



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Ethical Governance and Personnel Committee

20 January 2026

Wards affected: All wards

Revised Travel Policy

Report of Interim Deputy Chief Executive

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To approve the updated Travel and Subsistence Policy developed by the Joint Management and Trade Union Working Group.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the committee approve the updated Travel and Subsistence Policy.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Climate Change Strategy identified the requirement to promote green travel across the council and one of its actions was to review the current Travel and Subsistence Policy. The current policy, in its application, indirectly incentivised staff to use their car as the main mode of travel and undertake more miles to qualify as an essential user, which opposes the aim of the strategy.
- 3.2 The Trade Unions also sought a review of the policy equally expressing a desire to move towards promotion of green travel and a single mileage rate for all users. They wanted an equitable rate that was fair for all staff given the cost of living and increased motoring costs.

Current travel policy

- 3.3 To provide context, the current travel policy categorises car users into two types of car user, Essential or Casual User.

Essential User

To qualify as an essential user the employee in their job role, is required to meet the following criteria:

- Incur business mileage greater than 900 miles per annum and satisfy at least one of the criteria set out below:
 - (i) *Undertaking regular visits to customers, premises or sites or attendance at meetings to represent the council or*
 - (ii) *Undertaking travel on demand to multiple work bases within the same working day*
 - (iii) *Call out when on standby to attend customers or council*

- 3.4 Essential users receive £850 per annum to cover capital outlay and wear and tear. In addition to the lump sum they also receive 25p per mile for mileage incurred.

Casual user

- 3.5 All other employees are classed as a casual user and receive 45p per mile for mileage incurred.

Joint review of the policy

- 3.6 A joint review of the policy took place with the Trade Unions this year. A travel survey was also carried out to ascertain the appetite of staff to consider alternative modes of travel. The feedback from the travel survey was considered along with 5 years mileage data, including a review of existing essential user mileage.
- 3.7 The mileage data showed that whilst levels dipped between 2020 – 2023 they increased again and are now at pre-pandemic levels. The main reason for this increase is due to service resumption (i.e. more visits) and that the borough is geographically vast.
- 3.8 It was also noted that only 34 essential users (from a total of 90) meet the current criteria (over 900 miles) whereas 8 casual users currently meet the essential user status.
- 3.9 Based upon the data reviewed there was consensus to eliminate the need to have essential and casual users, given the anomalies in the data and the ongoing requirement to constantly administer such a scheme. The group agreed that one mileage rate is required for all users at a higher rate of 65p given that there would be a need to compensate their members, and the savings from removing the lump sum allowance would offset the increase in mileage rate.

Outcomes from the staff travel survey

- 3.10 The outcomes of staff travel survey highlighted that many staff lived within 5 miles of the councils offices but over 85% travelled to work by car. The barriers cited to travelling in a more sustainable way were:
- Lack of available and regular public transport routes
 - Lack of safe cycle routes into work
 - Carrying workplace kit that is too heavy (hybrid workers)
 - No appetite from staff for car sharing
 - Impractical to use office-based pool cars/bikes
 - Using other forms of travel would impact upon the employee time, when capacity/workload is high
 - Need their car to carry out their job role
- 3.11 Whilst the survey focussed predominantly upon commuting habits, the last two points highlights key barriers if staff are required to regularly travel as part of their job role. Another area that has been trialled is the use of pool vehicles and bikes. Such schemes have been discounted due to the conflict with hybrid working arrangements and all staff not being on site, so they do not make full use of the pool car/bike. What was recommended however, to encourage greener forms of travel, was an increase in the cycle rate to 45p per mile. This has been incorporated into the revised policy.

New Travel and Subsistence Policy

- 3.12 The new policy is set out at **Appendix 1** and directly aligns to the Climate Change Strategy. Its purpose is to reduce the environmental and financial impacts and where possible, encouraging employees to reduce unnecessary travel. Where travel is required, the policy promotes the use of more sustainable and safest forms of transport. The main changes to the policy are:
- Introducing the travel hierarchy - encouraging staff to use the most sustainable form of travel from walking (being the most preferred choice), through to cycling, public transport, car sharing to using their own car (as the last option).
 - Promoting sustainable incentives to staff including salary sacrifice schemes such as cycle to work and electric cars (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles)
 - Removing of essential and casual user status
 - Mileage rate of 65p per mile to all car users (up to 8500 miles per annum). This covers petrol, diesel and electric cars and the increased rate negotiated by the trade union is to cover all motoring costs
 - Car users who incur 8,500 miles or more will receive a reduced rate of 16p per mile for those excess miles
 - An increased cycle rate of 45p per mile.

Formal consultation - Trade union ballot

- 3.13 As the essential user lump sum payment forms part of an employee's contract of employment, which has previously been negotiated by the trade unions on a collective basis, any contractual change to this requires a formal ballot of the union membership.
- 3.14 A proposal was issued to staff for consultation on 3 November with a deadline of 21 November for responses. 67% of Unison members voted in favour of the new policy.

Roll out of policy

- 3.15 Essential users lump sum will be compensated as part of the policy implementation. Essential users will receive a one-off payment of £212.49 which is equivalent to 3 months' notice of the monthly essential user lump sum allowance. Updated contracts will be issued to former essential users.
- 3.16 The new policy will be published to all staff, with HR expenses systems updated, following approval at committee.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 4.1 Open Session

5. Financial implications (DW)

- 5.1 The costs based on the mileage done for 2023-24 for the existing arrangements and what that would have cost under the proposed arrangements are set out in the table below

2023-24 Mileage Cost (0.45p Essential, 0.25p Casual, £850 Essential User Lump Sum)

Type	Mileage Cost	Essential User	Total Cost
Casual	17,349	0	17,349
Essential	32,052	72,250	104,302
Other	311	0	311
Total	49,712	72,250	121,962

Proposed Mileage Cost (0.65p Essential & Casual Rate, No Essential User Lump Sum but compensation paid as one off , rate of 16p for miles in excess of 8,500 per annum

Type	Mileage Cost	Essential User Compensation (£70.83 for 3 months)	Total Cost
Casual	25,059	0	25,059
Essential	77,920	17,849	95,769
Other	675	0	675
Total	103,654	17,849	121,503
In Year Saving			(459)
On-Going saving			(18,308)

5.2 In the full year 2023/24 the overall car allowance budget was overspent by £23,954. If the saving is approved it will help to put the budget back in line.

6. Legal implications (ST)

6.1 None.

7. Corporate Plan implications

7.1 Contributes to Places – to work towards a greener borough.

8. Consultation

8.1 Unison worked jointly with management to propose this new policy. The policy has been subject to further consultation during November.

9. Risk implications

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 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.

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

10.1 An equality impact assessment will be carried out when drafting the proposal.

11. Climate implications

11.1 Set out within the report.

12. Corporate implications

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: None.

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