

HARROGATE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICER REPORT

To: Town Councillors
Author: Interim Town Clerk
Date: 3/7/25
Subject: Mayor's Chain of Office
Reference: FC110625 3

1. Purpose of Report

To bring Members' attention to the recent valuation of the Council's civic regalia, particularly in relation to the Mayor's chain of office, and the implications thereof.

The report seeks permission for the Clerk to develop proposals, in collaboration with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, for a modernised chain of office as part of the Council's upcoming branding exercise.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following a professional valuation, the Town Council's civic regalia collection, particularly the Mayor's chain of office, has been deemed of substantial monetary and historical value.
- 2.2 This is principally due to the recent increase in the value of gold.¹
- 2.3 As a result, there are significant health and safety concerns related to its regular wear including the risk of theft, personal injury or damage due to its fragility.
- 2.4 The latest valuation has confirmed that The Mayor's Chain of Office is of such significant value that it is no longer suitable for day-to-day use.

3. Insurance

- 3.1 Members are reminded that the civic collection is insured by North Yorkshire Council until 31st March 2025, but only whilst the items are on North Yorkshire Council property.
- 3.2 The Town Council will become fully responsible for the storage and insurance of the civic collection from 1st April 2025.

4. Risk Assessment

- 4.1 The Interim Town Clerk has discussed this matter with a senior Health and Safety Advisor at Peninsula Business Services.
Their advice included the following, summary recommendation:
"In terms of control measures, regarding the Mayoral Chains, I recommend a replica item and security for events that are higher risk."
They also advised on the issues to be considered as part of a risk assessment exercise.

¹ <https://www.gold.co.uk/gold-price/>

- 4.2 The Town Council's insurers have been sent a copy of the latest valuation report and have advised that they require sight of a risk assessment for the use and storage of the items prior to confirming the ongoing, and increased, premium.
- 4.3 This should be done in conjunction with an audit of the whole civic collection leading to its inclusion on the council's recently agreed asset register. It is estimated that this task will take the equivalent of a working week (37 hours).
- 4.4 Members are advised that operational capacity must be found to prioritise these tasks, but that the current staffing structure and council activities do not provide for this to take place.

5. Interim Measures

The Mayor is using the Belzona Molecular Medallion as a temporary solution.

However, this lacks the formality and recognition expected of civic regalia at many public events and is not suitable as a permanent replacement.

6. Consideration of Alternatives

6.1 *Continuation of Use of the Mayor's Chain of Office*

The Interim Town Clerk has explored temporary alternatives such as assigning a security guard to accompany the Mayor when wearing the chain.

However, this has been assessed as not being cost-effective over the long term and introduces operational and financial challenges for routine events.

It may be viable on occasions such as the Remembrance Day parade when security guards are already in attendance.

6.2 *Replica Chains*

Thomas Fattorini², the original manufacturers of the Mayor's Chain of Office, has been approached with a view to obtaining the cost for a set of replica chains being manufactured.

They have advised that:

"We can replicate your existing Pendant and chain in a lower grade of material for example sterling silver with gold plate, however it is very intricate and ornate with bespoke links, you would therefore have multiple Dies and Tooling required and would be quite costly."

They have estimated the cost would be a five-figure sum.

7. Branding Opportunity and Modern Identity

A modern, lightweight chain reflecting the Council's heritage, but in line with its emerging brand identity could be produced at a cost of around £5,000, significantly less than the cost of replicating the current regalia.

² <https://fattorini.co.uk/>

8. Protocol Development

Whether the council agrees to commission new chains or not, a formal protocol will be required to:

- 8.1 Determine which events warrant use of the original historic chains.
- 8.2 Clarify which chains (original or new and other items of the civic collections) are worn at specific types of engagements as part of the council's development of a suite of documents forming a civic protocol.
- 8.3 Establish procedures for safe storage, transport, and possible display of both sets.

9. Financial and Legal Considerations

- 9.1 Spending on civic regalia is permitted under the General Power of Competence as outlined in the Localism Act 2011, s.1.
- 9.2 Procurement should follow guidance from the Model Financial Regulations (NALC, 2025) to ensure transparency and best value.
- 9.3 Given the estimated cost, formal quotes should be obtained, and proper approvals secured.

10. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 10.1 Notes the significant value of the current Mayoral Chains of Office and its unsuitability for routine use.
- 10.2 Instruct the Clerk to prepare a draft protocol on the appropriate usage of original versus new regalia and prioritise the preparation of a risk assessment in this area for Council approval.
- 10.3 Approve the Clerk working with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to develop proposals for a modern chain of office in line with the new brand identity.
- 10.4 Agrees that a final design, budget, and usage protocol be brought to a future meeting for decision.