



REVISED TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE DIRECTION *A Borough to be proud of*

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the updated travel and subsistence policy, following the three-year review by the council's travel group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members note the outcome of the review and approve the revised policy.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The council introduced a new Travel Policy in April 2012. The policy was developed using a joint travel group, consisting of both staff and trade union members, to undertake a comprehensive review of the current travel scheme. The need to review the policy had arisen from budget pressures and the requirement to secure savings. It was also recognised at that time that there would be limited parking at the new Hub. The former policy did not have prescribed criteria to assess essential user status, therefore by default, the only requirement required to become an essential user was the need to have a car for work. As a result the council had, over a period of time, acquired a high volume of essential users.
- 3.2 The outcome of introducing a new policy during 2012 resulted in reduction of essential users from 119 to 71 due to newly prescribed criteria which challenged the requirements for an individual to have a car (i.e. what was their job purpose, i.e. did they undertake site visits, customers visits etc.). Employees also had to meet minimum annual mileage levels.
- 3.3 Given that the group had introduced tighter criteria and that mileage levels can vary, it was built within the policy to conduct 3 yearly reviews of average mileage of essential users. The first review took place earlier this year by a joint travel group consisting of staff and union representatives, to ensure consistency. The trade union also took the opportunity to consult with all staff at the council upon the application of the new policy. That review has now concluded and the number of essential users who are to be taken out of the scheme is 5. The number of new staff admitted to the scheme is 10. The total number of essential users from 1/4/15 is 78.
- 3.4 The group also took the opportunity to review the wording within the policy, and this is attached at Appendix A. Notably, the criteria and mileage required to be an essential user has unchanged, with a number of amendments to the policy which are set out below:
- Reiterates the point that employees can claim mileage on call outs from their home address
 - All training mileage incurred is to be paid at the casual rate of 40 pence per mile (formerly it was 25 pence)
 - All temporary staff will now automatically receive essential user payment if they meet the criteria (they were formerly paid at casual user rate)

- For all new posts and when there is no comparative position, the travel group will determine if the post is essential user. This is based upon a business case from the recruiting manager. The employee will start as a lower rate (casual) user.
- The review of essential users remains every three years however the travel rates will now be reviewed annually

3.5 What has become apparent, during the review of the policy by the group and following feedback from Unison, are concerns about current car parking arrangements for now and in the future. There is a perception that this is not just limited to essential users (who park at Willowbank Road) but for staff in general. The group felt that this is a divisive issue and agreed that car parking was not within its remit. The matter, upon Unison's request, has now been referred to the Strategic Leadership board for consideration.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [KP]

4.1 The total budget for essential car user allowances for 2015/16 is £118,700. As outlined in section 3.3, following a review of all staff mileage, the number of officers eligible for essential user status has increased by 5 and therefore the total impact on the budget was £4,250.

4.2 As outlined in section 3.4, the review proposed a number of other changes to the policy which may have financial implications:

- Employees can claim mileage on call outs from their home address – this is expected to have a minimal impact. Currently mileage is only classified as business or training so it is not possible to quantify this impact based on previous activity.
- Training mileage incurred is paid for at the casual rate at 40 pence per mile. (formerly it was 25 pence per mile) – the average total training miles over the last 2 financial years was 1,045. This would equate to an increased cost of £157
- Temporary staff now automatically receive essential user payment if they meet the criteria (they were formerly paid at casual user rate) – based on those officers hired on temporary contracts in 2014/2015 and their respective mileage levels, this change would have resulted in increased car allowance costs of £850 but conversely savings in mileage of £240.

4.3 On the basis that the travel group will review travel rates on an annual basis moving forward, the financial implications above could change.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [EH]

5.1 Where any of the proposed changes are also part of the payment of lump sum NJC terms and conditions, which are collectively agreed, all employees are engaged in accordance with that agreement. As the required consultation has been undertaken to agree the changes, any changes to contract terms can be implemented following approval.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Corporate Aim 2 – Empowering communities – Improve health and wellbeing.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Full consultation with staff (not limited to just Unison members) has taken place and the responses have been coordinated by the Branch Secretary. The travel group is jointly operated by Management and Unison representatives.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 8.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 8.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
There needs to be tight control over the allocation of essential users due to the restricted car parking and impact of financial costs to the council	Travel group to meet three yearly to review essential users status and application of the policy	Julie Stay

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An impact assessment will be undertaken following final consultation feedback.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community Safety implications
 - Environmental implications
 - ICT implications
 - Asset Management implications
 - Human Resources implications
 - Planning Implications
 - Voluntary Sector

Background papers: None

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