



CIVIC FUNCTIONS, TOWN MAYOR'S EXPENSES & TOWN MAYOR'S CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES POLICY

This policy statement covers three associated activities:

1. Civic Functions, where the Town Council meets the cost and has a designated budget.
2. Town Mayor's Expenses.
3. Town Mayor's Charity work.

The budget for each area will be decided by Council when it determines its yearly precept conscious of emerging commitments.

CIVIC FUNCTIONS

This is where the Council organises and manages specific civic events such as:

- Civic Service - March
- Remembrance Sunday - November
- Armistice Day - November
- Attendance at other Town Councils Civic Services

Expenditure is likely to be on for example around: catering, wreaths, a photographer, printing, and staff overtime.

Other related expenditure might include:

- Repairs to regalia (including any revisions to the Consorts chain)
- Updating the mayoral board in the Chamber

These examples are not exhaustive.

The budget for each year will be considered by Council when it determines its yearly precept conscious of emerging commitments.

Purchase orders will be raised consistent with Financial Regulations in the normal manner via the Head of Finance and will be properly authorised by the RFO, consistent with all other items of expenditure.

TOWN MAYOR'S EXPENSES

This is not a delegated sum. All Mayoral spending will be limited to the agreed budget over the course of the financial year. This budget will be reported in the usual way and will be included in the monthly projected outturn that goes to Council and in the contextual transparency information posted on our website.

Professional accounting good practice will apply in the closedown of accounts and should there be any surplus at the end of the year this will not automatically be carried forward unless it meets the closedown of accounts criteria.

Expenditure that is allowed:

The Mayoral Allowance budget is to defray reasonable costs in order that the office holder is not out of pocket for fulfilling the role of Mayor. This budget may also be used by other Members of the Council, including the Deputy Mayor, where they are formally representing the Council in place, or in support of, the Mayor.

Where practicable purchase orders should be raised and approved in advance of committing to expenditure. Purchase orders will be raised consistent with Financial Regulations in the normal manner via the Head of Finance and will be authorised by the RFO, consistent with all other items of expenditure. The request and authorisation functions need to be separate consistent with the Councils Financial Regulations.

Where the use of purchase orders is not practicable (e.g., mileage, charity donations, raffle tickets), the expense process should be used after the expense has been incurred. Submitted expense forms are processed by the Head of Finance and authorised by the RFO. A copy of the expense form is attached as Appendix A.

Expense claims should be supported with receipts where practicable, but it is recognised that some cash expenditure (e.g., charity donations and raffle tickets) will not be receipted. Should the Mayor win a prize, having used Mayor's expenses, it is expected that the prize is returned for others to win.

Acceptable claims include:

- Mileage to and from events
- Tickets for events
- Raffle and draw tickets
- Donations to charities (up to £25)
- Reasonable clothing allowance for Civic events (Mayor only)

Travel claims should be submitted through the Citrus HR system and will be approved by the RFO. The NJC (National Joint Council) mileage rates are the same as the prevailing HMRC mileage rates, available on the main HMRC website.

Expenditure which is not allowed:

The Mayor Expenses Budget must not be used to pay for:

- Gifts of monies or goods (including flowers) other than to charities, apart from flowers for retiring Councillors or incoming Mayors to the value of £40 including VAT, per bouquet
- Parking fines or parking charge notices
- Social events internal to the Council unless agreed by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor
- Costs associated with the use of home as office, personal telephone bills, etc.
- Printing fliers/leaflets/posters etc. other than for civic events covered above
- Events of a political nature, e.g., supporting or organised by a political party

TOWN MAYOR'S CHARITY WORK

The Mayor raises money upon behalf of their designated charities, through their own chosen charity events.

These monies are paid into a separate account code. At the end of the relevant financial year they are then distributed to nominated charities by the Head of Finance acting under guidance from the Mayor. There will also be associated expenditure in relation to setting up these events and again this should be submitted through the established purchase order system.

The monies distributed to charities will be net of any related non-staff costs and should not be topped up from any separate underspent Council budgets.

REPORTING AND MONITORING PROCEDURES:

The Head of Finance will provide a half yearly projected outturn to Council for all three budgets.

Information will also be included as part of the monthly projection to Council and in the detailed expenditure report under our transparency headings.

In the unlikely event of a disagreement regarding a claim, this should be referred to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting for a determination.

The policy statement and contextual examples have been produced to ensure robust and appropriate financial governance. They are there to protect both Councillors and Officers of the authority against assertions that proper practice has not been adhered to.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT

All relevant income and expenditure will be kept under review by both Internal and External Audit. The Auditors will also be tasked with providing challenge and oversight. Any observations will then be shared with full Council consistent with Financial Regulations.