

# Presiding Officer's Official Vehicle



20 February 2014

## Request for Information.

Thank you for your request received on 14 February in which you asked:

- 1. Please provide details of the car provided for the use of the Presiding Officer and Deputy on official business including the make and model?*
- 2. If the car was purchased what was the cost and when was it acquired and from what dealership? If it was hired on a contract, rather than purchased, please provide details of the annual contract costs?*
- 3. Please provide details of the annual running costs of the car together with any other costs associated with the car such as the salary of a driver? How many miles has the car done since it was acquired?*
- 4. What was the reason for purchasing a new car?*
- 5. Is the use of the car only allowed for official business of the National Assembly for Wales? If not, what are the arrangements for its use?*
- 6. What was the previous make and model of car provided for the Presiding Officer and Deputy? When was that acquired and at what cost (or annual contract hire cost if not) and when was it disposed of and for how much?*

I will answer each question in turn below.

- 1. Please provide details of the car provided for the use of the Presiding Officer and Deputy on official business including the make and model?*

This information has been released in a previous freedom of information request. The previous request can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

As this information is available on our website your request is subject to section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which exempts information that is already reasonably accessible by other means.

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2. *If the car was purchased what was the cost and when was it acquired and from what dealership? If it was hired on a contract, rather than purchased, please provide details of the annual contract costs?*

The Presiding Officer's official vehicle is leased from Audi Cardiff. The table below provides you with the annual lease costs of the vehicle since April 2011. This includes maintenance and vehicle excise duty.

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
2011 - 2012	£7889.64
2012 - 2013	£8680.74
April 2013 - January 2014 inclusive	£5919.90

3. *Please provide details of the annual running costs of the car together with any other costs associated with the car such as the salary of a driver? How many miles has the car done since it was acquired?*

The annual running costs are captured in question 2.

The insurance costs have been released in a previous freedom of information request, as have the fuel costs, with the exception of an update below. The previous request can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Fuel cost</b>
April 2013 - up to 14 February 2014	£2,343.94

The information on the salary of the driver has been answered in a previous request and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

The table below provides you with the annual mileage of the Presiding Officer's official vehicle since April 2011.

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Total miles travelled</b>
2011 - 2012	14,848
2012 - 2013	15,430
2013 - up to 14 February 2014	11,684

4. *What was the reason for purchasing a new car?*

As stated in question 2, the official vehicle is leased and not purchased. The previous car was replaced when the previous three year lease came to an end in October 2012.

We have determined that leasing a vehicle represents better overall value for money than outright purchase.

*5. Is the use of the car only allowed for official business of the National Assembly for Wales? If not, what are the arrangements for its use?*

Use of the official vehicle is governed by internal guidance on official travel for the Presiding Officers. Extracts from the guidance that relate to use of the official vehicle can be found below:

**Official business**

“Official business” means any of the duties or engagements associated with the office of Presiding Officer/Deputy and/or the Assembly Commission. Examples of what is not official business would be:

- any matters relating to an office holder’s role as an elected member of the Assembly (i.e. in connection with their constituency or electoral region);
- any matter relating to the office holder’s political party or bodies closely associated with that party (such as affiliated trades unions);
- private and family matters, including unofficial social engagements.

**Journeys to and from home**

To reflect the status of the posts, the Presiding Officer and Deputy are entitled to official travel between their home and office, or their home and the venue for an engagement. This will be provided by the official car, a contracted vehicle, the office holder’s personal car (mileage reimbursed under normal travel and subsistence rules) or other forms of transport as described in this guidance.

**Travel by Official Car**

**Eligibility**

The National Assembly for Wales provides official car(s) and driver(s) to the Presiding Officer/Deputy, Assembly Commissioners and some senior officials, for use on official business.

The following people are always entitled to use an official car when on official business. Entitlement is in the order shown, and is subject to the official car being available:

- Presiding Officer
- Deputy Presiding Officer
- Assembly Commissioners
- The Chief Executive & Clerk
- National Assembly Directors

Official cars may also, exceptionally, be provided for other public figures when they are visiting or carrying out functions for the National Assembly or Presiding Officer/Deputy. This service is at the discretion of the Commission and Member Support Service and is subject to sufficient spare capacity being available.

### **Officials and others accompanying the Presiding Officer/Deputy or Assembly Commissioners**

Officials (such as an Assistant or a Policy lead) or an Assembly Member accompanying the Presiding Officer/Deputy to an engagement are entitled to travel in the same official car, if the Presiding Officer/Deputy agrees. Such officials may also be picked up from and dropped off at home before or after such an engagement, provided either the extra time and distance involved are insignificant, or if it is very early in the morning or very late at night. Officials (other than the Chief Executive and Clerk and Directors) are not entitled to use an official car in any other circumstances.

Other individuals, such as a spouse or partner, may only use an official car if they are accompanying the Presiding Officer/Deputy on official business (for instance, an official dinner to which spouses or partners have been invited). In such cases they cannot be picked up or dropped off separately to the Presiding Officer/Deputy unless the extra time and distance involved are insignificant.

### **Transporting official papers**

Where IT systems or other more cost-effective options are not available, the official car may be used to transport official papers to an office holder's home or another location (such as a constituency office) where the office holder is present, without the office holder accompanying them. They should not be used to transport other

official material or equipment or constituency or party political materials.

### **Use of Cars for Non-Official Purposes**

Official cars must not be used for any other non-official purposes. In the case of the driver this includes any use of the car during the working day which is not considered official by the Head of the Commission and Member Support Service. Approved official uses are direct travel to a petrol station to refuel the car, to a car wash to clean/valet the car, or to a garage for the undertaking of servicing or other maintenance work. Any other use is not allowed unless prior permission has been sought by the driver from the Head of the Commission and Member Support Service.

Driver(s) are also entitled to use an official car for journeys between: the office and their home; the location where they have dropped off an office holder or their assistant at the end of an official journey and their home; or their home and the place where they are to collect an office holder or assistant to start an official journey. These journeys are allowed since they facilitate the efficient undertaking of official business. They must therefore be direct and not involve the use of the cars for any non-official business.

Driver(s) taking official cars to their home must inform the Commission and Member Support Service of the address for insurance purposes. When a car is taken to a driver's home it must immediately be safely parked and not used again until the driver is to return to the office or travel to a place where they are to collect an office holder (or his/her assistant). The Commission and Member Support Service must agree that the parking is safe and secure. Such agreement will not be given to on-street parking.

On days where the official vehicle is not in use, it must be parked securely at the home of the driver or at the National Assembly for Wales.

- 6. What was the previous make and model of car provided for the Presiding Officer and Deputy? When was that acquired and at what cost (or annual contract hire cost if not) and when was it disposed of and for how much?*

The previous make and model was also an Audi A8 that was acquired in October 2009. The annual lease cost of the previous vehicle was £9,467 and it was returned to the provider in October 2012 when the lease expired.

You will note that we have secured even better value for money with the current lease, this being one of the advantages of seeking market competition at the end of every lease.

Your request has been considered according to the principles set out in the Code of Practice on Public Access to Information. The code is published on our website at [http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about\\_us-commission\\_assembly\\_administration/abt-foi/abt-foi-cop-pub.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/abt-foi/abt-foi-cop-pub.htm)

If you have any questions regarding this response please contact me. If you feel you have cause for complaint, please follow the guidance at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Buddug Saer**  
**Programme Officer**  
**National Assembly for Wales**

Cause for concern or complaint with your FOI response?

If you believe that I have not applied the Code correctly or have not followed the relevant laws, you may make a formal complaint to the Chief Executive and Clerk at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay. Details of the Assembly's complaints principles are set out in the Code of Practice on Complaints available on the Internet at <http://www.assemblywales.org/conhome/con-complaint.htm>. Please advise me if you wish to receive a printed copy.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF