

# TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

## Introduction

The council is committed to reducing the environmental and financial impacts arising from business travel. The council also has a duty of care and health and safety to its employees when travelling for work purposes. Where possible, the aim of this policy is to encourage employees to reduce unnecessary travel and, where travel is required, promote the use of more sustainable and safest forms of transport.

## Purpose

The aim of this policy is to reduce CO2e emissions by decarbonising travel across the council to meet the vision of the council's Climate Change Strategy and prepare a safe system of work for managing the health and safety of employees when choosing options to travel. This policy also sets out the procedures to follow when arranging travel and reimbursement for expenses when travelling as part of their work.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council employees.

## Equalities

The council's commitment to equality of opportunity will be always observed during the operation of this policy. This will ensure that employees are treated fairly and without discrimination on the grounds age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

## Principles

The principles underpinning this policy are:

- To encourage the reduction of CO2e emissions to meet the aims as set out within the Climate Change Strategy
- To reduce and avoid unnecessary travel
- To support and educate staff in making efficient choices when they travel
- To provide a safe system of work for managing the health and safety of journeys carried out by drivers driving using their own vehicles.
- To have a fair and efficient procedure in place to reimburse expenses.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Council will:

- ✓ Ensure that services are delivered in the most efficient way possible
- ✓ Reduce the risk of potential harm to employees and others when travel is required
- ✓ Ensure that carbon emissions from staff travel are minimised

The Strategic Leadership Team will:

- ✓ Promote and facilitate alternatives forms of travel

- ✓ Ensure there is a safe system of work for employees if they are required to use their own car, if alternatives are not available, for council business

The HR Team will:

- ✓ Responsible for monitoring and regular review of this policy
- ✓ If car travel is essential, ensure that the relevant checks are carried out including driver and vehicle checks

Managers will:

- ✓ Ensure the policy is followed and implemented
- ✓ Carry out a risk assessment to prepare a safe system of work and consider whether the journey could be avoided and whether the task can be carried out using virtual meetings, telephone or email
- ✓ When the journey is necessary, ensure team members choose the relevant mode of transport following the travel hierarchy
- ✓ Ensure staff understand that claims will be authorised when compliant with this policy and VAT fuel receipts are provided to support any business mileage and / or other costs incurred being claimed.

Staff will:

- ✓ Only travel when necessary and in the delivery of service, and in line with the travel hierarchy
- ✓ If car travel is essential the staff member must:
  - Drive within the requirements of the law and adhere to speed limits
  - Hold a valid driver licence
  - That their vehicle has a valid MOT and serviced in line with manufacturers requirements
  - Have car insurance that covers business use and the carrying of business passengers
  - Ensure VAT receipts are provided for mileage claims or other costs incurred and claimed.

## **Business Travel – ‘Lesser of mileage rule’**

- 1.1 Employees should always consider the most efficient mean of travel in terms of time and efficiency to meet the council's green agenda.
- 1.2 The designated council location as set out in the contract of employment contract is considered the employee's work base.
- 1.3 Under the HMRC tax rules commuting miles (travel between an employee's home and their work base, including the return journey) are not claimable.
- 1.4 Employees who attend an alternative work location or client's home for official business reasons on route to/from the normal work base may claim mileage which is over and above their normal commuting miles. This must not exceed the miles which

would have been travelled had the employee made the journey from the normal work base (lesser of mileage rule).

- 1.5 Employees can claim mileage if required to travel between multiple work bases during the working day (subject to the lesser of rule).

## Travel Hierarchy – Decision Making Process



- 2.1 The council is committed to reducing the environmental and financial impacts arising from business travel. This not only covers miles travelled, but also the associated reduction of carbon emissions, reduction of cost to the 'public purse' and improved safety for its employees.
- 2.2 Employees are encouraged to use more sustainable forms of travel such as: travelling by foot, bike, bus/coach, train, motorbike or by car sharing. Employees should follow the sustainable travel hierarchy when travelling, whether it is part of the daily commute, for work related travel or for leisure.
- 2.3 Employees should make the following assessments prior to each business journey:

### Can travel be replaced by virtual meetings?

Where there is an alternative to travel, this should always be used. Not only does this save the council money, but it also reduces carbon emissions as well as lost productivity through time which would otherwise have been spent travelling.

### Active travel - Is the meeting close enough to attend by walking/cycling, or could employees use public transport?

For any journeys where walking, cycling or public transport are viable options, these should be selected wherever possible. Employees can claim 45p per mile when cycling for

business purposes. Public transport is often the best solution, where bus or train routes and timetables allow, and when staff are not required to carry any equipment.

The council will not reimburse mileage if the journey is less than 1 mile. Exceptions will be made for example, where employees have reduced mobility or there is no safe walking route.

#### **Can attendance at the meeting be delegated to a colleague in a closer base location?**

Due to the large geographical area covered by the council, often there will be a colleague or delegate located closer to the meeting who could attend instead. Meeting minutes and actions can then be discussed following the meeting.

#### **Lift Sharing - Could employees car share with other colleagues?**

**Before** traveling to a meeting, always check the meeting invitee list. If someone from an employee's base location is also attending, check how they are planning to get there and share the journey wherever possible. This will save on duplicate journeys, whilst offering good networking opportunities with colleagues.

#### **Should employees use their own car?**

There may be certain circumstances under which the use of an employee's own vehicle where other options are not available or viable. When undertaking council business in a private vehicle it is a legal requirement that employees hold a valid driving licence, business class insurance suitable for the types of journeys that are being undertaken, and a current MOT. VAT receipts for fuel must be provided to support the mileage claimed.

## **Business Mileage Rates**

3.1 Where employees use their car for business purposes (including training) the following mileage rates (which are based on HMRC rates) will apply:

- Petrol/diesel/hybrid/electric cars and motorcycles - 65p per mile \*
- 8500 miles or more paid at 16p per mile
- Cycle Rate 45p per mile
- Additional passenger 20p per mile

\* any mileage payment claimed in excess of the HMRC rate of 45p per mile will be classed as a benefit and reported on a P11d and taxed.

## **Council Initiatives**

### **Cycle2work**

4.1 Cycle to work is a government initiative to encourage more people to commute to and from work by bike enabling people to make healthier choices and reducing the

UK's CO2e emissions. Tax free bikes are available through a government approved scheme which is fully HMRC compliant. The scheme allows you to hire a cycle and safety equipment from your employer for the purpose of commuting to and from work and for use at weekends and evenings. The cost is spread across a period of 12 months. This exchange of gross salary deductions for a benefit, known as a salary sacrifice, lets you spread the cost to make payments more convenient.

- 4.2 The council, through its benefits platform, offers the Cycle2Work scheme which is supported by a wide range of specialist bike dealers, including: Halfords, Cycle Republic, Tredz and local independent bike shops.
- 4.3 The council also provides secure facilities to store bikes and shower facilities in the Hub and Jubilee building. For staff based at other council locations please contact your line manager to make local arrangements.

### **Tusker Cars**

- 4.4 The council operates a car benefit scheme through its benefits platform. The scheme is administered by Tusker who offer zero or ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) to purchase through salary sacrifice. ULEVs are currently defined as having less than 75 grams of CO2 per kilometre (g/km) from the tail pipe. These are listed at <https://carfueldata.vehicle-certification-agency.gov.uk/search-by-low-emissions.aspx>. Pure electric vehicles, and other plug-in electric vehicles when driving in the electric mode, produce no tailpipe CO2 or pollution.

- 4.5 Staff can access the Tusker scheme with the following benefits:

No initial upfront payment or credit checks

- Exclusive manufacturer discounts
- Routine service and maintenance
- Replacement tyres
- Fully comprehensive motor insurance including business travel
- Annual road tax
- Greater benefit in kind (BIK) savings (compared to petrol and diesel vehicles)

## **5. Other Arrangements**

### **Training**

- 5.1 Mileage incurred when attending training courses will be paid at the applicable mileage rate. Training mileage should be recorded separately when claiming. Wherever possible, employees attending the same event as other colleagues should travel together in the interests of the environment, alleviating parking problems and minimising travel costs.

### **Travel time**

- 5.2 The actual time spent on the training or development activity may be recorded as normal work time (at plain time) together with time incurred whilst travelling to and from the event, more than your normal commute to work time. This means that if the event is some distance away and you are 'at work' for more than your normal working hours, the extra time may now be counted. (Please note, however, that it is not intended that all hours should be claimed where an overnight stay is involved – please discuss with your manager what is appropriate.)

## **Public Transport**

- 5.3 Tickets and VAT receipts must be authorised by your line manager and then submitted to Human Resources to process
- 5.4 Rail travel tickets (at standard class) should be obtained in advance of the journey as soon as possible to try and ensure the cheapest travel cost. It should not normally be necessary for employees to pay at the counter. Use of taxis should be agreed in advance with your manager.
- 5.5 Should you need to book train tickets, please advise Jo McLaren as early as you possibly can as they rise substantially in price as the journey date becomes closer. Also, please check that you choose the cheapest (reasonably timed) option. You will need to provide Jo with details of your destination (from where to where) and date and time of travel – and provide her with a purchase order made out to 'HSBC Credit Card creditor no. 00255101'. If the travel is in relation to training, please advise HR, who will raise the PO on your behalf.

## **Subsistence**

- 5.6 The council does not reimburse employees for expenditure incurred in respect of meals when on training courses. Exceptionally, where attendance at a full day seminar or similar does not include the provision of meals, reimbursement of reasonable expenses may be paid subject to submission of expenses form and VAT receipt with prior approval by your line manager and submitted to Human Resources for processing. No reimbursement of expenditure is payable for employees attending post entry training courses.
- 5.7 In regard to overnight stays, the seminar/course should provide you with a list of locally recommended hotels. An official purchase order should be made and the invoice will be processed via the purchasing system. However, should the hotel not want to comply with this and decline the payment when you leave, the council will reimburse any personal expenditure incurred once the bill has been presented for payment. There is no agreed rate for overnight accommodation due to the varying costs of accommodation in the different locations around the country. Your accommodation must be authorised by your line manager in advance and it will be charged to your service area's budget.
- 5.8 Employees should keep meal costs to a minimum. It is recommended that where overnight accommodation has been arranged that employees keep to reasonably priced or set menus. No reimbursement will be made in respect of alcohol.
- 5.9 In all instances your expenses form and vat receipt must be authorised by your line manager and then submitted to Human Resources for processing.

## **Car Parking**

- 5.10 Payment for car parking will be made to car users on official council business if costs are incurred whilst at a location which is not an employee's normal place of work.
- 5.11 Employees are required to complete an expense form along with a VAT receipt, authorised by your line manager and then submitted to Human Resources for processing.

## **VAT Receipts**

- 5.12 All mileage claims must be made through employee self-service and submitted by the 13th of each month. For users who do not have access to the self-service portal this can be claimed manually.
- 5.13 Users are required to provide a VAT receipt with a claim for fuel consumed in a claim and this should be marked with the claim identity number and submitted to HR when requested.