

**A Review  
Of the  
Civic Allowances  
For the  
Mayor and Deputy Mayor  
Of  
Trafford Council**

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**A Report by**

**Dr Declan Hall**

**September 2023**

## **Executive Summary – Recommendations**

### **The recommended Civic Allowance for the Mayor**

It is recommended that the Civic Allowance for the Mayor of Trafford Council is reset at £10,000 per year.

### **The recommended Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor**

It is recommended that the Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor should be reset at £2,500.

### **Indexation**

It is recommended that the Civic Allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Trafford Council are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (*at spinal column point 43*) as agreed each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and applicable to the same year it applies to Officers and applicable for as long as the main allowances are indexed. The indexation for the Civic Allowances should commence from the start of the 2024/25 municipal year.

### **Implementation**

It is recommended that the recommendations contained in this report are adopted from the date the Annual Council meeting 2023.

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**Context and Regulatory Situation**

1. This report is a synopsis of the deliberations and recommendations made by Dr Declan Hall appointed by Trafford Council to advise the Council on the Civic Allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council.
2. The Civic Allowances are paid to Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council under the relevant sections of the Local Government Act 1972 and is an allowance which the Council thinks is reasonable for the purpose of meeting the expenses of holding those offices. As such, the Civic Allowances fall outside the remit of the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations and therefore not considered by the statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in its recent review of Members' Allowances.
3. However, during the review of allowances in early 2023 it was agreed by Members and Officers that once the IRP had delivered its recommendations that the Civic Allowance would also be looked to be reviewed as it has been at least 10 years since they were last reviewed. It was further agreed that the Chair of the IRP, Dr Declan Hall, would be commissioned to lead the review.

## Terms of Reference

4. The reviewer, Dr Declan Hall, has been asked by the Council to review the Council's Civic Allowance paid to the
  - A. The Mayor of Trafford Council
  - B. The Deputy Mayor of Trafford Council

In arriving at the recommendations the review took into account

- I. The views of relevant Members
- II. Factual briefings from relevant Council Officers
- III. Civic Allowances paid across the 10 Greater Manchester Councils

## The Reviewer – Dr Declan Hall

5. To lead the review the Council appointed Dr Declan Hall who is Chair of the Council's statutory IRP. Dr Hall is an independent consultant specialising in reviewing Members' Allowances and support in both statutory and non-statutory contexts. He is a former lecturer in local government and politics at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham.
6. The IRP was supported by John Addison, Governance Manager and Statutory Scrutiny Officer at Trafford Council, who was the organisational lead in facilitating and supporting the work of the review.

## The Review Process and Methodology

7. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 the reviewer interviewed via Teams relevant Members and also received factual briefings from relevant Officers. It was during the Member interviews that the roles and costs of holding civic office were discussed and they were also able to raise any issues of concern. Relevant Officers also provided factual briefings on the range of support received by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the historic work patterns of these office holders.
8. Furthermore, the Officers also carried out a research exercise, namely obtaining details on the Civic Allowances paid to the (ceremonial) Mayors and Deputy Mayors across all the Greater Manchester councils. These figures were used for benchmarking purposes.
9. The full range of interviewees and written information received and considered by the review is set out in the appendices as follows:
  - Appendix 1: Elected Members interviewed
  - Appendix 2: Officers who provided a factual briefing for the review
  - Appendix 3: Summary of benchmarking of Trafford Council Civic Allowances against other Greater Manchester Councils

## **The current situation – The Mayor**

10. The Mayor has access to a fund of £10,000 to pay for a civic reception, Christmas cards and other things the Mayor would like to do during their term of office. The bulk of this fund is spent on the Civic Sunday and annual Civic reception. In addition, the Mayor is provided with a driver and car to take them to events.
11. The Civic Allowance is currently £6,000 that is paid directly to the Mayor in a lump sum. This allowance is spent on new clothing for the Mayor and Mayor's consort, hospitality costs hosting Councillors in the Mayor's parlour after Council meetings, seven times per year, buying raffle tickets and making donations when attending mostly local community events (on average three or four such events per week), buying tickets to diners they are invited to and hospitality costs for visiting groups or individuals to the Council, such a school groups. It is noted that the current Civic Allowance of £6,000 has remained at this level for at least 10 years.
12. No evidence was received to indicate that the current Civic Allowance did not cover the operational and ad hoc expenses incurred by the Mayor. However, there is also another cost dimension namely time and financial loss. Regarding the cost of time it should be noted that just like the Basic Allowance a proportion of it should be given voluntarily. In fact, as being Mayor is a civic office it is not unreasonable to expect that the majority of the time spent on civic duties should be given voluntarily.
13. Regarding the cost on the financial loss dimension that will vary depending on the post holder, for some it will be relatively minor as they are either retired or not working but for others it will be substantial as they will have to take time of work to undertake Mayoral duties. Nonetheless, broadly speaking there will be a financial loss for the Mayor that the current Civic Allowance does not recognise and there was some anecdotal evidence that the current Civic Allowance was a barrier to serving as Mayor.

## **Benchmarking the Mayor's Civic Allowance**

24. Research undertaken by Officers on the Civic Allowance paid across all the Greater Manchester councils shows a mean and median Civic Allowance of £15,938 and £16,484 respectively. In fact the Trafford Civic Allowance (£6,000) is by far the lowest across Greater Manchester, with the next lowest being Salford at £11,204 (see appendix two for further details). While this review has not been driven by the benchmarking figures it does show that the Trafford Mayoral Civic Allowance is so far adrift from peers as not to be justified.

## **The recommended Civic Allowance for the Mayor**

25. As such, it is recommended that the Mayor's Civic Allowance is updated on the following grounds:
  - It has remained static for the past 10 years and therefore has lost relative value

- It does not recognise the cost in time (albeit relatively minor) for being Mayor and the financial lost (whether actual or potential) in earnings for being Mayor
- It is so far adrift from the Civic Allowance paid by peer councils as not to justifiable.

26. In setting an increased Civic Allowance a figure of £10,000 has been settled upon. It is recognised that for those in employment this figure does not fully compensate for their financial loss by being Mayor but this has been balanced against those post holders who will incur a marginal financial loss by being Mayor. It is further noted that a Civic Allowance of £10,000 for the Trafford Council Mayor would still leave it the lowest Mayoral Civic Allowance across the 10 Greater Manchester councils.
27. **It is recommended that the Civic Allowance for the Mayor of Trafford Council is reset at £10,000 per year.**

### **The Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor**

28. Currently, the Deputy Mayor receives a Civic Allowance of £2,000 per year. The Deputy Mayor has to stand in for the Mayor as and when which historically has not been that often. Out of this Civic Allowance the Deputy Mayor is expected to buy new clothes for themselves and consort and when attending events to buy raffle tickets and make appropriate charitable donations. In addition, while the Deputy Mayor is provided with the Mayor's car and driver when attending events there are occasions when the Mayor is already using this facility and the costs of transport have to be taken out of the Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor. It is noted that the Deputy Mayor's Civic Allowance has remained static for the last the years.
29. Again no sense was obtained that the current Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor did not cover operational expenses. Furthermore, the below the line costs in terms of time and financial loss for being Deputy Mayor are marginal due to the limited number of events they are required to attend.

### **Benchmarking the Deputy Mayor's Civic Allowance**

30. Benchmarking the Civic Allowance for Deputy Mayors paid across all the Greater Manchester councils shows a mean and median Civic Allowance of £2,880 and £3,129 respectively. In this particular case the Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor of Trafford is not as adrift from peers as it is for the Mayor and does not provide the same compelling case for a substantial uplift.

### **The recommended Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor**

31. Due to the limited costs and benchmarking figures it is being recommended that a smaller uplift should be applied to the Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor, primarily an inflationary uplift to recognise that it has remained unaltered for the last ten years. **As such, it is recommended that the Civic Allowance for the Deputy Mayor should be reset at £2,500.**

## **Indexation**

32. Currently the main allowances at Trafford Council are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (*at spinal column point 43*) as agreed each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and applicable to the same year it applies to Officers. It is increasingly normal practice for councils to index their Civic Allowances on the same basis. To prevent the Civic Allowances losing relative value this review concluded that it was only equitable that the Civic Allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are indexed on the same basis as the main allowances paid to Trafford Councillors.
33. **It is recommended that the Civic Allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Trafford Council are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (*at spinal column point 43*) as agreed each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and applicable to the same year it applies to Officers and applicable for as long as the main allowances are indexed. The indexation for the Civic Allowances should commence from the start of the 2024/25 municipal year.**

## **Implementation**

34. **It is recommended that the recommendations contained in this report are adopted from the date the Annual Council meeting 2023.**

## **APPENDIX ONE - Member Interviewees**

1. Cllr N. Evans: Leader of Main (Conservative) Opposition Group, Shadow Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration
2. Cllr T. Ross: Leader of the Council and Labour Group and a former Mayor
3. Cllr D. O'Sullivan Mayor of Trafford Council
4. Cllr A. Whyte: Deputy Mayor of Trafford Council<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Was interviewed via telephone



## **APPENDIX TWO - Officer Briefings**

John Addison: Governance Manager & Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Emma Malpas: Deputy Monitoring Officer

Natalie Owen: Governance Officer

## APPENDIX THREE – Benchmarking Civic Allowances paid across the Greater Manchester Councils

<b>Civic Allowances Paid in Greater Manchester Councils</b>			
<b>GM Council</b>	<b>Mayor's Civic Allowance</b>	<b>Deputy Mayor's Civic Allowance</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bolton	£20,378	£530	
Bury	£16,472	£4,118	2021
Manchester	£26,628		Spend in 2021/22
Oldham	£16,495	£3,129	2022
Rochdale	£13,500	£3,500	
Salford	£11,204	£1,305	
Stockport	£11,873	£850	
Tameside	£18,014	£4,219	2022
Wigan	£18,818	£6,273	
<b>Trafford</b>	£6,000	£2,000	
<b>Mean</b>	£15,938	£2,880	
<b>Median</b>	£16,484	£3,129	