

Committee: Finance and Resources

Date: 5 December 2023

Report: Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy

Purpose of the report

1. To agree the introduction of the Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy.

Recommendation

2. That Members approve the Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy, set out in **Appendix A**.

Strategic Planning Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework and specifically Corporate Action Plan Objective 33, "Ensure we have HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the work of the Authority effectively".

Background

4. The Authority has not previously had a policy for this particular area of work, instead there have been various guidance notes covering specific issues including 'Essential and casual car users' and 'Ranger Fleet Vehicles' and 'Travel mileage and subsistence'.
5. A number of vehicle related incidents have occurred during the last 12-months, these have been largely due to the volume of new starters and/or individuals, and their managers, not being aware of either the Authority's operational procedures or custom and practice.

Proposal

6. It was recognised the current guidance notes were either ambiguous or no longer referred to, and the new Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy intends to provide the clarity required for staff, managers and the Authority.
7. The new policy combines the key points, with elements from existing procedures included or referenced, enforces the expectation of staff to car share, as well as introduce new topics, such as: checks on Authority vehicles; insurance and carrying passengers; electric charging points; and, driving a mini bus on Authority business.
8. The proposed changes have been shared with UNISON for their comments.

Staffing implications

9. Improving clarity and stating the requirements aligns with the requirements of the Investment in People standard of 'Leading and inspiring people' within the theme of 'Creating transparency and trust'.

Equality implications

10. An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and it is considered that adoption of the new policy will have either a neutral or positive impact on individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Conclusion

11. The new Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy, allows the Authority to communicate expectations on what the Authority expects from staff using vehicles and what staff can expect from the Authority in return.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

17 November 2023

Vehicle Use on Authority Business Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority's policy on the use of any vehicle on Authority business is explained below, and covers specifically:
- Work journeys, public transport and car sharing;
 - Use of a member of staff's own vehicles including essential user status;
 - Authority vehicle fleet (pool cars and ranger vehicles);
 - electric vehicle charging and Authority charge points; and
 - minibuses.
- 1.2 This policy does not cover the following:
- Safety aspects of driving vehicles on Authority business. This can be found in the H&S handbook code of practice (COP) B10 driving, which can be accessed here <\\yorkshiredales\ydnpadata\Health and Safety\01. H&S Handbook\COP B10 - Driving.doc>; and
 - Business expenses payable. This can be found in the Travel, Mileage and Subsistence on Authority Business Guidance, which can be accessed here <\\yorkshiredales\ydnpadata\Corporate Services\Human Resources\Policies\Travel Mileage and Subsistence on Authority Business Guidance Notes Apr 19.doc>.

2. Use of a vehicle on work journeys, public transport and car sharing

- 2.1 The nature and functions of some posts are such that there will be times when it is essential those staff have access to a vehicle in order to fulfil the requirements of their post. In some posts, this need will arise as a matter of routine; the requirement to deliver a service or carry out work away from their work base. For others the need may be less often, but the responsibilities of the post are such that on occasions access to a vehicle is essential to the function of the post and Authority business.
- 2.2 To reduce the Authority's carbon footprint and fuel costs, every effort should be made to select the most economical route. This will usually be the shortest and most direct route. Travelling duties, particularly periodic visits of inspection, should be planned so as to reduce the total mileage to a minimum. Staff must endeavour to car share wherever possible.
- 2.3 For all journeys between Grassington/Colvend, Bainbridge/Yoredale and Hawes/DCM staff are expected to car share unless there is an overriding business reason why this is not possible.
- 2.4 For longer journeys, beyond the National Park and outside of North Yorkshire and Cumbria, there is an expectation that staff will use the most environmentally friendly and economical option for travel (usually public transport rather than a vehicle). The exception would be where it has a significantly disproportionate impact on the overall journey time, and/or the number of people sharing a vehicle makes it a suitable alternative.

3. Essential users

- 3.1 Essential user status applies to those staff who are expected to be able to make a vehicle available for use on Authority business in order for them to be able to fulfil their role effectively. The key purpose of the 'Essential user' designation is to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Authority's business objectives.
- 3.2 Staff joining the Authority will be made aware, during the recruitment process, if the post carries Essential user status. Essential user status will be reviewed whenever there is a substantial and permanent change in the role of a particular post (for example, as might happen during a re-organisation of the Authority).
- 3.3 Any member of staff using a vehicle on Authority business must have a **valid driving licence**. If using their own vehicle, they must have a **valid MOT Certificate** and **'business use' cover** on their insurance for that vehicle. Staff are required to certify their mileage claims to that effect, when submitting their mileage claim.
- 3.4 On joining the Authority anyone using their own vehicle in the course of their work must complete the Self-Declaration Form (see **Appendix 1**). If any changes occur the onus is on the individual member of staff to tell their line manager and HR. The Authority reserves the right to carry out spot-checks and ask to see evidence of the relevant documents.

4. Mileage payments

- 4.1 Staff using their own vehicle on Authority business will be recompensed at the mileage rate approved by His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) – currently 45p per mile. This is the maximum payment permitted before such payments have to be treated as taxable income.
- 4.2 The HMRC mileage rate will be paid for a business journey once the staff member's normal home to designated work base mileage/commute has been deducted. For further details regarding this see **Appendix 2**.
- 4.3 Staff using their own vehicle on Authority business and where business passengers are carried, an additional mileage rate of 5p per mile, per passenger, will be paid for the full distance the passenger(s) is carried.

5. Authority vehicle fleet - pool cars and allocated vehicles

- 5.1 Some rangers and estates staff are allocated Authority fleet vehicles. The Authority also provides pool cars for staff to use as part of their role, that can be booked in advance. These vehicles are available to all staff including essential users. The difference in essential and non-essential user status is that:
 - Non-essential users are expected to make use of a pool car if it is available, and only use their own vehicle as a last resort (e.g. where the trip is essential and no pool cars are available).
 - Essential users may make use of a pool car (although there is no requirement for them to do so). If no pool car is available, then they must make use of their own vehicle.

- 5.2 Pool cars can be booked up to 4 weeks in advance. If a pool car is booked in advance, but not required, the booking must be cancelled and made available to other staff as soon as possible. Pool cars should not be 'block booked', i.e. on the basis that they might be needed, but only where specific activities are scheduled.
- 5.3 Pool cars can be picked up by staff from a location other than their designated work base. Where this is at the individual's discretion and will reduce some, or all, of their normal home to designated work base mileage, the individual will be required to pay the Authority 20p per mile, up to their home to work base mileage saved (see **Appendix 2**).
- 5.4 There may be occasional instances when priority for use of the pool cars will be required for Authority purposes, over and above a booking already made by an individual or team. On these occasions the Head of Park Management, or the Head of HR, will have final authorisation for use of a particular vehicle.
- 5.5 Allocated vehicles, when not in use for extended periods will be made available as pool cars. The Ranger Service and Contracts Support Officer will make staff aware of availability.

6. Vehicle Checks

- 6.1 Before using a pool vehicle, all members of staff must complete a Vehicle Inspection and Defect Report. The report document can be found in each pool vehicle. Any defects must be reported to the Ranger Service and Contracts Support Officer (whose details are included on the front of the Report book) as soon as possible after use.
- 6.2 Staff allocated an Authority fleet vehicle must complete the mileage log and vehicle checks for that vehicle, each week.

7. Insurance and carrying passengers

Authority fleet vehicles must only be used for carrying passengers on Authority business, unless in an emergency. In the event of an emergency, the Head of Park Management, or the Head of HR, need to be notified as soon as possible.

8. Taking an Authority vehicle home at night

The rules governing the taking of **any** Authority fleet vehicle home by any member of staff, overnight, are detailed at **Appendix 3**.

9. Authority electric charging points for Authority fleet vehicles

The Authority will provide designated electric charging points for Authority fleet vehicles only, at some Authority properties. Staff driving any electric fleet vehicle will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the electric fleet vehicle is correctly connected and recharged after each use (at a designated charge point at an Authority property), so it remains

appropriately charged at all times, for normal working practices and/or for others to use.

- Any cost incurred from charging an electric fleet vehicle in and around the National Park, including at a staff member's home, will not be reimbursed. A fleet vehicle should always have sufficient charge for any short journey or home to work journey (ranger fleet)
- For longer journeys e.g. outside of North Yorkshire and Cumbria, where charging at recognised EV points and reimbursement may be necessary, an expenses claim with a receipt must be submitted.

10. Mini bus driving on Authority business

10.1 Staff and volunteers may drive hired minibuses on Authority insurance (not the hire company insurance) under the following conditions:

- Passengers are not making payment for travelling in the minibus;
- For groups of passengers who are not Authority staff there is an appropriate participant/responsible adult ratio for safe group management and same requirements for safeguarding are met;
- The driver has met any training requirements;
- A risk assessment, including risk management for the minibus is in place; and
- The driver has the category D1 included on their driving licence.

10.2 MIDAS training is mandatory for staff whose role requires them to drive minibuses in the course of their work with groups who are not Authority staff, Members and/or volunteers. MIDAS training should be renewed every 4 years, unless a D1 driving test has been taken within that period.

10.3 The responsibilities of the minibus driver, including for passenger safety, are shown at **Appendix 4**.



Appendix 1

Self Declaration Form

This form is to be completed by all staff who either drive an Authority vehicle or their own vehicle(s) on Authority business.

I declare that:

Please tick the statements that apply to you:	
I hold a valid driving licence	
I have business cover insurance to enable my vehicle to be used on business (only required if you drive your own vehicle for Authority business)	
My vehicle has a valid MOT Certificate (only required if you drive your own vehicle for Authority business)	

Please provide the following information about your vehicle:

Engine Size (cc) N/A for Electric Vehicles	Fuel Type (Petrol,/Diesel/Hybrid/Electric)

I am aware that if I need to use my own vehicle for business travel, I need to have relevant business cover on my own car insurance and hold a valid MOT Certificate, if applicable, for the vehicle involved.

I agree to inform my manager and HR immediately if any of the above circumstances change.

Signed

Date



Appendix 2

How is home to work mileage calculated?

Home to work mileage for staff using their own vehicle is calculated on the basis that they should be no worse off, or better off, than having travelled the normal home to designated work base journey.

Where a journey commences from a member of staff's home, the 'Claimable Mileage' is mileage 'over and above' the normal journey to their designated work base. The situation is reversed where they travel home directly after their last official call, i.e. normal home to designated work base mileage needs to be subtracted from the claim, if not travelling from and to their designated work base.

Example 1

A member of staff's work base is Bainbridge (B) and they live in Northallerton (N). Their commute from home to work is 32 miles.

On this particular day they work from Bainbridge in the morning and Aysgarth (A) in the afternoon. They travel home to Northallerton from Aysgarth at the end of the day.

Journey and claimable miles:

- a) N to B = 32 miles – not claimable as usual home to work miles
- b) B to A = 5 miles – claimable* as travelling on work business
- c) A to N = 27 miles – not claimable as usual work to home miles

* Due to the reduced commute home on journey c), the 5 miles travelled on journey b) cannot be claimed for.

Example 2

Using the same scenario above, but the member of staff is allocated an Authority vehicle that they use to travel to and from work and pay 20p per mile for these miles.

Journey and miles payable:

- a) N to B = 32 miles – miles payable as usual home to work miles
- b) B to A = 5 miles – not payable* as travelling on work business
- c) A to N = 27 miles – miles payable as usual work to home miles

* Due to the reduced commute home on journey c), the 5 miles travelled on journey b) won't reduce the usual 64 miles payable, for the day.

Example 3

Using a similar scenario to example 2, but the member of staff travels from home direct to Aysgarth, works all day at Aysgarth and then travels home. 27 miles each way would be payable, not the usual 32 miles each way.

In general, unless the daily mileage is less than the 'home to work' travel then the member of staff will be expected to pay the full mileage amount to and from their work base - in this example 64 miles per day.

Example 4

A member of staff's work base is Grassington (G) and they live in Sedbusk (S). Their commute from home to work is 28 miles.

On this particular day they travel from home to Bainbridge (B) using their own vehicle, pick up a pool car and travel to Grassington. At the end of their working day they travel from Grassington to Bainbridge, drop off the pool car and travel home using their own vehicle.

As the member of staff has travelled 25 miles each way using a pool car, 50 miles, charged at 20p per mile, will be payable to the Authority, by the member of staff

A concession of 5p per mile, per passenger, will be available when a colleague, volunteer or Member is a passenger and where they are eligible to claim mileage.



Appendix 3

Taking an Authority vehicle home

Where staff are supplied with a fleet vehicle, by the Authority, to perform their role they will be allowed to take the vehicle from 'home to work' and vice versa. This is for the staff member to decide, on an individual basis, but must be agreed in advance with the Head of Park Management.

The following conditions will be applied if it is agreed for a member of staff to take a vehicle home:

The member of staff will be responsible for:

- Keeping the vehicle overnight in an agreed suitable parking location, (authorised in advance by their manager);
- Keeping accurate records of 'home to work' and private use (unusual or specific circumstances) in the vehicle log book; and
- Ensuring prompt payment is made to the Senior Administrator, Corporate Services within 5 working days at the end of each calendar month.

The Head of Park Management will be responsible for:

- Agreeing the designated work base for each post;
- Agreeing the 'home to work', and vice versa, daily mileage use. This will be calculated by the staff member's manager; and
- Agreeing, in advance 'private use' of the vehicle in unusual or specific circumstances, and at the same mileage rate as for 'home to work' travel.

The reimbursement rate for use for 'home to work' travel and vice versa or private use will be 20p per mile payable:

- Subject to review, at least every three years, and/or when other terms and conditions are reviewed within the Authority; and
- For weekend and bank holiday working 'home to work' travel conditions are the same as any weekday.

The reimbursement rate will not be charged when:

- Use of the Authority vehicle is wholly outside the normal working day (8:30 – 17:00) e.g. when someone travels from home to an evening meeting, having already applied 'home to work' or 'work to home' travel costs for the normal working day.
- In the event of an unusual scenario relating to use of the vehicle, and Authority business, any request for use will be considered by the manager in conjunction with the Head of Park Management to ensure continuity of decision making.
- An Authority vehicle is off the road or required by the Authority for business purposes. In these circumstances the Authority will endeavour to provide an alternative vehicle, but this is not guaranteed.
- In circumstances when staff do not wish to use an Authority vehicle for 'home to work' travel. In these circumstance the vehicle will be left at the work-base in an agreed suitable parking location, and left in a safe manner as determined by the Head of Park Management.

The Head of Park Management, in conjunction with the Head of HR, will have final authorisation for issues relating to that of suitable parking locations, daily mileage to and from work-base and general use of a vehicle.

The relevant conditions above also apply on the rare occasion an individual chooses, and is given permission, to take a pool car home.



Appendix 4

Driving a minibus on Authority business

The driver will be responsible for:

- Checking the exterior and interior of the vehicle is in a safe condition on collection of the minibus.
- Confirming the Authority's insurance arrangements with the hire company or organisation.
- Making arrangements for fuel on return.
- If the minibus is to be kept overnight that this has been agreed with their manager and the parking place must meet any requirements set out in the hire contract.
- Returning the minibus in the same condition, inside and out, as it was on collection.
- Reporting any issues and/or incidents to the hire company or organisation on returning the minibus and to the Senior Administrator, Corporate Services in relation to insurance.
- The safety of the passengers and other road users.

Passenger safety:

- Seat belts must be worn by all passengers when the vehicle is in motion.
- There must be enough responsible adults travelling with group to maintain appropriate behaviour and to assist in the case of an emergency. Further details can be found in the H&S handbook code of practice (COP) B4 Safety Management of Authority Group Activities, which can be accessed here <X:\Health and Safety\01. H&S Handbook\COP B4 - YDNPA group activities.doc>
- Where passengers are wheelchair users, the visiting group leader is responsible for securing the wheelchairs.
- Equipment and baggage must be secured to prevent contact with passengers or blocking escape routes in the event of an accident.
- Drop off and pick up points must be identified in the risk assessment. Unless unavoidable, passengers should disembark away from traffic. Where this is not possible measures to keep passengers away from traffic must be outlined in the risk assessment.