

Lancaster City Council | Report Cover Sheet

Meeting	Cabinet	Date	7 December 2021		
Title	Mayor's Transport and other Civic Matters				
Report of	Director of Corporate Services				
Purpose of Report					
To seek decisions on the future provision of transport and staffing for the Mayor, including the possible sale of the Council's L50 numberplate. The report also provides an update for Cabinet on the competition bid for Lord Mayor status.					
Key Decision	N	Date of Notice	8.11.21 (re Exempt appendix)	Exempt	PARTIALLY (appendix)

Report Summary
<p>The contract which was in place for the supply of vehicle, chauffeuring and Mayor's Attendant services expired shortly before the pandemic began. The vehicle was a petrol car.</p> <p>There was a long period of time when the Mayor could not perform any ceremonial duties due to Covid. This is slowly lifting now, with more and more requests and invitations coming in.</p> <p>However, the Council currently has no chauffeur or attendant and no dedicated vehicle for the Mayor's use. Until a solution is found, the Democratic Support Officer for Civic and Ceremonial has acted as chauffeur and attendant and, as activities have increased, a local taxi firm with an electric vehicle have covered a few engagements with the Head of Democratic Services covering others.</p> <p>Decisions are sought on several matters and, to assist with how these decisions might fit together, the report details three of many possible solutions that might be considered for future transport for the Mayor, bearing in mind that the Council wishes to use an electric vehicle in line with the Climate Emergency.</p> <p>The report also updates Cabinet on the competition entry for Lord Mayor status.</p>

Recommendations
<p>(1) That Cabinet considers the matters for decision set out in paragraph 4 of the report, alongside the options provided in paragraph 5 to provide a way forward for transport and support for the Mayor at their engagements.</p> <p>(2) That the update on progress with the competition entry for Lord Mayor status be noted.</p>

Relationship to Policy Framework	
Corporate Plan – Clean Green and Safe Neighbourhoods. Use of an electric car to reduce the Council's impact on the environment.	
Conclusion of Impact Assessment(s) where applicable	
Climate Changing to an electric car from a petrol car will have a positive impact.	Wellbeing & Social Value
Digital	Health & Safety

Equality	Community Safety
Details of Consultation	
Members of the Council Business Committee have been asked to supply their comments for inclusion in this report. See paragraph 5.1	
Legal Implications	
None identified.	
Financial Implications	
<p>The current budget provision for Mayoral transport costs is £16K.</p> <p>Option 1 – this would generate a capital receipt and it is estimated that this could potentially range from £25K to £80K. It is proposed to re-direct this amount to purchase an electric vehicle and utilise a proportion of the current budget provision for transport costs to cover the salary of a part time post (0.2fte on Grade 6 c.£10Kpa) for a Chauffeur/Mayor’s Attendant, with the remaining amount being set aside for ongoing vehicle running costs plus setting aside an annual amount for the future renewal of the vehicle therefore anticipating that the option will overall be cost neutral.</p> <p>Option 2 – this would see the use of the existing electric pool cars to deliver the necessary transport arrangements plus also creating a part time post as also covered in Option 1. It is anticipated that this will be the most cost effective solution and would generate annual revenue savings estimated at £6Kpa whilst also allowing the Council to retain the ‘L50’ registration plate.</p> <p>Option 3 - it hopeful that this option can be managed from within the current budgetary provision but it will not be known until a procurement exercise has been completed.</p> <p>Should the Lord Mayor application be successful, then the budget for the Mayor might need to be increased, as was pointed out in the report to Council Business Committee. Reasons for this (new robe, increased activities, staffing support) are set out in the report. The amount of increase would be dependent on Council’s wishes regarding the role of the Lord Mayor and the budget set for Democratic Services to stay within</p>	
Other Resource or Risk Implications	
As set out in the report.	
Section 151 Officer’s Comments	
<p>The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to make in regard to the disposal of the L50 registration plate and subsequent options for Mayoral transport.</p> <p>In relation to the Council’s application for Lord Mayor status Members may wish to consider the following.</p> <p>As referred to in this report and that to Council Business Committee (16th September 2021), should the Lord Mayor application be successful, then the associated budgets will require an uplift to reflect the status of the position and on-going support that will be required.</p> <p>As Members will be aware the Council is currently facing a significant budget deficit 2021/22 and beyond and as a result there is pressure to reduce in costs where possible. Any increased cost pressures will need to be clearly articulated, matched to Council priorities, and need to be factored into the current budget round, which may result in the need to reduce costs within other service areas.</p>	

Monitoring Officer's Comments	
The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add	
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Links to Background Papers	

1.0 Mayor's Transport - Background

- 1.1 Prior to May 2013, the Council employed a full time Beadle carrying out the role of Mayor's Attendant/Chauffeur. The Council leased an executive car for the Mayor fitted with the L50 number plate belonging to the Council. Over time it became clear that there was insufficient work for a full-time post. When the hours of the post were reduced, a part time Beadle was employed for a short while. However, the anti-social hours, which change from week to week, made it too difficult to plan a social life, therefore the Beadle did not stay. In view of this, it was felt that a contract would be a better option.
- 1.2 On 17 May 2013 the City Council entered into a three-year contract with a chauffeuring firm located outside the district to provide a Chauffeur/Mayor's Attendant (aka Beadle) to use the executive car leased by the City Council to take the Mayor to Council and Civic Events. The contract included the Attendant/Beadle acting as a Master of Ceremonies, where required, and conducting tours of Lancaster Town Hall. The Council paid a set hourly rate for itemised work done.
- 1.3 Not long after the contract was entered into, the lease on the executive car came to an end. The car was old and needed repairs so the option to purchase was not taken up. At that point it was agreed that the chauffeuring firm provide a suitable executive car and put the L50 plate on that car. There was an increase in the hourly rate as result. The contract included supply of a safe, to securely store the Mayoral chains when events occurred out of office hours.
- 1.4 In May 2017, the contract, which included an option to renew for a further three years, was renewed. The contract expired around the time of the pandemic.

2.0 L50 Number Plate

- 2.1 The L50 number plate has been the property of the Council for many years and there are no records that can be traced regarding its origin.
- 2.2 After consulting several online auction services for personalised number plates, it seems that this plate is quite valuable. (A list of estimates is provided in exempt appendix 1.) These are just estimates, however, and the actual price realised with depend on interest in the plate.
- 2.3 It does seem, however, that the plate would realise sufficient funds to purchase some type of electric car which could be used for the Mayor, if Cabinet decided this was an option it wished to pursue. It would also require a new part-time post of Chauffeur/Mayor's Attendant, which has been through job evaluation as a Grade 6. It is

envisaged that this post would be two days per week with extra hours paid if and when necessary to cover events.

- 2.4 It is worth noting that personalised plates with the letters LCC and various numbers are currently on auction sites for sale valued in the region of £200-300. If it was felt that the Mayor's car should have a distinctive plate, this could be an option.

3.0 Chauffeuring, support at Events and Security of the Chains

- 3.1 When a contract was in place, this included all of the above. Currently the Mayor either attends with just the badge on a ribbon and no chains, or an officer accompanies him to make sure the chains are secure at all times their return to safe storage at the end of the event. Organisers of events, and the public attending them, expect to see the Mayor wearing the chain of office. This means that, now events are resuming, the Civic and Ceremonial Officer and Head of Democratic Services are covering more and more functions, often in the evening and at weekends. Whilst a local taxi firm with an electric car has been used, if the chains are being used, these still have to be secured by an officer at the start and end of each event. This is resource intensive and highly inconvenient for the staff concerned.
- 3.2 In 2015, officers looked at the cost of making up replica chains for the Mayor to wear, as, at that time, the Mayor was a keen cyclist and preferred to travel to events by bike. Democratic Services are seeking an up-to-date quote via a local jeweller. That figure should be available to report at the meeting, if not before. In 2015, the price quoted for a replica of the badge alone (NOT including the chains) was over £3,000 from a specialist in Civic Insignia.

4.0 Matters for Decision

- 4.1 Whilst three possible options are discussed below, there are other permutations on the same themes so, for clarity, the decisions that Cabinet is asked to consider are:

Whether or not to auction the L50 number plate. If the decision is to auction the plate, then a reserve price would need to be agreed and a decision made about the proceeds and whether these would be used to purchase an electric car to transport the Mayor to engagements.

Whether to seek a contractor to provide an all-inclusive service. The tender specification would include use of a suitable electric vehicle and driver who would also act as the Mayor's attendant at events and keep the chains secure.

Whether officers should seek to establish a part time post of Chauffeur/Mayor's Attendant. The cost of this post would, in large part, be covered by the budget for Mayoral Transport. It is envisaged that it would be the equivalent of two days per week with the hours of work fitting with the diary engagements.

Whether or not to use existing pool cars to transport the Mayor or purchase or lease a car solely for that purpose. This decision would depend on having the part time post described above to drive the vehicle.

Whether or not to purchase replica chains. These would have none of the historic or monetary value of the real chains and could be worn by the Mayor at every event, meeting the public's expectations.

5.0 Possible Options and Options Analysis for the future of Mayor's transport (including risk assessment)

NB *These options are not exhaustive. They illustrate three approaches that are feasible and may help with decision-making around the number plate, chauffeuring, security of chains and support for the Mayor at events.*

Option 1:

To sell the number plate, buy a suitable electric car with the funds and create a new part time post of Chauffeur/Mayor's Attendant (funding to be covered by the current budget for transport).

Advantages:

- This would bring the service back in house completely.
- Changing from a petrol car to an electric car fits with the Council's priorities

Disadvantages:

- The number plate is a valuable asset which may have sentimental value to some Councillors and residents.
- The number plate may not raise enough money to buy a suitable vehicle.

Risks:

- The unsocial and unpredictable hours of a Mayor's Attendant may mean that the Council does not fill the post or there is a high turnover.
- The number plate may not sell (a reserve price would need to be put on the plate to stop its sale for an unacceptably low figure).

Option 2:

Create a new part time Chauffeur/Mayor's Attendant post and use the existing electric pool cars to transport the Mayor.

Advantages:

- Brings the service back in house.
- Changing from a petrol car to an electric car fits with the Council's priorities.
- The L50 number plate can be kept, possibly on display in the Mayor's parlour

Disadvantages:

- Not an executive car, which the public are used to seeing

Risks:

- None identified.

Option 3:

Go out to tender for a contractor who will provide a suitable electric car and driver who can carry out the Mayor's Attendant role as well as keep the chains secure.

Advantages:

- Saves time and money on jobs such as taxing/insuring/servicing/washing/cleaning the car. All will be done by contractor.
- No problems about cover when the Chauffeur/Attendant is on holiday or otherwise absent. The contractor will supply cover.
- The L50 number plate can be kept, possibly on display in the Mayor's parlour.
- Executive car will be provided.

Disadvantages:

- Solution needs to be found for keeping the chains secure out of office hours.

Risks:

- There may not be any interest in tendering for the contract.

6.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

6.1 The officer preferred option from the three above is to try Option 3 in the first instance as the contract option has worked well in the past. It is not possible to predict how much interest there may be in the contract until it is advertised. The chains must be suitably secured, however and how this will be achieved is something that would need to be agreed confidentially with whoever is awarded the contract.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 Council Business Committee has a remit of agreeing Civic and Ceremonial matters in consultation with the Mayor, therefore the Mayor and Committee Member have been consulted on the options in this report. The report is presented to Cabinet as the options discussed have budget implications which can be fed into the budget process. The Chair of the Committee has commented that whilst it would be a shame to lose the L50 number plate, it would seem sensible if it could pay for an electric limousine for Mayoral use.

8.0 Competition for Lord Mayor Status

8.1 On 16 September 2021, Council Business Committee considered whether the Council should respond to an invitation from the Minister of State to enter a competition for a Lord Mayoralty and resolved:

That the Council should submit an application for Lord Mayoralty. It should recognise that such support must embrace a commitment for the Council to invest financially in the enhanced profile of the mayoralty.

8.2 The deadline for entries is 8 December 2021 and, at the time of drafting this report in late November, work is well underway to pull together information for the submission. The submission will showcase the whole of the district, not just Lancaster. It will highlight innovation in the area in different sectors and the collaborative working going on here, not just provide details of services, functions and buildings which City Council is responsible for.

8.3 Lancaster City Council submitted applications for a Lord Mayoralty in 1986, 1991, 2001 and 2011, but was unsuccessful on each occasion; hopefully the wider focus of the approach for this bid will have more impact.

8.4 Lord Mayors traditionally carry out more engagements than our ceremonial Mayor and invitations would come from far and wide, that than just our district or other boroughs in Lancashire. It is not unusual for a Lord Mayor to make two or more trips abroad to represent their Council during the year. There can be a significant cost to those trips and for wider travel around the country, and this did concern Council Business Committee when considering whether or not to enter the competition. However, if the Council decides on a budget for the year, then all the invitations accepted would be budgeted for, and any that were too costly would have to be declined. Currently the main support officer for the Mayor and civic events is a Democratic Support Officer with particular responsibility for Civic and Ceremonial. Working time for that post is allocated as approximately 0.5fte on Civic and Mayoral support and 0.5fte on committee clerking/Overview and Scrutiny duties. There is adequate capacity at this level for the current ceremonial Mayor, although it is always stretched in May because Annual Council has to be planned at the busiest time

for Democratic Services (May elections). Should the council be successful in the application for Lord Mayor and wish to increase Mayoral activity, by accepting invitations abroad, for example, then greater capacity would be needed. A full-time post of Lord Mayor's secretary might be required.

- 8.5 A new robe would need to be procured if Lancaster City Council won the competition, since Lord Mayors' robes are traditionally black and quite different to the robe the Council has for its civic Mayor. Initial enquiries from established suppliers have revealed that the price of a ceremonial robe for a Lord Mayor varies from around £8,000-£24,000 depending on the material used and the trim and ornamentation. However, it may be possible to make a significant saving on this by using local skills to make up the garment. This would definitely be something to explore, should Lancaster's entry be successful.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Cabinet is asked to note the update on the entry for the Lord Mayor competition and to consider the decisions outlined regarding future transport and support for the Mayor at engagements and security of the chains.