided by the Committee and Management Support Team. As part of the support function review the Mayor's secretary role has been assigned to the Management Support Team Leader. The Mayor is also supported by the Mace Bearer and Deputy Mace Bearer. Although the support function review identified the level of support for the Mayor in terms of officers it did not review in detail the operational workings or protocols for the office.



- 3.2 It has become evident that there are no set protocols in terms of the level of support that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor can expect to receive. The operational workings of the civic office have never been reviewed at Sutton. There was a business need to review the protocols of the office and to develop more modern and efficient ways of working.
- 3.3 In the current financial year approximately £61,000 (not including staffing costs) has been allocated to run the Mayor's office. An approximation of how that is broken down is set out below (these figures are based on budget allocation not spend):
- Transport - £37,000
 - Hospitality - £5,000 (catering for civic events hosted by the Mayor, the average cost of catering for a main civic reception is £200)
 - Mayor's Allowance - £14,700 (e.g. clothing, tickets for civic events in other boroughs) (£2,000 of this allowance is assigned to the Deputy Mayor)
 - Office expenses - £4,900 (clothing for the macebearer, printing, internal telephone recharges, IT equipment and repair, insurance)
- 3.4 The level of staffing of the civic office has not formed part of this review. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor receive direct support from the Macebearer part time at an approximate cost of £12,000 per annum (not including on-costs) and Deputy Macebearer pro rata payment approx £4,500 per annum (not including on-costs). The Mayor's Secretary role is fulfilled by a Senior Business Support Officer in the Management Support Team this role is not solely dedicated to supporting the Mayor.

4. Issues

Civic Tradition

- 4.1 The role of the Mayor is steeped in tradition and history, for example the office of Lord Mayor of London was instituted in 1189. It was around this time that other major towns followed such as Winchester and Exeter in appointing Mayors. The title of Mayor was recognised in the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. When the London Boroughs were created by virtue of London Government Act 1963, each one was granted borough status. The Local Government Act 1972 established precedence, Schedule 2, Part 1, Section 2 (5) "The Mayor of a London Borough shall have precedence in the Borough, but not so as to prejudicially affect Her Majesty's Royal Prerogative." It is this precedence that establishes the position of Mayor as 'the first citizen' and a ceremonial figurehead for the borough.
- 4.2 Sutton's Constitution clearly sets out the expectations of the Mayor of Sutton in terms of chairing Full Council - it is the Mayor's responsibility to ensure that the business of the Council can be carried out efficiently having regard for Councillors rights and the interests of the community. The Constitution also recognises a role for the Mayor in terms of promoting public involvement in the Council's activities and attending civic events.



Consultation

- 4.3 As part of the review a short consultation exercise was conducted which consisted of: a residents panel survey and two focus groups with officers involved in the civic office and a group of Councillors. The residents panel consultation report is attached at Appendix A, the majority of respondents agreed that having a Mayor within Sutton is beneficial to Sutton and the survey results indicate that residents place high value in the civic office recognising the contributions charity, community and the voluntary sector in the borough. Activities such as developing international or town twinning relationships and maintaining close links with the armed forces and veterans' organisations were not priorities as identified by survey respondents. Whilst the survey results indicate that the role of the Mayor is valued by Sutton residents it shows that there is a lack of awareness about the role among residents. It is therefore proposed that additional support is provided to the Mayor in promoting the role of the civic office, this would take the form of well-maintained twitter and facebook accounts and support for a regular Mayoral blog on the Council's website.
- 4.4 Some of the comments submitted as part of the residents' survey focused on a need to reduce the cost of the civic office particularly in the context the Council needing to make significant savings. However, this is not consistent with the overall finding that 41% of respondents felt having a Mayor was beneficial to the borough. It is therefore proposed that more emphasis is put on promoting the civic office and this is supported by some of the findings and comments from the resident survey.
- 4.5 The two focus groups were held where one was with Council officers who have been involved in the civic office and one with a group of Councillors from both political groups. The former Mayor and Deputy Mayor (2014/15) were also consulted on the proposals outlined in this report. Whilst a focus group report has not been produced the comments from the consultation have been incorporated into the recommendations. Both groups strongly recognised the importance of the role of the Mayor for Sutton, particularly in terms of recognising the role of the Mayor in supporting and celebrating volunteering and community activities in the borough. Both groups identified that in order to provide a consistent level of support to the Mayor certain protocols and parameters needed to be set, particularly in terms of the level of events attended so that officers were able to plan appropriately and so that the activities of the Mayor could be supported within available resources. It is therefore proposed that a Mayoral handbook is developed to guide the activities of the Mayor based on the principles identified in this report.

Town Twinning

- 4.6 The Council is twinned with the following five European Towns

- Apeldoorn (the Netherlands)
- Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (a district in Berlin, Germany)
- Gagny (a suburb of Paris, France)
- Gladsaxe (a suburb of Copenhagen, Denmark)
- Minden (Germany)



- In addition there is a friendship link with Tavernelle Val Di Pesa in Italy.

- 4.7 A grant is available to voluntary organisations to fund town twinning activities. The general rule is that for groups visiting the twin towns they pay for the cost of travel and the town pick up the hosting costs. So grants could be given towards travel costs if going abroad or hosting costs in looking after visitors from the towns. The Mayors of the twin towns meet every other year over a weekend to renew friendship links. Each town takes it in turn to host these meetings. In recent years these meetings have had a theme and each town would be expected to contribute towards the programme for the weekend. There is no allocated budget to support these activities. Transport costs for the Mayor would come from the Mayoral allowance. When Sutton hosts resources will need to be diverted from other areas to cover costs.
- 4.8 The survey and consultation results indicate that town twinning activities are rated as the least important of civic activities. It is therefore proposed that the Council ceases to support town twinning activities. The town twinning grant is not regularly spent, one of the regular recipients of the grant is Sutton Town Twinning Association in 2014/15 and 2015/16 they were awarded £700.

Remembrance Sunday

- 4.9 Each year the Mayor visits a different remembrance service in the Borough on the following rotation: Carshalton, Wallington, Belmont, Sutton, Cheam, and Worcester Park. Support is provided by the Council in the form of sending invitations to Councillors, MPs and voluntary organisations and liaising with the relevant church to make arrangements on the day. It is recommended that support for Remembrance Sunday services continues, but that no other Remembrance events are supported by the Council other than the Mayor attending external Remembrance events as appropriate.

Flag Raising Ceremonies

- 4.10 The Council has long supported flag raising ceremonies. There is no allocated budget to support these events and they can be resource intensive from a secretariat perspective in arranging diaries for senior officers and Councillors and co-ordinating attendance of groups outside of the Council. These events also incur additional costs such as sound enhancement. In the current financial context, it is suggested that voluntary organisations, such as the British Legion, are approached to support these events with an expectation that the Mayor would attend. If a suitable voluntary organisation is not able to take on support for these events then the civic office will continue to organise such events.

Charity

- 4.11 It is normal practice for the Mayor to choose a local charity to support for the year. Previously charity activities have been supported by a Charity Committee; it is proposed that this continues with ad-hoc support required for up to three charity events per annum through the Mayor's secretary and macebearer, this includes invitations, publicity/promotion, attendance monitoring and attendance. The Mayor's secretary and Macebearer will not provide any support to the



Mayor's charity events beyond that set out, further support would be expected to be source through the Charity Committee and officers will explore seeking voluntary support to assist in the administration of charity events.

- 4.12 Officers also provide support to the Mayor in attending other Council's mayoral charity events, this can be resource intensive in terms of secretariat support (managing invitations, claiming back Mayor's expenses for raffle prizes and tickets, arranging transport for the Mayor and cost of transport). It is therefore proposed that the Mayor is encouraged to attend mayoral charity events in adjoining boroughs and districts only.

Civic Tradition

- 4.13 The majority of significant events which link to the civic tradition are held outside of the borough. The Councillor focus group in particular commented that these events provide important networking opportunities particularly for new Mayors and gave them important opportunities to speak to other London Mayors and gain support and advice. It is therefore proposed that the Mayor be encouraged and supported to attend the following civic events outside of the borough only: the Civic Service with the Lord Mayor of Westminster, the London Mayors' Association New Mayors' Induction Day, The Queen's Annual Garden Party and the Annual Whittington Walk.

Engagements and events

- 4.14 The Mayor attends a wide variety of events within the borough, and on occasions outside of the borough boundaries. The role of attending events is recognised in the constitution, which specifies the aim of promoting public involvement in Council activities. In practice the Mayor's activities take a range of forms, they can be categorised into three broad categories

- events arranged by the civic office such as: civic service, civic receptions, Mayor's charity events
- events arranged by others (internal and external to the Council) within the borough
- events arranged by others outside of the borough

- 4.15 The level of support required in assisting the Mayor in attending these events varies. For example in an event which the civic office organises usually involves arranging: venues, refreshments, invitations. The main support required for external events is liaising with other organisations to find out what they require from the Mayor (for example speeches, chains and travel).

Transport

- 4.16 A significant resource for external events is transport. The current budget for civic transport is £37,000 per annum. Without setting criteria for use of civic transport there is a high risk that this budget overspends. Some options for better management of this budget or making savings could be to set a limit to use of civic transport and therefore allowing the Mayor to choose the focus of their activities – for example on local engagement or supporting volunteering. Setting a



20 hour per week limit would ensure the budget limit is met. It is proposed that the Mayor's use of hired vehicles is reviewed on a monthly basis with staff from the Committee and Management Support Service and that the Mayor is encouraged to focus their activities on events which include or provide benefit to local residents and limit their attendance at events outside of the borough which do not benefit local residents or recognise civic engagement in the borough.

- 4.17 Officers have conducted a desktop review of civic transport options looking at: hired vehicles, leasing a car either to be driven by the mace-bearer or hiring a driver or using an ad-hoc taxi service (such as uber executive). It is recommended to continue with a contracted chauffeur service for Mayoral transport at this time. Although leasing a vehicle appears to be a cost-effective alternative driving duties could not be taken on by the Macebearer within the current 18 contracted hours per week. It is estimated 18 additional hours would be required to cover other tasks taken on by the Macebearer, namely support at civic receptions and the Mayor's charity. This reduces the cost effectiveness of leasing a vehicle. In addition the advantages for using a hired chauffeur services are felt to outweigh any small savings which could be achieved by leasing a vehicle such the availability of multiple vehicles (if there is a clash in Mayor and Deputy Mayor engagements), driver cover, incorporation of costs in contract (cleaning, petrol, insurance etc).

Civic Receptions

- 4.18 It is common practice for the Mayor to host regular civic receptions in the Mayor's parlour, the officer and Councillor focus groups in particular recognised that these receptions were an important and valued mechanism for recognising volunteers' contributions in the borough. It is to host receptions on a ward basis, with invitees selected at random from the electoral register, this is seen as a way of promoting the role of the Mayor to residents who might otherwise never have any contact with the Civic Office. The receptions do require support in the form of arranging dates, invites, monitoring attendance, arranging catering, and hosting with most receptions held outside of normal working hours.
- 4.19 There is a business need to set an expectation for the number of civic receptions to be organised so that the level can be delivered within existing resources. It is therefore proposed that the number of civic receptions will be set at a maximum of 12 per annum, in order to reduce the spend against the civic hospitality budget it is also proposed that alcohol is provided in only limited circumstances such as when hosting an evening reception to celebrate contributions to the borough. It is proposed that the Mayor no longer invites Councillors to the parlour following Council meetings, however that a reception will be held for the Mayor, Councillors and guests following the Annual Council meeting. The decision as to whether to serve alcohol at this will be left to the discretion of the incoming Mayor. The approximate cost of a main civic reception is £200 setting a limit of 12 main receptions per annum would deliver a saving of approximately £2,500.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 In broad terms the Council can continue to support the civic office in the way it has done for many years, change the support offer to the Mayor as set out in the report or remove support for



the civic tradition entirely. The importance and value of the civic office and its contribution to a sense of civic pride is recognised and therefore the report sets out some expectations which allows the Mayor to receive an appropriate level of support whilst setting some parameters for the Mayor’s activities. The proposals have been developed following a consultation exercise and the recommendations reflect the views expressed through the residents’ survey and Councillor and officer focus groups

6. Impacts and Implications

Financial

- 6.1 If the recommendations as set out in this report are agreed savings of £7,200 in 2016/17 can be made. An £8,000 savings has already been made for 2016/17 against the town twinning grant budget. The breakdown of savings are as follows:
- £8,000 – town twinning grant 2016/17 (already agreed through the budget process)
 - £2,000 – town twinning grant 2017/18
 - £2,700 – Mayor’s additional allowance
 - £2,500 – civic hospitality budget

Legal

- 6.2 The only specific requirements for local authorities in relation to the civic Mayor are set out in the Local Government Act 1972; this states that all local authorities must appoint a chairman and this appointment must be made from Councillors. The only authorities who can use the term ‘Mayor’ are those which have been granted a Royal Charter and given the status of borough or city. Although there is a huge amount of tradition and history associated with the term Mayor there are no specific rights or roles associated with the office and there is no requirement for local authorities to support a civic office.

7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	The Mayor of Sutton Civic Function Consultation Report, Sutton Online Residents Panel Survey, February 2015

Background documents
Mayoralty Review Documents



Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 29 March 2016
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	Yes	Sue Hogg
Legal	No	N/A

This page is intentionally left blank