

Spending on mayoral cars

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Introduction

Local authorities across the country have spent over£4.5million since 2015 on cars for mayors' usage.

Mayors and councilchairmen and women often fulfil ceremonial duties within their local authority and serve as the 'first citizen'. Yet these generally mundane and little cared-for functions do not require the purchasing or leasing of luxury vehicles to convey minor politicians.

Local authorities should encourage civic leaders to use their own method of transport and sell-off surplus vehicles: almost 40 per cent of all councils did not own or lease a mayoral car over the last three years.

Key findings

Between April 2015 and March 2018:

- **210** local authorities spent **£4,530,992**on vehicles for mayors, lord mayors, lord provosts, chairmen and women. This includes fuel, maintenance, tax and other associated costs. The average spend was **£21,576**.
- Local authorities spent **£2,762,152 on buying and leasing cars**over the three-year period.
- At least **258** cars are owned or leased by local authorities across the UK for the use of the mayor (or equivalent figure).
- Three local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Kensington and Chelsea) own a **Bentley Continental Flying Spur**. The City of Westminster and Cardiff City Council both owned a **Rolls Royce** during this period.
- Other luxury vehicles used by UK councils' mayors included the **Audi A8, BMW 7, Jaguar XJ, Mercedes S class** and **Lexus RX**.
- The council that spent the most was the **City of Glasgow**, with **£107,661** spent on leasing, maintenance and fuel for **three cars**.
- **9 councils** spent taxpayers' money on **personalised number plates**, whilst others purchased them many years ago.

On a regional basis, the local authorities that spent the most were:

Region	Local authority	Total spend (£)
East of England	Bedford Borough	23,595
East Midlands	North East Derbyshire	30,842
London	London Borough of Redbridge	73,667
North East	Sunderland City	42,258
North West	Cheshire East	67,980
Northern Ireland	Antrim and Newtownabbey	48,421
Scotland	City of Glasgow	107,661
South East	Milton Keynes	67,306
South West	Devon	82,198
Wales	Powys	41,313
West Midlands	Birmingham City	52,500
Yorkshire and the Humber	Hull City	94,471

[Click here to see how much your council spent on mayoral cars](#)

Sources and methodology

- A Freedom of Information (FOI) request was sent to all local authorities in the country (418), excluding town and parish councils. It asked for how many cars each local authority has for use of their mayor, or equivalent (such as chairman in county councils and lord provost in some Scottish authorities).
- The following was also asked for in the FOI request:
 - The cost of purchasing a car(s) during 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
 - The cost of leasing a car(s) during 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
 - The cost of fuel for a car(s) during 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
 - The cost of purchasing a personalised number plate(s) during 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
 - The costs associated with maintaining a car(s) during 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
- A total of 377 local authorities responded to the FOI request. Of these, 210 spent money on mayoral cars, or 56 per cent.
- All figures are in cash terms. Any FOI responses received after 17 August 2018 were not included in the dataset.
- Of those who sent a response, 167 did not own or lease any cars for the use of the mayor or equivalent. This is equal to 40 per cent of all the UK's councils.
- Many councils only give an overall spending figure, rather than a breakdown of costs over years. This explains the difference between the total column and column breakdowns in the linked Excel.