

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Personnel Committee – 15 December 2021

Subject: New and revised HROD policies: Staff Travel and revised Expenses Policy

Report of: Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Summary

To outline new and revised employment policies for the Committee's consideration: the new Staff Travel Policy and the revised Expenses Policy.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve the new policies attached to this report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The staff travel policy has been written following an action in the Manchester City Council Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025. It introduces a travel hierarchy which prioritises lower carbon modes of travel.
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The staff travel policy introduces a travel hierarchy prioritising sustainable modes for in-work travel.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to introduce the new Staff Travel Policy and outline proposed revisions to the Employee Expenses Policy. Comprehensive policy reviews have been undertaken engaging key stakeholders and trade union colleagues.

2.0 New policies

2.1 Travelling Sustainably: Staff Travel Policy

Context

The Staff Travel Policy has been written following a recommendation in the Manchester City Council Climate Action Plan for the Council to reduce its emissions through staff travel by 100 tCO₂ annually. The policy introduces a travel hierarchy based on the carbon emissions of each mode. At the top of the hierarchy is not travelling, with grey fleet miles and air travel at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The policy has been written following analysis of the journeys made by Council Officers by examining data on grey fleet miles claimed, taxis usage, car club miles and flights data both pre and post pandemic to understand where there are opportunities to reduce travel and change the mode of travel for the journeys taken.

This work has included a proposal to bring in a mileage rate for electric vehicles to encourage the transition to a more sustainable grey fleet. Taxi contracts, the Car Club contract and the travel booking tool contract are all being re-tendered in the first half of 2022 which present additional opportunities.

Policy engagement

Given that this is a new policy, significant engagement has taken place to ensure that the policy (and the guidance and training that will follow), meet the needs of staff, and services.

- Discussions have taken place with the HROD Business Partners to look at the data we hold on the way their services currently travel and to understand what the business requirements are now and may be in the future.
- More in-depth discussions with services where there are specific issues relating to travel currently.
- Presentations to the Zero Carbon Coordination Group for Workstream 2.
- Trade Union consultation throughout the different stages of the policy development process.
- The Business Disability Forum have been consulted on the policy to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible.

- A presentation was taken to the Ways of Working Volunteer Group to garner feedback and to address queries.
- Engagement with other organisations who have done similar pieces of work both locally and further afield including: University of Salford, Manchester Metropolitan University, The Christie, and TfGM.

Feedback from all these groups has been fed into the policy.

Policy Content

- The policy highlights the need for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions through staff travel and recognises the impact of our indirect emissions through wider staff behaviours.
- It recognises that the decisions people make about travel need to take into account wider considerations in order for this policy to be inclusive and accessible.
- It Introduces a travel hierarchy that staff should use when making decisions about travel at the top of which is considerations as to whether the travel is needed and prioritising active and sustainable modes.
- Revised guidance and updated content on the intranet will be published to complement the policy.

Approach to Implementation

- Directorates are being engaged on how they can implement the policy within their service areas. Feedback from these discussions will inform interventions that are planned post go-live.
- There is an opportunity to embed the policy through our travel contracts, three of which are being re-tendered in 2022: Taxi Contracts, Travel Booking (Diversity Travel) and the Car Club contract.
- Information on the policy will be added into the Carbon Literacy Training course which is a mandatory training course for staff.
- Monitoring of emissions by mode will continue quarterly which will enable a regular review of the impact of the policy.

3.0 Existing Policies: Review approach

3.1 Expenses Policy

Context

The guidance on how to travel was previously included in the expenses policy, following the extraction of this detail, the expenses policy has been re-worked as a stand-alone policy.

Policy Content

The content is not materially different and the main changes to this policy are:

- Minor changes have been made to the amounts for which staff can claim expenses. These are summarised below:

Expense	Previous amount	New amount	Justification
Flu Vaccination	£10.00	£15.00	Boots, Well and Lloyds all charge between £14-15 for a vaccine. This change has previously been agreed by SMT (6 th July 2021).
Eye Test	£20.00	£25.00	The average cost of an eye test is between £20-25. 293 people claimed for this in 202/21, the increase would mean that the Council would incur additional costs of circa. £1,465
Glasses (single lens)	£25.00	£40.00	For these it is difficult to find average prices.
Glasses (Varifocals)	£60.00	£65.00	

Other changes include:

- Simplifying the language used
- Adding in information on how employees can claim tax relief from the Government if they do any working from home
- Updating the guidance information on the intranet
- Removing reference to historic processes

Following the approval of this new policy, work will need to be undertaken to review some of the claims processes in SAP.

5.0 Comments from Trade Unions

- 5.1 Unison: The method we have used to get to an agreed policy has worked well and has allowed for Trade Union expertise to improve the policy, we welcome this inclusive way of working going forward. The focus on reducing the Council's carbon footprint is clearly important to us all, however it is important that this is matched in changed ways of working to allow this policy to achieve its aims in a way that does not just focus on the actions of individual workers. If we feel that the policy is not working as planned, we reserve the right to come back to personnel committee.

6.0 Comments from the Director of HR/OD

- 6.1 No further comments to add.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Personnel Committee are requested to approve the new Staff Travel Policy and the changes to the Expenses Policy.