

# Subject: Monitoring of Expenses and Taxable Benefits – Mayor, Elected Members and Senior Staff – 2014/15

Report to: Audit Panel

Report of: Executive Director of Resources

Date: 22 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the taxable benefits and expenses submitted by the Mayor, London Assembly Members and senior staff during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the taxable benefits and expenses submitted by the Mayor, London Assembly Members and senior staff during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 This report presents taxable benefits and expenses claimed, processed and approved during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014. The reporting and monitoring of taxable benefits and expenses in a public meeting supports the transparency and openness of GLA activity to ensure accountability to Londoners. **Appendix 1** provides details of expenses for the Mayor and Assembly Members, **Appendix 2** provides details of taxable benefits for the Mayor and Assembly Members, and **Appendix 3** provides details of expenses for senior staff.

## 4. Issues for Consideration

### Taxable benefits – Travel card

- 4.1 The Mayor and Assembly Members are entitled to an annual six-zone travel card. Members have the discretion to decide how many zones they require. The provision of a travel card is a taxable benefit. During the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 sixteen travel cards were issued and taxable benefits totalled £35,968 for the period. Details are set out at Appendix 2.

## Business Expenses

### Use of taxis

- 4.2 Taxi expenses reported during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 totalled £13 for an Assembly Member. Senior staff incurred £1,263 on taxi expenses during this period.

### Other expense claims

- 4.3 In the course of their official duties the Mayor, Assembly Members and senior staff may incur business expenses. Wherever possible, the Authority books services in advance and all valid business expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the approved Expenses and Benefits Framework.
- 4.4 During the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014, no expenses were claimed by the Mayor and Assembly Members. Senior staff incurred £1,808 on Domestic Travel, £657 on Foreign Travel and £2,452 on Other Expenses. The category of Other Expenses includes subsistence, civic hospitality, hotel accommodation, eye tests and other miscellaneous expenses.
- 4.5 The GLA also provides mobile devices for the Mayor, Assembly Members and senior staff for business purposes as appropriate. The cost of these devices, which are paid direct by the GLA, is not included in this report.

### Statistics

- 4.6 Summary totals for the periods April 2013 to August 2013 and April 2014 to August 2014 show a dramatic decrease in expenses incurred by the Mayor and Assembly Members. Inevitably, any comparisons during the course of the year will be heavily influenced by the scheduling of foreign visits and this is particularly evident for the period under review due to the Mayoral visits to foreign countries that took place during the comparable period a year earlier. Accordingly variances will only be reported at the end of the financial year.

	<b>April 2013 to March 2014 Total</b>	<b>April 2013 to August 2013 Total</b>	<b>April 2014 to August 2014 Total</b>
	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(£)</b>
Taxi Expense Claims	629	276	13
Other Domestic Travel	464	208	0
Foreign Travel	22,329	4,131	0
Other Expenses	4,761	673	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,183</b>	<b>5,288</b>	<b>13</b>

- 4.7 Summary totals for the periods April 2013 to August 2013 and April 2014 to August 2014 show an overall decrease in expenses claimed by Senior Staff, especially low in Foreign Travel and Other Expenses. Claims under these categories are heavily influenced by the schedules of foreign travel for Senior Officers who accompanied the Mayor on his Official Trade Visits to foreign countries in 2013/14. Accordingly variances will only be reported at the end of the financial year.

	<b>April 2013 to March 2014 Total (£)</b>	<b>April 2013 to August 2013 Total (£)</b>	<b>April 2014 to August 2014 Total (£)</b>
Taxi Expense Claims	3,476	1,408	1,263
Other Domestic Travel	4,611	1,421	1,808
Foreign Travel	56,210	15,611	657
Other Expenses	38,200	4,463	2,452
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,497</b>	<b>22,904</b>	<b>6,181</b>

### **Exceptions**

- 4.8 All expenses and benefits have been authorised and paid in accordance with the Expenses and Benefits Framework. The Framework provides for exceptions to be approved but there were no exceptions granted during the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014.

### **Carbon Emissions**

- 4.9 The Authority is committed to reducing its carbon footprint. This has been reflected in the Expenses and Benefits Framework and there is an expectation that all claimants will use public transport wherever possible. The Authority calculates the carbon emissions on all flights and, in line with Government guidelines, pays the offsetting costs.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Under section 127(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 the Mayor is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Authority and to secure that one of the Authority's officers, the Chief Finance Officer, has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. The Chief Finance Officer of the Authority is the Executive Director of Resources. The adoption of the Expenses and Benefits Framework is one of the arrangements made by the Mayor on the recommendation of the Chief Finance Officer for the good administration of the financial affairs of the Authority.

## **6. Financial Implications**

### **Expenses**

- 6.1 Total expenditure on business expenses for the Mayor and Assembly Members for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 amounted to £13 and, for Senior Officers, £6,181. These costs have been met from respective budgets.

### **Taxable Benefits**

- 6.2 Expenditure on travel cards for Elected Members for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 August 2014 amounted to £35,968. These are taxable benefits and have been met from the relevant budget.
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#### **List of appendices to this report:**

**Appendix 1** - Details of expenses for the Mayor and Assembly Members

**Appendix 2** - Details of taxable benefits for the Mayor and Assembly Members

**Appendix 3** - Details of expenses for senior staff

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
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List of Background Papers: None
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Contact Officer: Doug Wilson, Head of Financial Services
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Telephone: 020 7983 4038
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E-mail: <a href="mailto:doug.wilson@london.gov.uk">doug.wilson@london.gov.uk</a>
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