

Formal Council Questions and Responses

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1 Question to the Leader of the Council : 2019/9 - Civic Cars

Councillor Ray Mogford asked:

A recent FOI request has exposed the extent to which the Leader has been using tax payer funded Chaffeur driven cars.

To many hard pressed local tax payers this would seem like another unnecessary indulgence by this Administration.

In the interests of transparency and in the context of the often stated need to make considerable ongoing savings all round, can the Leader answer the following questions below

- Justify the number of trips she has made and explain why her own transport was not suitable on so many occasions over the last couple of years?
- Provide details of all meetings where the leader or her representative used one of the Chaffeur driven cars over the last 6 Months, as recorded in the Chaffeur Logs
- Does the Leader expect to continue to use this facility at the same level going forward or are further cost reductions in this area expected?

The Leader responded:

As the recent FOI response showed, the civic cars are predominantly used to support the Mayoralty, with the Leader's Office only accounting for 14% of trips over the time period requested. The civic cars and the drivers are required for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, so the costs associated with leasing and running the cars are incurred whether or not they are used for other purposes. Therefore the cost of 14% of trips during that time is negligible; the additional resources required for these extra trips are restricted to fuel costs, and it's more economical to use the cars in this way rather than reimburse me for the costs of using my own vehicle – quite apart from the security and safety implications.

Booking of the cars for these additional trips is carefully managed by officers and based on need, efficiency and best use of resources. Justification for use can be for a variety of reasons, depending on the type of event I am attending, but include considerations such as accessibility, time pressures, and security risk assessments.

The request for details of specific use is an operational matter and will be dealt with by the head of service outside of this formal question process.

I intend to continue using this facility at whatever level is deemed appropriate based on the factors outlined above and the advice of my supporting officers. There are no plans to further reduce costs in this area as this would impact on our ability to maintain the Mayoralty, and there are no plans to abolish this important function.

