

Committee: Standards and General Purposes

Date: 9 March 2017

Wards: All

Subject: Civic regalia and other valuable items

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Assistant Director Corporate Governance

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services, 0208 545 3864

Recommendations:

- A. That the Standards and General Purposes Committee agree to the implementation of the civic regalia and other valuable items display and disposal policy as set out in paragraphs 2.12 onwards, subject to any changes the Committee wishes to make.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. A review in August 2016 by the Internal Audit team of civic regalia and other valuable items made a number of recommendations with regard to documentation and financial control. An action plan was drawn up to address these and all but one of the recommendations has now been implemented.
- 1.2. The one remaining recommendation to address is that a disposal process should be agreed for those items donated and gifted to the Mayor's Office that are no longer required. A draft disposal process is set out in this report for consideration by the Standards and General Purposes Committee (details are contained in paragraphs 2.12 onwards).
- 1.3. In summary, the draft process recommends that all items of civic regalia should be retained by the borough, that other valuable items of cultural or historic interest should be securely displayed in the Mayor's Parlour and that the remaining valuable and miscellaneous items should be disposed of. It is recommended that the proceeds from disposal should be used first to purchase a secure display cabinet and the rest should be paid to the Mayor of Merton's Charitable Trust.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Audit review of civic regalia
- 2.2. Internal Audit have reviewed civic regalia & other valuable items in August 2016 as part of the 2015/16 audit plan. The auditor identified significant shortfalls with regard to the documentation of records of the civic regalia and other valuable items and concluded that the level of financial control was below the required standard.
- 2.3. An action plan was drawn up to address Internal Audit's recommendations and all but one of the recommendations has now been implemented. In

particular, all items have now been located and the inventory is now complete and up-to-date.

2.4. The one remaining recommendation to address is that a disposal process should be agreed for those items donated and gifted to the Mayor's Office that are no longer required. Internal Audit advised that a disposal policy should demonstrate a consistent approach and reduce storage costs. All disposals should be fully recorded; the reasons and the authority for the adjustment must be clearly stated. All disposals should be undertaken in line with LBM Financial Procedures (2007), which provides the following guidance for disposal:

- Up to £500, consult with staff, voluntary organisation and schools before passing to the Mayors charity
- Over £500 use auction or advertise

2.5. Description and value of items

2.6. All valuations date from 2012 and were undertaken by a valuer from Mappin and Webb. The next valuation is due to take place early in 2017.

2.7. The civic regalia that is in regular use includes the mace, badges and chains of office, the chaplain's cross and multi-faith insignia. The value of these items is £147,155.

2.8. There are other mayoral badges and chains are only worn occasionally. The value of these items is £227,800.

2.9. Various decorative items are kept on display in the Mayor's Parlour, including a silver tea set. Mappin and Webb reviewed these items in 2012 and valued those considered worth valuing – total value is £20,965.

2.10. A number of valuable items that are not in use are stored in a safe within the civic centre. These include three large ornamental silver nickel centrepieces dated 1868, two silver tea trays, silver coated tea urn, silver key and a presentation gavel. The value of these items is £10,350 – this excludes the tea urn as it was not valued in 2012.

2.11. A large number of miscellaneous items that have been donated to the Mayor over many years have all been listed on an inventory and are currently stored in crates prior to a decision being taken on disposal. It is unlikely that any single item will be worth more than £500. The items have been viewed by the Heritage and Local Studies service manager and she has advised that they are not of historic significance due to lack of evidential documentation.

2.12. Recommendations for display and disposal

2.13. These recommendations are based on discussion with five members of the Standards and General Purposes Committee who viewed the civic regalia and other valuable items on 6 December 2016 – Councillors Mary Curtin, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Ian Munn and David Williams.

2.14. It is recommended that all the civic regalia that is in regular or occasional use (as set out in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 above) should be retained. It is further recommended that the mayoral badges and chains that are in occasional rather than regular use should be placed on display in a secure

cabinet in the Mayor's Parlour, rather than kept in a safe as at present, as these are of historical interest.

- 2.15. It is recommended that the various decorative items on display in the Mayor's Parlour should be retained. These will be included in the 2017 insurance valuation. It is further recommended that existing and new decorative items with a value below £100 (such as New Year Day Parade trophies) should be retained for a maximum of five years. Disposal will then be made through offering as a prize at a mayoral charity event.
- 2.16. It is recommended that the three large ornamental silver nickel centrepieces dated 1868, two silver tea trays, silver coated tea urn and the silver key should be sold through auction as these items are no longer required. The tea urn should be valued prior to disposal.
- 2.17. It is recommended that the presentation gavel should be retained and placed on display in a secure cabinet in the Mayor's Parlour, rather than kept in a safe as at present, as this is of historical interest.
- 2.18. It is recommended that the miscellaneous items currently stored in crates should be professionally assessed and then disposed of through auction, advertisement or prize at a mayoral charity event as appropriate. Any items that may of interest to a council department (for example certificates awarded by or to the department) will be offered to the department prior to disposal.
- 2.19. It is recommended that items subsequently donated to the Mayor are assessed initially by the Mayor's Executive Assistant and the Head of Democracy Services should be kept on display during that mayoral year and a decision made at a later date on whether to keep, dispose of through auction (value over £500) or through prize at a mayoral event (value below £500).
- 2.20. It is recommended that the monies raised from disposal of items should be used to purchase a secure display cabinet for the Mayor's Parlour. The balance should be paid to the Mayor of Merton's Charitable Trust so that the Trustees can determine how best to allocate in accordance with the public benefit aims of the Trust.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Standards and General Purposes Committee is asked to consider the recommendations for display and disposal and make any changes that it considers appropriate. In doing this the Committee should be mindful of the historic and monetary value of the items under consideration as well as security and storage requirements.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Members of the Standards and General Purposes Committee were invited to view the civic regalia and other valuable items on 6 December 2016. Councillors Mary Curtin, Janice Howard, Mary-Jane Jeanes, Ian Munn and David Williams were able to take up this invitation. The proposals in this report are based on discussion with those councillors and their subsequent comments on an early draft of this report.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. An insurance valuation of civic regalia and other valuable items is due to take place early in 2017.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. As part of the work being undertaken to quinquennially revalue heritage assets within the Borough advice on the optimal disposal method will be provided on the items donated to the Mayor.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no significant legal implications raised by this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. To follow

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- none

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. South West London Audit Partnership report, civic regalia and other valuable items, August 2016