

ESSENTIAL CAR USER SCHEME

APPLICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

- 1 The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for developing and reviewing this scheme in conjunction with the Chief Executive and other Corporate Directors. Individual Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring that the scheme is implemented and maintained within their services. This scheme does not apply to those employees who are the responsibility of school governing bodies.
- 2 Each employee must meet the travel requirements for their post. Mileage for business travel will be reimbursed using casual and essential user allowances.
- 3 Where business mileage is incurred, in addition to ensuring their vehicle is safe, roadworthy, and has a valid MOT certificate where necessary, employees must, at their cost, maintain an insurance policy that indemnifies the Council against third party claims (including those concerning passengers) arising from the use of their vehicle on official business. Business Use insurance will normally provide this cover. Where an allowance is provided, employees will be required to provide a car and to use it for business journeys. An individual may elect not to do this (unless the contract of employment and/or job description specifies that a car must be provided) and they will not receive the allowance.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 4 An individual is designated as an essential user if they:
 - a) exceed 4,999 business miles per annum; or
 - b) exceed 2,499 business miles per annum **and** satisfy one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. regularly (at least three times per week on average) transport customers or work related equipment which cannot be reasonably carried on public transport; or
 - ii. regularly (at least three times per week on average) travel to places where no public transport is available due to the time of travel or the location; or
 - iii. Undertake, on a daily basis, several small journeys that are an integral part of the post.
- 5 Heads of Service will determine eligibility based on the criteria in b) above. Where a Head of Service or above is the employee in question, their immediate line manager will decide. The Council's Grievance Procedure will apply to settle any disputes, although Stage 1 of the procedure will be omitted as only Heads of Service can authorise essential car user allowances.

REVIEW

- 6 Eligibility for essential user allowances will be reviewed annually in April based on mileage claims for the previous year. Changes will come into effect on 1 June annually. If the criteria are not met in any year, the post holder will no longer be paid the allowance, subject to three months' notice being given. Where a user becomes eligible having previously been a casual user, essential user allowances will be paid but no retrospective payments will be made.
- 7 Employee Services will send notice and remove the allowance from all employees who have driven less than 2,500 business miles in the previous financial year, and will pay the allowance, from 1 June, to those who have driven 5,000 miles or more. Heads of Service will be required to evaluate those who have driven between 2,500 and 4,999 miles.

Employee Services will provide a list to each head of service for verification and final approval.

- 8 The three months' notice will be extended to twelve months in the case of an employee being asked to undertake a temporary role to cover sickness, or maternity, paternity or adoption leave where taking that role would otherwise result in the loss of the allowance. Twelve months will be the maximum notice period. Heads of Service will be required to contact Employee Services in these cases.
- 9 Employees must inform their manager and Employee Services immediately if they believe they have been allocated essential car user allowance status in error, and payments will be recovered in these cases whether or not the employee has notified their manager and Employee Services.
- 10 This scheme will be subject to review as necessary, and if it is changed or ceased by the Policy Board, three months' notice of any change or cessation will be given to employees. No other protection will apply. For the avoidance of doubt, this scheme is non-contractual and payments are non-pensionable.

NEW EMPLOYEES

- 11 New employees or those that move roles will be eligible to join the scheme on their appointment if they can reasonably be expected to meet the criteria of the scheme. If there is a previous postholder, their mileage will be considered in this assessment. The Head of Service must confirm eligibility. Employees joining part way through the year will have mileage eligibility criteria and lump sum payments calculated pro-rata. Employees who join part way through the year will have their mileage assessed the following April on a pro rata basis to determine whether they remain eligible.

PART TIME EMPLOYEES

- 12 Part time employees will have lump sum payments and mileage based eligibility criteria calculated pro rata.

ABSENCES

- 13 Where an employee is absent due to maternity, paternity or adoption leave, lump sum payments will be paid throughout this period.
- 14 Where an employee is absent due to illness, lump sum payments will be paid for the remainder of the month in which the absence commenced, and for a further three months thereafter.
- 15 Where a car is not in use as a result of needing essential repairs, providing this is for no more than one month, the lump sum payment will continue to be paid. In addition, on production of receipts, reimbursement will be made for actual costs incurred if using public transport.

ALLOWANCE RATES

- 16 Essential users are paid according to the following table and will be paid in 12 equal instalments. Employees must claim lump sums and mileage according to the process set out by the Council. Rates will be subject to annual review by the Head of Corporate Services in

consultation with the relevant Policy Board member. Any changes to the rates payable will be published on the Council's intranet site; individual notice will not be provided.

	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200cc and above
Lump Sum	£846	£963	£1,239
Per mile first 6,000	36.9p	40.9p	50.5p
Per mile after 6,000	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p

Casual users are paid at the HMRC rates

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 17 Those employees who are currently protected on the recruitment and retention lease car scheme ending on 31 May 2014 will be entitled to join this scheme on 1 June 2014.
- 18 For the 2013/14 financial year where this new scheme only applies for part of the year, eligibility will be based on 2012/13 mileage. Lump sum payments and the thresholds for the lower essential and casual user mileage payments will be calculated pro rata.