

Report of the Director of Resources & Housing

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Date: 24th February 2020

Subject: Reducing emissions from staff travel

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) has asked for an update on the Council's position on staff travel. Specific reference is made to proposals that were reported to Executive Board on the Climate Emergency in January 2020. These are intended to ensure that "Grey Fleet" staff travel is zero emissions by 2030. To achieve this, a range of measures will be introduced and these are covered in this report. In particular they focus on:

- Adopting new approaches to using transport smartly and linking this to better journey planning and use of technology
- Employment policy – changing terms and conditions and offering new incentives to travel appropriately
- Changes in working practices and culture

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report and request further information on themes which they feel will be helpful in understanding and advising on how policy aims will be better delivered.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board, has considered a number of climate related themes recently. This includes issues on accommodation and buildings. It requested that work is extended to consider more sustainable transportation options for those members of staff that are expected to travel around the city as part of their specific job role.
- 1.2 The timing of this is helpful as the Executive Board received a report in January 2020 on the Climate Emergency, which included the impact of staff travel. Specifically the report referred to the “Grey Fleet” (i.e. the work mileage that staff undertake in their own vehicles). It is intended that changes are made so that this becomes zero emissions by 2030. Whilst this report concentrates on the Grey Fleet, it is noted that the Executive Board also covered related issues in terms of how the Council can reduce emissions for the fleet of vehicles which we internally operate and manage.
- 1.3 To achieve a zero emissions position for the Grey Fleet, a range of measures will be introduced and these are covered in this report. A series of appendices are also provided giving more detail information about staff travel.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Our Grey Fleet accounts for 4.2 million miles claimed annually by staff using their own cars for work purposes. As the Executive Board report identifies this amounts around 1,262 tonnes of CO₂e per annum. Although this is not a major contributor in the context of total carbon emissions for the City, it is nevertheless important that the Council leads by example and demonstrates beyond the organisation what can be achieved.
- 2.2 Local Authorities have longstanding arrangements for staff travel, which were based on former national agreements. Under a local agreement, which was revised in 2014, LCC staff are entitled to reimbursement for authorised travel in their own cars. There are two categories of user:
 - Essential users who must meet mileage and other ancillary criteria to qualify for a lump sum payment of £963 pa and a mileage rate of 40.9p – These are based on former national rates.
 - Casual users – who are paid at the HMRC set mileage rate of 45.0p
 - Both groups also are entitled to reimbursement of car parking costs if these are incurred
- 2.3 In 2018/19, lump sum, mileage and car parking claims relating to this grey mileage amounted to £3.25m. The following appendices give more details on the scale and costs of this grey mileage:
 - Appendix I – Local Agreement on Travel and Subsistence

- Appendix II – Summary analysis of claims
- Appendix III – A breakdown of use by Directorate

3.0 Main Issues

Smarter Travel arrangements

- 3.1 To achieve a zero emissions position by 2030, a number of measures were considered by the Executive Board. These include options that will reduce the need for and support more sustainable alternatives to staff travel in their own vehicles. This report outlines the various initiatives and policy measures currently in place and to be developed further.
- 3.2 A Travel Planning framework for work travel is currently being refreshed. This will follow LCC's existing corporate travel plans that were established by the Highways and Transportation Division in City Development in 2015. They set out a hierarchy of choices in order of sustainability under which staff should plan and make any work journeys (e.g. asking staff to consider alternatives to travelling and/or avoiding single occupancy car use by sharing vehicles or using public transport). The aim is to re-balance decisions between perceptions of cost efficient travel versus real environmental impact. This will obviously consider mobility issues affecting disabled staff and personal safety too, especially where public transport options are limited. Although it is also stressed public transport is a safer form of travel overall i.e. in terms of road accident risks.
- 3.3 In parallel to this work, a Smart Cities Innovation Lab has been led by DIS, exploring the potential to develop digital solutions to better inform travel planning. This is intended to allow staff to easily understand the above choices by providing a single, accessible online travel planning portal.
- 3.4 Alongside the idea of a travel hierarchy, measures will be put in place to support staff to understand and access travel alternatives. Pool vehicles, shared metro-cards, e-bikes and walking are being promoted. This will now include a new pilot scheme for low emission pooled vehicles, expected to be provided through the existing WYCA Car Club scheme 2020. Key to this will be establishing how pool vehicle use can be optimised, as well as identifying and delivering suitably located, dedicated parking spaces with charging infrastructure. To achieve this LCC will work with partners in the city to achieve economies of scale. The scope for using spare capacity within the LCC fleet of cars and small vans for staff travel will also be investigated.
- 3.5 Finally, increasing options to work flexibly will also enable positive changes in reducing staff travel. This includes, where possible, offering more choices to manage appointments, workloads and locations to reduce travel needs. This will

complement the Changing the Workplace programme – in terms of accommodation, technology, AV conferencing, customer access, use of other equipment and work planning, etc. Associated opportunities to improve wellbeing and work-life balance are also highly relevant here.

Travel Policy and Terms and Conditions

- 3.6 As well as changing travel arrangements and behaviours, the Executive Board determined that LCC will strive to undertake no Grey Fleet mileage in pure petrol or diesel cars by 2025. This target will be increased to no mileage in private cars unless in zero emission vehicles by 2030. Effectively this means staff who do not drive in an approved vehicle will not be reimbursed for any costs they incur.
- 3.7 The Council is working closely with the trade unions to find a way forward which meets this aim without impacting services or penalising staff as they make this transition. For example, staff on low incomes have been identified as a group that needs particular attention. However, as a growing market for low emission and electric vehicles develops, it is expected staff will be far more able to afford these vehicles. Given the reduced running costs of low emission vehicles, future options to vary the mileage rates and lump sum payments might also apply (e.g. if HMRC rates were to change).
- 3.8 Presently the Council can offer support in terms of a salary sacrifice car leasing scheme for what are termed ULEV (ultra-low emission vehicles - which applies to certain hybrid and all electric vehicles). From April 2020 taxation of these leased vehicles is going to be reduced, making leasing much more cost effective. Employees who are Leeds residents and drive electric vehicles would further benefit as LCC currently offers free parking for LCC operated parking spaces.
- 3.9 As part of the discussion with trade unions, FAQs will be prepared to share with staff that highlight the benefits of switching to hybrids and electric vehicles. This will draw on some of the experience of consulting with taxi and private hire drivers in terms of the cost/benefits of adopting new vehicles. Finally, we will begin a process of monitoring the vehicles staff use to claim mileage to see how we are annually progressing towards 2025 and 2030 targets.
- 3.10 As previously mentioned, this work will also be linked to other options to help staff make more sustainable journeys into work. This will be achieved, for example, by:
- Further increasing the amount of home/remote working staff can undertake.
 - Encouraging shifts to public transport – we are increasing the availability of discounted and season ticket loans and ensuring we stress these options especially for new starters.

- Promoting the cycle to work scheme. We have leased over 400 bikes since 2016 and expect to reach 600 plus by 2020 with a new offer in place for electric bikes.
- Piloting the Lift-Share car sharing app for commuting journeys.

Changing Working Practices and Culture

- 3.11 It is recognised however that these measures will not reduce all travel needs and some roles can currently only be performed effectively if staff use their own vehicles. Key roles are detailed in Appendix III and this reflects service delivery needs. For example, where travel around the city is needed to perform work and meet people. Having held a number of employee focus groups it is clear staff need to be mobile to visit people in their own homes, undertake site visits, meet with clients and carry bulky equipment etc. Some aspects of work are reactive and cannot be planned and for some reasons staff may be required to start and finish as a particular work location.
- 3.12 However, this does not mean all aspects of work cannot be done differently and jobs re-designed to be performed differently in the future. To understand this better some in depth analysis will be undertaken in high use services. Likewise HR can actively consider how new jobs are designed and check that managers are properly considering the climate emergency as a work related issue.
- 3.13 The same applies in terms of management culture and the levels of discretion and choice given to staff to plan their work. To understand this better we will consider new options to involve staff more.
- 3.14 As indicated a series of focus groups were held in 2019 to test staff views on transport issues. Likewise, staff have been in touch with LCC via the Big Climate Conversation; raising many ideas and concerns which apply to issues in the workplace. To build on this, and stimulate wider discussions, a Climate Emergency Staff Forum is being set up. An inaugural meeting took place in January 2020 and further work will be developed. With over 100 staff showing an interest, there is scope to widen dialogue and also ask these staff to model and test ideas in the workplace. Ideally, each directorate can have a small group that can pick up local issues. From the meeting, and follow up feedback, staff were clearly interested in improving the work transport issues covered in this report. Further meetings will be held over 2020 to progress this.
- 3.15 The Trade unions have also voiced support for this approach and have indicated that LCC could work more widely with the regional TUC if this helps both groups understand how climate emergency affects work.

- 3.16 Finally, as LCC develops an overall People Strategy, consideration will be given to ensure there is a focus on the Climate Emergency. This will apply not only in terms of travel, but ensuring staff, and especially managers, are trained and have relevant skills to adapt to new needs.

Co-ordinating this work

- 3.17 Since 2019, various officers have come together to address the themes in this report as a multi-disciplinary team. This is led by the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality and Influencing Travel Behaviour teams, but involves HR, Fleet Management, DIS and Asset Management. Specific targets and milestones will be set to ensure the themes in this report are progressed. Currently the following are planned to be delivered in 2020:

- Piloting of a new EV pool car scheme;
- Delivery of programme of staff engagement and awareness raising, including provision of information for staff on changing vehicles;
- Piloting of digital solutions to support, simplify and integrate travel planning;
- Consultation on and relaunch of the Corporate Travel Plan.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The engagement of staff and trade unions has been reflected within this report.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.4.1 There are no specific equality and diversity implications associated with the content of this report.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This report addresses key issues regarding the Climate Emergency. There are additional aspects that also relate to the Best Council Plan in terms of LCC being an efficient and healthy organisation.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 As mentioned above, this report addresses key issues regarding Climate Emergency.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 It is not expected that additional costs will be incurred in addressing changes with the Grey Fleet. Subject to LCC's financial requirements, if savings are made

consideration will be given to how these might be re-invested to progress policy aims.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with the content of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no specific or immediately significant risks associated with the issues outlined in this report. Proposals put forward in this report will be subject to a formal project management approach and on-going risks managed accordingly.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Having a zero emissions Grey Fleet will mark a major contribution to LCC's overall Climate Emergency aims. This aim is challenging, but by working in collaboration with staff and trade unions this is seen as achievable.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report and request further information on themes which they feel will be helpful in understanding and advising on how policy aims will be better delivered.

7.0 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Mileage Rates

Mileages rates for staff using their vehicles for work purposes have evolved from national terms and conditions, which in the past set rates for different categories of users and car engine size. Since 1997 councils were able to set their own rates, but LCC, like many others retained and index linked the former national rates.

However, in 2014, as part of a wider package to amend terms and conditions an agreement was made with the trade unions that revised and consolidated rates. This shown below and effectively all rates have been frozen for the last 5 years with no changes made to HMRC rates.

Essential users

The lump sum payment paid to essential car users will be £963 per annum. The mileage rate reimbursed will be 40.9p per mile for the first 8,500 miles and 14.4p thereafter. These rates will be frozen and no increase will apply.

Casual Users

Casual car users will be reimbursed at the HMRC mileage rate of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter. The 45p and 25p per mile rates will increase or decrease in line with the approved HMRC mileage rates.

Various other conditions apply regarding the use of vehicles, including criteria for being designated an essential user and reviews of this. For staff who work in Adults and Children and Families there is a lower mileage threshold, reflecting a former fieldworker agreement.

The details of the scheme are attached.

MOTOR CAR ALLOWANCES

For the avoidance of doubt this Policy update replaces Section 6 of Local Conditions of Service, paragraph 63 – Motor Car Allowances as from 1st December 2014

The following local conditions and procedures apply:-

1 Designation Of Car User

For existing roles Chief Officers are authorised to designate an officer as either a casual or essential user. For new roles the decision as to whether or not the post be designated as essential or casual will be taken by the Chief Officer HR. When determining the allocation of an essential user allowance the following criteria should be used:-

- (a) The Officer must travel in excess of 2,500 miles per year on official Council business.
- (b) The vehicle must be used on an average of at least three days per week on official Council business.
- (c) The Officer, as part of their normal duties, is required to carry passengers or bulky equipment on a regular basis.
- (d) The Officer is required to be on emergency standby on a regular basis.
- (e) The officer is required to use their vehicle outside of public transport hours on a regular basis.

To be designated an essential user the officer will need to satisfy at least two of the first three criteria, however, in certain circumstances (d) and (e) can be taken into account.

When determining the allocation of an essential user car status to those individuals or groups who may be classed as 'special cases', the following criteria will be used:-

- (a) Effective use of Officers time
- (b) Vulnerability of the employee
- (c) Areas of recruitment difficulty

When an employee moves from an essential to a casual post or vice versa then with effect from the date of appointment the mileage for that particular year should revert to a nil balance.

The lump sum payment paid to essential car users will be £963 per annum. The mileage rate reimbursed will be 40.9p per mile for the first 8,500 miles and 14.4p thereafter. These rates will be frozen and no increase will apply.

The fieldworkers agreement, agreed in 1986 (social services) covering posts that now fall within Adult Social Care and Children's Services will continue to apply for the specifically

identified posts. The list of job titles covered by the terms of this agreement will be reviewed regularly to ensure that relevant and current job titles are detailed.

Essential car user status will be reviewed every 6 months, April and October, taking into account the previous 12 months mileage claim. Those employees who no longer meet the eligibility criteria will have the essential car user allowance removed. The first review will take place in April 2015

Casual car users will be reimbursed at the HMRC mileage rate of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter. The 45p and 25p per mile rates will increase or decrease in line with the approved HMRC mileage rates.

This updated Section 6 paragraph 63 of the Travel and Subsistence policy supersedes any other documents referencing the essential car user scheme, its allowances and related mileage rates on Insite or otherwise with the exception of any additional variances agreed within the Fieldworker Agreement.

(Changes to Section 63 effective 1st December 2014- Agreed in the Collective Agreement –Changes to Terms & Conditions of Service 2014)

Appendix II

Summary of Claims 2018/19

Car Parking	
Claimants	2216

Casual Users	
Claimants	2080
Miles	1698765
Average Miles	817

Essential Users	
Lump sum claimants	1340
Miles	2,538,616
Average Miles	1894

Appendix III

Claims by Directorate

Directorate	Essential Miles
Adults & Health	669411
Children & Families	1189038
City Development	87077
Civic Enterprise Leeds	35189
Communities & Environment	92715
Resources & Housing	462269
Other	2917
Grand Total	2538616

In terms of job roles a variety of designations are used for different types of work – especially social care related fieldwork in Children and Families and Adults and Health. The following account for just over 50% of essential miles claimed:

Role	Mileage
Social Worker	405341
Adults & Health	101383
Children & Families	303958
SKILs Worker	273436
Adults & Health	273436
Senior Social Worker	231036
Adults & Health	84785
Children & Families	146251
Technical Officer	141819
Communities & Environment	2243
Resources & Housing	139576
Team Leader	90586
City Development	4331
Resources & Housing	86255
Social Work Assistant	85016
Adults & Health	15338
Children & Families	69678
Team Manager	82021
Adults & Health	5571
Children & Families	62756
Resources & Housing	13694