

Grey Fleet Policy

July 2021

Agreed by TUs



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out Reading Borough Council's approach to management of the Grey Fleet and how it should be used.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The Grey Fleet Policy covers vehicles that are used by an employee for making a work-related journey (not vehicles owned, hired, or leased by the Council). In most cases this will be a privately-owned vehicle that is used on Council business (not travel to and from normal place of work); however, it could also include a vehicle that an employee has privately hired/borrowed and uses on Council business.
- 2.2. The 'Driving at work/managing work related road safety' guidelines, published by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in 2014, makes it clear that the Council has the same Duty of Care towards all its employees making work-related journeys regardless of vehicle ownership, so the grey fleet needs to be managed in exactly the same way as Council owned or leased fleet. It is an offence for the Council to allow staff to drive their own vehicle on Council business without the appropriate entitlement.
- 2.3. This policy must be read and complied with before any grey fleet use is considered with and, as highlighted in Section 3 Travel Hierarchy, grey fleet use should be used as the last resort. Failure to follow this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

3. Business Travel

- 3.1. The Council is responsible for meeting the cost of travel by its employees on official business. Official travelling means necessary travel for the purpose of:
- attendance at meetings in pursuit of official Council's business
 - attendance at training courses
 - journeys made on work related business
- 3.2. Official travelling does not include travel from home to normal place of work and the return journey.

- 3.3. It is necessary for the Council to review its spending on employee travel and this means reviewing the cost of travel and promoting the most cost-effective method of transport for employees in the first instance as well as highlighting both safety and duty of care issues.
- 3.4. The Council is committed to reducing the impact on the environment from its business travel and the cost of this travel. The Government's vision is for a sustainable Public Sector and includes a target to reduce carbon emissions from road vehicles used for Public Sector operations by 15%. In addition, one of the Council's service priorities in the Corporate Plan is to keep the town clean, safe, green and active, and the Council's Local Transport Plan has the objective of reducing carbon emissions from transport and improving air quality. This means looking at ways to reduce miles travelled and identifying the most efficient methods of transport with lower carbon emissions per mile.
- 3.5. As part of the overall health and safety policy, the Council is also committed to managing the risks that employees encounter when driving for work and all employees are required to fully engage with this.,

4. Necessity of Travel

- 4.1. Employees will only be reimbursed for expenses, which they incur in the course of official travel in line with documented reimbursement rates.
- 4.2. The following considerations must be made prior to every journey, by the employee and their manager, before approval is given for an employee to use their private vehicle for work purposes and to submit mileage a claim. (Section 3.2 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy)
 - Is the meeting/visit absolutely necessary? E.g. can it be done on the telephone or Teams instead?
 - Is 'active travel' possible as an alternative to using own car, e.g. walking, cycling etc (there is a cycle mileage rate of 37p per mile as an incentive for staff to use their own bicycle for work purposes)
 - Staff must use public transport or a pool car instead of their own vehicle wherever possible. Safety and practicality must be considered.

5. Transport Hierarchy of Decision Making

- 5.1. Authorisation will be required by the Line Manager in advance of all journeys.
- 5.2. The following order of priority should be adhered to when travelling on official business (Also see Section 3 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy):
 - Public transport
 - Pool vehicle
 - Private vehicle
- 5.3. For round trips expected to exceed 50 miles, employees should book a pool vehicle on-line rather than use their own vehicle.
- 5.4. In exceptional cases (e.g. where there is a medical condition or disability or other reason) a journey in an employee-owned vehicle may exceed 50 miles. In these cases, authorisation will be required in advance of the journey from the Line Manager.

6. Using a Private Vehicle

- 6.1. Payments may be made to allow employees to use their own vehicles for journeys less than 50 miles, provided this is on Council businesses.
- 6.2. Employees driving for work in their own vehicle must ensure that it always complies with the law, is in a safe and roadworthy condition and is suitable for its purpose. (See [Licence & Vehicle Checks – Guide for Employees](#))
- 6.3. The employee must ensure that:
 - the vehicle meets the minimum safety specifications required by the Council.
 - the vehicle is taxed and, where appropriate, has a valid MOT certificate
 - the motor insurance policy includes business use cover for the amount and type of mileage undertaken and, if necessary, also covers business passengers.
 - possession of a valid licence to drive the vehicle being used
 - no medical reasons prevent the driver using the vehicle

- the vehicle is not used inappropriately, e.g. unsecured load carrying or off-road access.

6.4. When claiming mileage in a private vehicle, the employee must enter the details on to I-Trent and certify the following declaration:

“I certify that the claim is to reimburse expenditure actually and necessarily incurred by me on behalf of Reading Borough Council and that I am aware of and have followed both the grey fleet policy and the travel hierarchy”.

7. Ongoing Governance of Private Vehicle Use

7.1. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to:

- Ensure employees understand their responsibilities to ensure vehicles are legal, safe and well-maintained.
- Check vehicle documents in advance of first use of vehicle for business purposes and at least annually thereafter.
- Follow monitoring, authorisation and reporting procedures to help manage transport usage.

7.2. It is the responsibility of employees using their own vehicles for business to:

- Present the vehicle's MOT certificate, insurance policy and service schedule for inspection in advance of first driving for work and thereafter on an annual basis or at other times when requested by Line Manager
- Present their driving licence for inspection in advance of first driving for work and thereafter on an annual basis or at other times when requested by the Council.
- Notify Line Manager of any changes imposed on their licence, restrictions on ability to drive, material changes to insurance provision and vehicle related issues
- Cooperate with monitoring, authorisation and reporting procedures.

8. Insurance of Private Vehicles

- 8.1. Motor Mileage Allowance will only be paid where the employee holds an insurance policy that covers the driver and vehicle for business use.
- 8.2. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to verify the insurance status of their employees, via either the original insurance document or a cover note. Any material changes to the employee's insurance provision must be notified to the Line Manager.

9. Conditions of Use for Private Vehicles

- 9.1. At those times when an employee-owned vehicle is being used for business purposes, the driver shall not carry any non-Council passengers that is not related to the Council's business requirements.
- 9.2. At these times, the driver shall complete their journey from starting point to destination without undertaking any personal activities.

10. Mileage Claiming Process

- 10.1. Mileage claims shall be paid to employees only when the relevant document and licence checks have been carried out and reported in the correct manner.
- 10.2. All staff must ensure their vehicle; MOT and insurance information is updated when changes occur.
- 10.3. All staff must keep their personal details updated and make the appropriate changes where needed
- 10.4. All mileage claims must be completed and submitted by the end of the following month of the date of the claim, any claims made after this date will be rejected. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from line managers. The Council reserves the right to withhold any payment where written approval has not been sought. (Also see Section 2 – Reimbursement of Expenses Policy)

11. Managing Occupational Road Risk

- 11.1. When opting to drive on Reading Borough Council business it is important to remember and apply the following health and safety best practice:

- Ensure that you familiarise yourself with the controls of any vehicle be it your own vehicle or a pool car/hire car and before setting off you should complete your vehicle roadworthy checks.
- Never use a mobile phone or use other mobile devices whilst driving to avoid possible distraction.
- Always observe speed limits and never drive faster than road or driving conditions safely allow.
- Plan ahead allowing time at the start of any journey for delays end-route: congestion, hold-ups and bad weather.
- Do not undertake a journey if you are under the influence of alcohol /drugs or feel tired or unwell.
- Plan your journey to take enough breaks: a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended.
- You must be able to read a new style number plate from 20 metres (66 feet). If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, you must always wear them whilst driving.

Tool box guides for licence and vehicle checks are on the intranet under iTrent Guides, please see the link <https://intranet.reading.gov.uk/manual/grey-fleet-policy/licence-vehicle-checks-guide-employees>