

<b>Committee:</b> Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<b>Date:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b>
<b>Draft Report of:</b> Overview & Scrutiny Committee		<b>Title:</b> Reference from Council – Executive Mayor’s Car – Draft OSC report to Council  <b>Wards Affected:</b> All	

1. **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 18 September 2013, Council considered a report on the business case and value for money discerned from the retention of the Mayor’s private car, and resolved to request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) review the report and the issues involved. OSC agreed, and the report was considered at its meeting on 3rd December. The Committee deferred further consideration pending the provision of additional information, and the item was considered again at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The officer report is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 1.2 From the information provided by officers, the Committee acknowledges that an options appraisal was carried out before the decision to implement the current arrangements. We also note that the costs of these are largely fixed.
- 1.3 However in considering the options appraisal, we noted that it did not include the use of public transport, use of the Mayor’s own car, or walking as options, which we consider an oversight.
- 1.4 Furthermore, as an element of the business case for the Mayor’s car was the number of his engagements and use of his time, the Committee thought it pertinent to examine the nature of those engagements for which the car was used, and the details of the journeys involved. Members were concerned to ensure a proper separation of the Executive and ceremonial functions of the Council, and that civic engagements were not forming a disproportionate part of the car’s use. We therefore requested and received the record sheets of the Mayor’s driver, which recorded only times of journeys and the mileage travelled. We also requested information on the Mayor’s past diary commitments, but this which was not provided.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Council endorses the following findings, and that the Mayor and Cabinet members act accordingly.

2.2 The Mayor's non-cooperation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has meant that we have not been able to access the relevant evidence and information on the way the Executive Mayor's car and driver has been used. We are therefore unable to dismiss the concerns which have been raised about these.

2.3 In particular:

- driver records provided to the Committee of the actual use of the car did not detail the actual journeys undertaken, but merely the number of miles travelled;
- we were not provided with information regarding the Mayor's engagements over the relevant period; and
- the Mayor did not make himself available to discuss his use of the car.
- For these reasons, the Committee is unable to confirm that the car was not used for personal or political engagements.
- We also remain unclear that the car was not used to discharge civic duties which should be undertaken by the Speaker.
- The Committee acknowledges that the Executive Mayor of the council needs access to appropriate transport in order to carry out his duties. Where a car and driver is used, engagements should be recorded, and details of these journeys made available to the Committee if required, rather than simple mileage as is currently the case.
- Furthermore, a new, thorough and robust options analysis should be carried out to assess all of the possible options for the Mayor's transport needs. This should include the option of sharing a car and driver with the Speaker, as well as the use of public transport.

### **3. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 3.1 The report recommends that further options analysis, beyond that already carried out as referred to in the report above, is carried out to assess all of the possible options for the Mayor's transport need. It is anticipated this appraisal would be carried by officers of the council, and as such the financial implications will be the opportunity cost of officer time, which will be contained within existing budgets.

### **4. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 4.1 Under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council, as best value authority, is under a duty to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 4.2 The chauffeur is a Council employee and the car is contracted under a lease agreement which terminates in October 2014. If the current arrangements are terminated there will be significant redundancy costs and a termination cost of approximately £5,000 for the lease which tapers off as the agreement nears expiry.
- 4.3 There are no other immediate legal implications arising from this report.

### **5. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 Any relevant matters are set out in the previous reports.

### **6. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 6.1 Any relevant matters are set out in the previous reports.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Any relevant matters are set out in the previous reports.

### **8. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

- 8.1 Any relevant matters are set out in the previous reports.

**9. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Report to Full Council on Executive Mayor’s Car, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)  
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of “background papers”

Name and telephone number of holder  
and address where open to inspection.

**None**

**N/A**