

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Request for this information was made, by Councillor Nicholson, at the OSMB agenda planning meeting held on 30 November 2011.

I. A summary of the implementation to date of the revised arrangements:

Criteria for events and engagements to which the Lord Mayor is invited were introduced in December 2010:

Events the Lord Mayor will attend:

- Council initiatives/events that support the council's/the city's priorities
- Community events – events organised by local people and attended by local people. This includes improving the representation and participation of minority groups.
- Military events – Armed Forces Week, Atlantic Day Blitz service, memorial/remembrance services, home coming parades etc
- Council meetings, Lord Mayor Choosing events, events relating to Freeman/Aldermen of the city, Citizenship Ceremonies, Remembrance Sunday, Fishing Feast
- Religious ceremonies and events of all denominations
- Twinning
- Traditional events ie, Thanksgiving, Queen's Anniversaries, Scott 100
- 100th birthday celebrations and visits and significant anniversaries

Events the Lord Mayor will not normally attend:

- Purely commercial/business engagements unless they are likely to have a measurable/positive/significant impact on the local economy (increasing jobs/training/apprenticeships/...)
- Charity events, unless they support the city's/council's priorities
- Social events, which may include performances by theatre/ drama groups; ward members/other councillors'/ events; family occasions; dinners and dances
- Events held outside the city of Plymouth, unless there is a specific and overriding factor

However, the council will be flexible and will take a common sense approach to the criteria when assessing invitations received by the Lord Mayor.

The number of events and engagements attended by the Lord Mayor in 2010/2011 was 562 (47 per month) and, to the end of October 2011, 204 engagements had been attended (30 per month).

Other

The focus of the Lord Mayor's staff is on the council's civic programme and Lord Mayoral support rather than upon the Lord Mayor's charities. The Lord Mayor's office does not have the staff resources to act as fundraisers and the Lord Mayor is advised to set up a charity committee. However, the staff may assist with the content and wording of tickets,

posters, menus etc; bank charity monies; balance the account at the end of the year; and provide mailing lists.

Councillors' annual visit to the pantomime at the Theatre Royal has been discontinued and, instead, the complimentary tickets are distributed to looked after children.

The annual civic heads social event has been discontinued and the Lord Mayor no longer accepts invites to other authorities' civic heads social events.

2. How many invitations have been received, accepted and declined?

The number of engagements received since May 2011 is 321 of which 207 have been accepted and 114 have been declined.

3. Customer feedback results

Feedback is always sought after civic events. Below is a sample of some of the comments, which are closely considered when either the same or a similar event is being organised.

Lord Mayor's Choosing, AGM (May) – positive: children's ukulele band excellent, well organised, excellent throughout ... less positive: sound not good at rear of Guildhall, should be a time limit for speeches, don't like cardboard cups (refreshments after the ceremony).

Lord Mayor's Choosing, evening dinner (May) – probably the best dinner I've had in the Guildhall, menu and wine very good, very enjoyable, price just right ... less positive: overpriced and poor menu, couldn't hear the entertainment.

Lord Mayor's Choosing, civic service) (May) – thoroughly enjoyed the service, well organised ... less positive: should be more orders of service, order of precedence not observed in the seating arrangements.

2nd Royal Tank Regiment homecoming parade (July) – positive: entire event was a success, excellent, very good, perfect, well organised, good to have children there, use of the Big Screen was great ... less positive: vegetarian pasties could have been available, difficult to hear at times, a programme would have been nice.

Fishing Feast (July) – positive: excellent day, good hotel, very good food, hope we do the same next year... less positive: more varied food would be nice, would like different music.

3 Commando home coming parade (November): very positive feedback received from councillors, dignitaries and the media (no less positive feedback received).

Remembrance Sunday Service (November): feedback currently being received.

Currently, the Lord Mayor's office does not ask organisers of external events for feedback. However, letters of thanks are regularly received. The National Association of Civic Officers provides some suggestions about asking for and obtaining feedback – these are currently being examined with a view to introducing a feedback process for each external event.

4. Review of current budget spend

The Democratic and Member Support Manager has been charged with achieving a £200,000 budget saving in the 2011/2012 financial year. This equates to a 23.5% saving on a total budget of £849,077 (Democratic Support, Lord Mayor, Elliot Terrace, Overview and Scrutiny and Special Functions).

The Lord Mayor's annual budget is as follows:

	£
Lord Mayor (This budget includes the salaries of the Civic Support Manager, the Lord Mayor's Secretary and the Mace Bearers, the Lord Mayor's allowance, fuel and leasing costs for the Lord Mayor's vehicle, printing, photocopying and postage)	161713
Special Functions (Lord Mayor's Choosing events, Remembrance Sunday Service on the Hoe, homecoming and freedom parades, Lord Mayor's Day, Lord Mayor's Carol Service, the Fishing Feast and hospitality)	73000
Elliot Terrace (This budget includes the salary of the housekeeper, electricity, gas, rates, water charges, sewerage, refuse and laundry and excludes annual repair and maintenance costs)	51787
Total	286500

Staff cost savings:

	Annual saving £
LM Secretary post reduced from 5 days/week to 3.5 days/week	7600
Dem/Member Support Asst deleted. Previously 2 administrative posts, now there is one post shared between the Lord Mayor's office and Democratic Support (£19,300 divided by 2)	9650
Other staffing cost savings to be realised in 2011/2012	17500
Total	34750

Special functions: over the past 2 years, concentrated efforts have been made to ensure that the budget for each function is not overspent. In most cases, special functions have been delivered within budget. One exception is the cost of hosting the 3 Commando homecoming parade, approximately £12,500. This will result in a budget overspend of £7,500 under this cost centre heading.

The Lord Mayor's hospitality budget is £20,000/annum. Target saving is £10,000. Expenditure to date is £4,000.

5. Report on the use of Elliot Terrace.

The licence agreement with the Lord Chancellor's office achieves an income of £6,000 a year.

Guided tours: the delegated decision taken in February this year stated that, 'If the number of tours continues at its current level (20 - 30 guided tours conducted each year) this will produce an annual income of around £2,000 which will contribute to the income target set. The number of tours cannot be accurately forecast as the number of guided tours may diminish once charges are introduced.'

The number of paid for tours has been five to-date which has achieved an income of £490. No marketing of guided tours at Elliot Terrace has yet been undertaken but this is scheduled to take place by the end of the financial year.

One of the reasons for introducing charges was to cease the practice of the council subsidising tours as the Mace Bearer's time and the housekeeper's time, as well as the cost of refreshments, were not charged for. The Lord Mayor may still choose to offer guided tours to local and community groups and the cost of this is deducted from the Lord Mayor's hospitality budget.

All of the council's assets are being examined with a view to maximising their use and/or income. It is too early to provide a report to Members on further use of Elliot Terrace as the consideration of options is at a very early stage.