



<b>Meeting:</b>	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities (in consultation with Executive Leader)
<b>Meeting date:</b>	21/02/2024
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Customer & Communities
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Cllr Katie Lomas - Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities In consultation with Cllr Claire Douglas – Executive Leader inc. Corporate Services, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

### **Decision Report:**

### **Civic Protocols Review**

1. This report reviews a range of current civic protocols to ensure that the Civic Party, including use of the Mansion House and Lord Mayor's Charity are supported into the future in a sustainable way at a time of constrained resources.
2. Importantly this review will ensure that the Lord Mayor can continue to act as an ambassador for the city as its First Citizen, in their role in relation to:
  - a. historical and ceremonial traditions of the Office of Lord Mayor;
  - b. attend and support civic events and community activities which demonstrate the First Citizen's commitment to the Council Plan.
3. This council reiterates its support for a strong Lord Mayor fulfilling the role of First Citizen, reflecting the historical significance and value of the civic function and its role in the life of the city.

4. This commitment sits alongside proposed significant investment to ensure critical repairs are undertaken at the Mansion House which is the ancestral home of York's Lord Mayoralty, and which will remain the seat of the civic party into the future.

## **Benefits and Challenges**

5. The current protocols are based on custom and practice not informed by formal officer or councillor decision-making and have therefore been based on an informal agreement in the past with the Lord Mayoralty/Civic Party. This has meant the protocols have been open to wide interpretation and created pressures around budget management. These revisions will ensure there is clarity around decision-making and expectations and will ensure tighter budget management. The protocols will be clear about what is funded and what duties can be undertaken at a personal rather than public cost.
6. There will be an inevitable reduction in funded activity as budgetary targets and management are brought under control, but improved transparency on how money is spent. As part of these proposals, it will be recommended that the protocols are published each year with any revisions.

## **Policy Basis for Decision**

7. The role of the Lord Mayor and the Civic Party in York is a fundamental part of the city's continuing historic traditions and plays a fundamental part in the tourism offer of the city. The role of Lord Mayor is firmly enshrined in the council's Constitution (Article 5 Role of the Lord Mayor), as an ambassador for the city and its cultural and economic ambitions. As such, the appointee will play an active part in promoting all the council's priorities.
8. The York Community Fund (YCF) priorities are set down in the YCF Partnership Agreement and mirror the council's core commitments:
  - Equalities and Human Rights - Equality of opportunity
  - Affordability - Tackling the cost-of-living crisis
  - Climate - Environment and the climate emergency
  - Health - Health and wellbeing

Funding raised from the Lord Mayor's charity work will contribute to community and voluntary sector projects that will achieve key outcomes in these priority areas.

## **Financial Strategy Implications**

9. The recommendations in this report achieve the draft required budget reduction for 2024/25 which is a minimum of £10k, and the opportunity to make further efficiencies as the number of events attended is reduced and other associated costs (e.g., of security).
10. Beyond the specific remit of this report there are some further financial matters to consider that fall within the Executive's remit (i.e., are significant in nature) which relate to:
  - the challenges of managing the significant and increasing running costs of the Mansion House;
  - existing savings targets that are unachievable without changing the business model of running the Mansion House; and
  - the management and options around other assets such as the Lord Mayor's limousine and the significant estimated value of the DN1 car registration plate.
11. It is considered that these matters and related options should form part of a future report to the Executive which will seek to provide solutions to ensure the financial security of the Mansion House in public ownership, and the financial and climate change benefits to York of other civic assets are maximised.

## **Recommendation and Reasons**

12. The Executive Member is asked to approve the following in consultation with the Executive Leader:
  - (a) Changes to civic protocols for introduction in the new Civic Year from May 2024 as follows:
    - The York Community Fund (YCF) becomes the permanent mechanism for channelling all Lord Mayor Charity monetary donations;
    - Externally funded foreign travel decisions using the lowest carbon option that is practical will be made by the Chief Operating Officer/Leader of the Council by exception; other foreign trips will not be supported;
    - Enhancement of a Civic Party webpage on the CYC website;
    - Attendance at events outside of the city will not be funded;

- The council will provide support for set agreed events each year. For all other events the civic party will attend at their own cost and wear badges of office;
- The final list of events will be delegated to the Director of Customer & Communities in consultation with Executive portfolio holders, and should seek to reduce the number of annual/regular funded attendances by 25%;
- A set of transport protocols will be developed for civic vehicle usage for agreed annual events and for exceptions such as royal visits including:
  - increased use of public transport where possible (with reasonable adjustments made where required);
  - civic party to wear badges of office when on public transport and attending community events;
  - provision of parking passes for personal vehicles to continue, making use of the civic car unnecessary for home to city centre events, or Mansion House/West Offices to city centre events.
- In line with the review of the reduction in funded annual/regular events, the number of occasions the sword, mace, robes and chains are required will be all be reviewed and reduced for their security and protection;
- Badges of office are to be used more regularly and other options including sponsorship of replica chains will be sought over the next civic year;
- The Mansion House will no longer to be used for living accommodation for the Lord Mayoralty;
- Lord Mayor and Sheriff's personal allowances are reduced by a total of £5k (reducing to £1595 and £785 respectively).

(b) Review and publish the Civic Protocols on the council's website by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May each year;

(c) Officers to take a future report to Executive which will seek to provide options to ensure the financial security of the Mansion House in public ownership, and the financial and climate change benefits to York of other civic assets are maximised.

## **Background**

### **The role of the Lord Mayor of York and the Civic Party**

13. The Lord Mayor of York is the 'First Citizen' of the city and is a serving councillor; appointment to this position is made each year in

May with their consort of choice. At the same time each year the Lord Mayor's choice of Sheriff of York is appointed with their consort of choice.

14. The Lord Mayor chairs meetings of 'Full Council' and, together with the Sheriff:
  - represents the city on ceremonial occasions;
  - welcomes national, international visitors, members of the Royal Household and other dignitaries;
  - attends events organised by local people and community groups; and
  - nominates and supports fund raising activities for voluntary and community groups as the Lord Mayor's Charities for the year.
  
15. York's Lord Mayor is second only to the Lord Mayor of London in precedence and its Sheriff holds one of the oldest offices of Sheriff in England and Wales.

### **The Civic Protocols**

16. The current set of civic protocols are updated on a minor basis each year. For the next iteration the protocols have been reviewed through the lens of the four core commitments of the new Council Plan to ensure each element contributes in some way to their achievement including climate change actions. They also ensure that during a cost-of-living crisis the activity and costs of the Lord Mayor and the civic party are reflective of the times, proportionate and demonstrate value for money.

### **Areas of proposed change**

#### **Lord Mayor's Charity**

17. The charity role of the Lord Mayor's work is invaluable for its contributions to the critical work of the voluntary and community sector in York and should be retained. It is proposed that the York Community Fund (YCF) becomes the permanent mechanism for channelling all Lord Mayor Charity monetary donations in future, with the ability for the Lord Mayor to continue to either choose an existing YCF campaign to support or select new campaigns for the year.

#### **Economic/ Tourism Role**

18. The Lord Mayor in the past had a role to play in supporting York as a business and tourist destination. It is envisaged that this role will pass to the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority elected mayor, therefore it is proposed that to allow for efficient and cost-effective support for the civic party that future work will fully focus on civic and community activity. There will be no funding available going forward for foreign travel or related activities, although it is feasible that as the role does have a standing as a senior civic role in the United Kingdom, that the Lord Mayor and Civic Party may be invited to associated events as civic representatives. If a trip is fully externally funded then the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Council Leader will make the final decision on whether members of the civic party can attend if there are tangible benefits to the city (the lowest carbon option for travel that is practical should be prioritised).

### **Website Development**

The Lord Mayoralty currently is referred to on both the Mansion House and council websites, but they are not reflective of the day-to-day activities of the Civic Party. It is proposed to enhance the webpage on the CYC site in order to bring the roles alive and give residents and visitors an insight into the history, importance and nature of work undertaken. This will be used to promote the Lord Mayoralty's civic and community work and boost fundraising for the York Community Fund.

### **Attendance at events outside of York**

20. The Civic Party has previously attended engagements outside of York at their discretion and in the future will not be required to do so at the cost of the city. Should an invitation be received from elsewhere and can be justified as part of the role – this will be agreed if the cost can be borne as a private cost not at the cost of York residents.

### **Personal Civic usage of the Mansion House**

21. No budget is provided by CYC for personal use of the Mansion House which must be funded and paid for at the current hire fee, and use of the House will be dependent upon availability. There is no recommended change to this position.

## **Lord Mayor's Charity – Free Use of the Mansion House and civic support**

22. The current protocols allow for three free uses of the Mansion House for the Lord Mayor's Charity per civic year (see paragraph 35 below). Given that the proceeds are recommended to benefit the York Community Fund, it is proposed that this practice is allowed to continue.
23. As is the case currently the civic office will only be able to provide minimal support for charity events. No financial assistance will be provided from CYC funds to cover any charitable event.

## **Attendance at events – security and transport costs**

24. The number, types and additional costs of events attended is shown in Annex A. This shows a list of annual events alongside typical other regular events which can be community based, races, charity, and other invitations some of which are generated by the civic party themselves (those can be an additional 300 a year). Events are administered by the civic office team with drivers provided for driving and escorting duties where security is required for the civic regalia (chains and or mace/sword).
25. Currently there is no limit to the number of events the Lord Mayor can attend or who attends, although given the council's financial position, the events this year have been strictly constrained by budget availability.
26. Given the need to reduce and manage within fixed budgets going forward the council will provide support (financial/staffing etc) for set agreed events only. For all other events the civic party will attend at own cost and wear badges of office. It is proposed that the final list will be delegated to the Director of Customer & Communities to agree with Executive Member portfolio holders, and should seek to reduce the number of annual/regular funded attendances by 25%. The first £5k saved in related budgets will contribute £5k to the proposed £10k 2024/25 budget saving.

## **Transport to events**

27. The current position is that the dedicated civic vehicle is made available for agreed civic events, however, there are no set rules on use. The civic party are expected to make their way to the Mansion House or West Offices when events are in the city centre, but this is not always adhered to. The civic party are provided with car parking passes to park in any CYC carparks free of charge. The use of taxis is permitted on an ad hoc basis.
28. It is proposed going forward that a set of transport protocols will be developed for civic vehicle usage for agreed annual events and for exceptions such as royal visits including:
- increased use of public transport where possible (with reasonable adjustments made where required);
  - civic party wear to badges of office when on public transport and attending community events;
  - provision of parking passes for personal vehicles to continue, making use of the civic car unnecessary for home to city centre events, or Mansion House/West Offices to city centre events.

## **Regalia and collection**

29. The current position is that the sword and mace, which are historically, culturally, and financially irreplaceable, accompany the Lord Mayor, staffing permitting, on ceremonial occasions as listed below:
- Annual and bimonthly full Council Meetings
  - Civic Yorkshire Day regional celebration
  - Legal Sunday Service and parade
  - Annual Freedom Court and any private freedom ceremonies
  - Remembrance Sunday
  - Freedom parades
  - Civic church service.
30. There is restricted access to the collection, particularly the gold and silver, due to value, condition, and conservation requirements in particular the gold goblet which has after professional advice, been removed from civic usage but remains on display at the House.



Currently mayoral robes are used on specific occasions and if requested by an event organiser, these are delicate and costly to repair.

31. It is proposed that going forward the number of occasions the sword and mace are required will be reduced, thus reducing staffing and security costs, and potential damage to the regalia with continued practice of restricted access to the collection and civic robes. It is recommended that robes are no longer provided at the event organiser's request, and only used on specified occasions – usually those when the mace and sword are present and other exceptional significant events such as the Guild Parade and where there is an officer present. These specific events will be identified as part of the exercise of reviewing funded annual/regular events that will be supported in future.

### **Civic Chains**

32. Chains of Office are used in line with council insurance obligations, chains/jewels are not allowed to be worn on water or by a quayside. Except for a small number of specific occasions, the travelling chains are worn by the Lord Mayor. Specific occasions which permit the original 1612 chains to be worn are:
  - Annual Council
  - Remembrance Sunday
  - Royal visits
33. It is recommended that use of the chains at specific events should be identified as part of the exercise of reviewing funded annual/regular events that will be supported in future.
34. Consideration has been given to replacing the Lady Mayoress' chain with a replica, however this may cost an estimated £3,125 so it is recommended that badges of office are used more regularly and other options including sponsorship of replica chains are sought over the next civic year.

### **Civic Use of the Mansion House**

35. The current position is that on two full days (Mondays and Tuesdays) when Mansion House is closed and evenings after public opening, it can be booked for civic use, subject to diary availability (i.e., prebooked income generating events) and staffing, for such civic functions, examples as follows:
- For Lord Mayors' and Sheriffs' designated charities during their year in office. To support these events three free uses of the Mansion House will be provided, thereafter, a full charge will be levied;
  - Official Dijon and Munster twinning group visits;
  - Civic receptions (definition of which is a reception where the hospitality is paid directly from the civic budgets);
  - Freedom and Honorary Alderman ceremonies;
  - Poppy Appeal launch.
36. There are notable exceptions to this practice, when the House, by virtue of the significance of some civic occasions, will be closed (in part or full) and made available for civic use on days when it would normally have been open to the public. Such occasions are:
- Remembrance Sunday
  - Royal visits
  - A local, regional, or national activity of sufficient significance (e.g., Tour De France).
37. It is proposed that this position is retained and reviewed each year, depending on planned commercial use and public access opportunities.
38. Regarding use of the Lord Mayor's Apartment in the Mansion House, the accommodation has been provided as the optional home of the Lord Mayor and consort each civic year, however the provision of free living accommodation is not recommended as appropriate in these challenging financial times. There are no longer resources available to service and clean the apartments due to previous budget savings. Currently the apartment is inaccessible due to the condition of the lift which is not working nor fire compliant, and is unlikely to be regarded as safe for overnight sleeping accommodation even when the lift is repaired (subject to capital funding approval). This will not affect the Civic Party's

normal access and use of the Mansion House for civic duties and events.

## **Allowances**

39. Currently the council provides a total personal allowance of £7,380 to the Lord Mayor (£4,960) and Sheriff (£2,420) for their year of office. This helps to cover expenses, whilst in office, including clothing, meals, charity/raffle tickets etc.
40. In addition, the Lord Mayor receives a separate Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of £4,960, independently assessed, and recommended by the council's Independent Remuneration Panel, for their role as Chair of Full Council meetings, during their year of office.
41. It is recommended that there is no change to the SRA but that personal allowances are reduced by £5k (and remainder allocated pro rata) to contribute to the £10k proposed 2024/25 budget savings. This would reduce the Lord Mayor's personal allowance to £1595 and the Sheriff's personal allowance to £785.

## **Consultation Analysis**

42. The incoming Lord Mayor Elect has been consulted on the broad proposals.

## **Options Analysis and Evidential Basis**

43. Each current protocol is described alongside the proposal for change. The Executive Members can consider no change as the option for any or all of the changes.

## **Organisational Impact and Implications**

44.

- **Financial** – the report seeks to save £10k as set down the 2024/25 Budget Strategy proposals.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – there are no staffing implications of the report.

- **Legal** – The council has no statutory obligation to fund or maintain the civic functions described in this report but may lawfully choose to do so subject to the general public law duty to make decisions which are reasonable. The conferment of the style the “Right Honourable the Lord Mayor” was made under letters patent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974. The title is honorary and does not extend the powers, functions or duties of the authority or the holder of the office concerned.
- **Procurement** – any procurement of taxi contracts, and any sponsorship opportunities (eg replica chains) must be commissioned via a compliant procurement route under the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (soon to be Procurement Act 2023). Further advice regarding the procurement routes, strategies and markets must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – Overall, whilst ceremonial duties may not directly impact residents' health, they can play a significant role in creating a supportive environment conducive to healthier lifestyles, increased community engagement and civic pride. As outlined in paragraph 8 the charitable work of the Lord Mayor often contributes to direct funding of projects that will help to address and improve health outcomes for our communities. The proposal takes a stepped and sensible approach to the proposed saving and will have little impact on the health of residents.”
- **Environment and Climate action** – the transport solutions will be in line with any council transport policy and will seek to reduce the carbon footprint of the Civic Party, and in turn contribute to the delivery of the council’s core commitment around climate change.
- **Affordability** - as outlined in paragraph 8 the charitable work of the Lord Mayor will contribute to direct funding of projects that will help to address and improve financial inclusion outcomes for residents not least within the current Cost of Living Crisis.
- **Equalities and Human Rights** - The Council recognises, and needs to take into account its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share

a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions).

As outlined in paragraph 8 the charitable work of the Lord Mayor will contribute to direct funding of projects that will help to address and improve Equalities and Human Rights outcomes for residents. It is not possible to describe the outcomes that this may deliver at this stage and so an individual impact assessment has not been produced for this report, however the Executive Report on establishing the York Community Fund states:

*'The work of the proposed YCF will go beyond funding alone... as a wider community fund it will also provide resources that voluntary groups and charities may otherwise struggle to access in the future.'*

*'Given the nature of a Community Foundation the funds are likely to benefit all groups of people with protected characteristics with grant recipients across a range of social and community projects, working with a wide range of partnerships, and community and voluntary sector organisations for public good.'*

- **Data Protection and Privacy** - Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK GDPR. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines. DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all of our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve. As there is no personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data being processed to inform the decision in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA. This is evidenced by completion of DPIA screening questions.
- **Communications** – Communications will need to manage any media enquiries in relation to these proposals, within the

broader work associated with the current budget setting process.

Additionally, the communications service will continue work to support the Lord Mayor's office with fundraising and civic duties, where appropriate, and work to see if current support can be improved.

- **Economy** – it is envisaged that the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority elected Mayor will be the lead figurehead on economic activities for the city and the region. This report does reduce down the role of the Lord Mayor in economic promotion of the city but recognises that there may be occasions or visits that may support the local economy from a civic perspective.

## Risks and Mitigations

45. The report seeks to protect the role and reputation of the Lord Mayor in the city, safeguard the council's budgets and contribute to the delivery of the council's core commitments. Any associated risks will be managed via a Directorate Risk Register, however all risks are operational and will be monitored at service level.

## Wards Impacted

No wards are impacted save that the Mansion House resides in the Guildhall Ward.

## Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

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## Background papers

Financial Strategy 2024/25 – Executive January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024:  
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s172791/Executive%20Financial%20Strategy%20Jan%202024%20FINAL.pdf>

and proposed budget savings (CAC08):  
<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s172791/Executive%20Financial%20Strategy%20Jan%202024%20FINAL.pdf>

## **Annexes**

Annex A Current Annual Civic Events