

Subject: Monitoring of Expenses and Taxable Benefits – Mayor, Elected Members and Senior Staff – 2015/16

Report to: Audit Panel Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Resources

Date: 20 October 2015

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 2015 to 31 August 2015.

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 2015 to 31 August 2015.**

3. Background

- 3.1 This report presents taxable benefits and expenses claimed, processed and approved during the period. 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 cards

- 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 15 travel cards were issued (Appendix 2).

Newspapers

- 4.2 The Mayor receives newspapers which are purchased by the GLA. This is a taxable benefit and £1,184 has been included in Appendix 2.

Mobile phones

- 4.3 Two Assembly Members have retained their personal mobile phones for which the GLA pays the rental charge. This constitutes a taxable benefit and £629 has been included in Appendix 2.
- 4.4 The Mayor and Assembly Members incur income tax and national insurance contributions on these benefits.

Business Expenses

Use of taxis

- 4.5 Taxi expenditure for the period for Assembly Members is nil. Senior staff incurred £951 on taxi expenses during this period.

Other expense claims

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 During the period, no claims were made by the Mayor or Assembly Members. Senior staff incurred £6,698 on Foreign Travel, £1,023 on Other Expenses and £966 on Domestic Travel. The category of Other Expenses includes subsistence, civic hospitality, hotel accommodation, eye tests and other miscellaneous expenses.
- 4.8 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

- 4.9 Summary totals for the periods April 2014 to August 2014 and April 2015 to August 2015 show a decrease in already minimal expenses incurred by the Mayor and Assembly Members.

	April 2014 to March 2015 Total (£)	April 2014 to August 2014 Total (£)	April 2015 to August 2015 Total (£)
Taxi Expense Claims	58	13	0
Other Domestic Travel	98	0	0
Foreign Travel	8,074	0	0
Other Expenses	969	0	0
Total	9,199	13	0

- 4.10 Summary totals for the periods April 2014 to August 2014 and April 2015 to August 2015 show an overall increase in expenses claimed by Senior Staff. Foreign Travel expenditure increased from £657 to £6,698. All other costs fell over the respective periods.

	April 2014 to March 2015 Total (£)	April 2014 to August 2014 Total (£)	April 2015 to August 2015 Total (£)
Taxi Expense Claims	3,866	1,263	939
Other Domestic Travel	6,221	1,808	966
Foreign Travel	35,983	657	6,698
Other Expenses	20,614	2,452	1,023
Total	66,684	6,180	9,626

Exceptions

- 4.11 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. 3 exceptions were granted during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 August 2015.

Claimant	Exception Value (£)	Outside the Framework	Reason for Approval
Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture	47	Breakfast greater than £10 on 3 consecutive days	Acceptable business expense
Principal Policy and Programme Officer	56	Subsistence costs greater than £45/day	Acceptable business expense
Cycling Commissioner	34	Missing receipt for Tube Journeys	Acceptable business expense

Carbon Emissions

- 4.12 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 2015 to 31 August 2015 amounted to nil and, for Senior Officers, £9,638. These costs have been met from the relevant budgets.

Taxable Benefits

- 6.2 Expenditure on travel cards for Elected Members for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 August 2015 amounted to £34,504.

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

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