



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CLIMATE CHANGE,
BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION**

MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Reducing the Environmental Impact of Council Grey Fleet Mileage

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Council's Staff Travel Policy, Council grey mileage trends, and set out a forward plan of activities to further reduce carbon emissions associated with Council business travel.

2. Information and Analysis

Background

- 2.1 Corporate business travel in this report is focused on reducing the environmental impact of the 'grey fleet mileage'. Grey fleet mileage is defined as any journey undertaken in the direction of an employee's duty which involves use of a motorised vehicle owned by them. Employees duties include attending seminars, conferences, ad hoc training and vocational training funded by the Council.
- 2.2 A Staff Travel Policy is currently in place which sets out the guiding principles that underpin business travel for working arrangements, and are as follows:
- Culture and associated working arrangements are built on mutual trust.
 - The Council recognises the importance of flexibility, the need to reduce our carbon footprint in delivering its services to residents and communities.

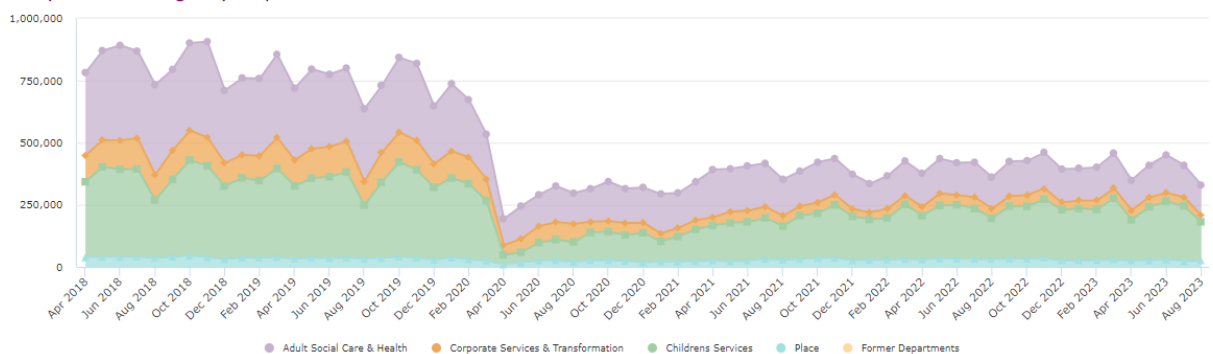
- All employees have a responsibility to take the most appropriate and sustainable method of transport, co-ordinating travel, where possible, to keep the number of separate car journeys to an absolute minimum.
- Employees must travel by the most cost-effective route and should only undertake Council work related journeys that are absolutely necessary.
- All travel arrangements are agreed with the relevant line manager.

2.3 Before authorising mileage and expenses, managers are required to consider whether alternative means of transport/online meeting communication would be more appropriate than driving. Where a work-related journey is essential employees should seek to use one of the electric pool cars rather than their own vehicle. The exception to this will be when there are no pool cars available or unable to use public transport or walk or cycle.

2.4 Notably, since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has fully adopted the use of hybrid working (a mixture of home and office working) and use of online meeting platforms into usual working practices. Available data shows that 81% of meetings held in the Council’s hybrid meeting rooms have been held partially online. This trend is aligned to national changes in hybrid working where 44% of workers reported home or hybrid working, and 56% reported only travelling to work in the last seven days (September 2022 to January 2023).

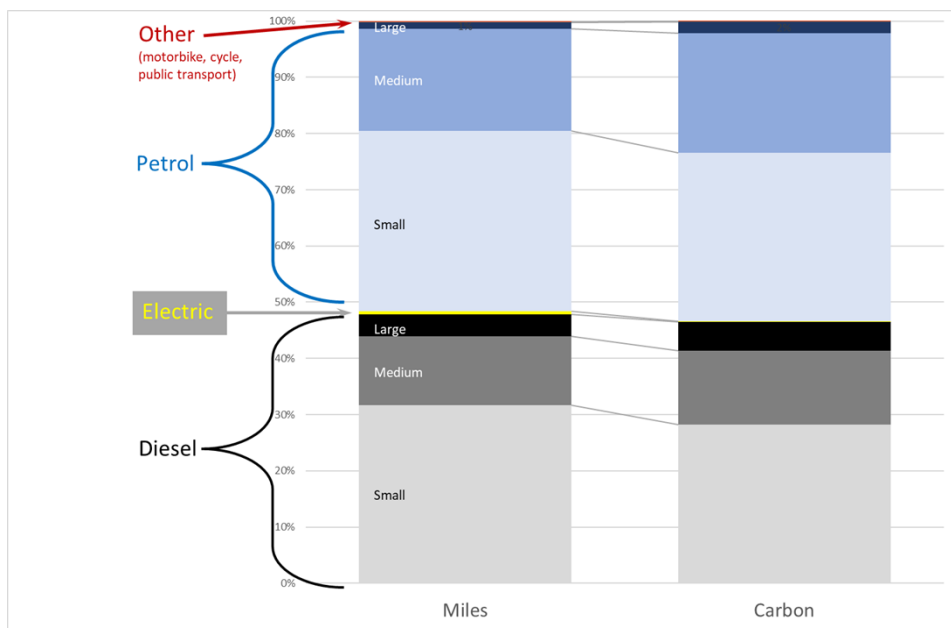
2.5 Whilst online meeting platforms have been adopted, it is clear that travel remains essential for some Council operations and employee duties, particularly in adult social care, child protection and delivery of place-based projects. Analysis of grey fleet mileage demonstrates that in some Council Departments as few as four divisions can be responsible for over 90% of grey fleet mileage. Consequently, the forward programme set out in this report recognises a need for a more focused approach to reduce carbon emissions associated with essential travel.

Grey fleet mileage by department



2.6 Analysis of grey fleet mileage data has highlighted good potential to undertake a more focused approach which utilises data on employee vehicle engine sizes and their fuel type to further tackle carbon emissions. A methodology has been developed which provides a clearer insight into where resources can be prioritised to deliver a greater reduction in carbon emissions; as opposed to using average vehicle data with unknown fuel types. The Committee should note that this methodology underestimates grey fleet emissions by approximately 8%, but the benefits of a more granular dataset outweighs this factor in determining where actions should be targeted to reduce carbon emissions.

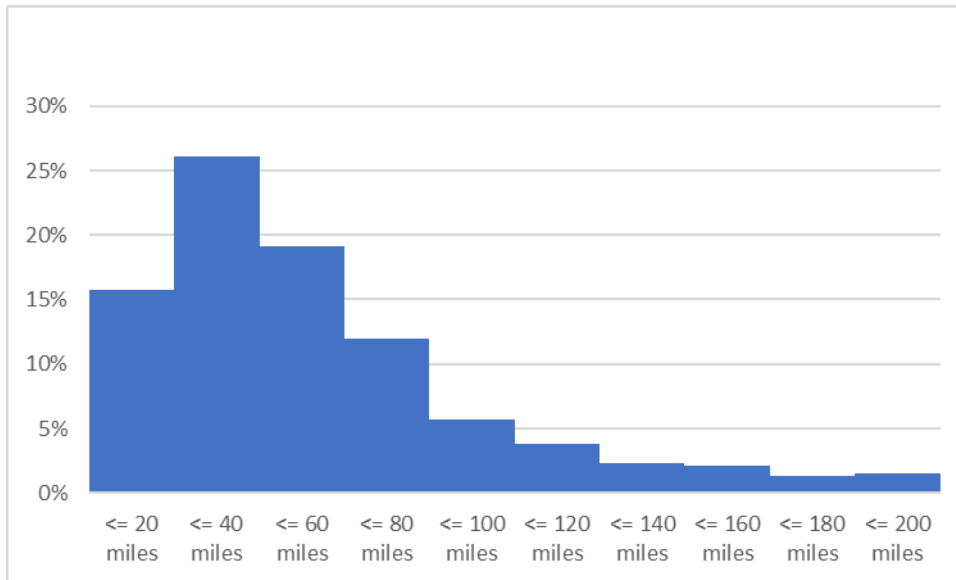
2.7 It is estimated that 64% of employee grey fleet mileage is currently undertaken in smaller engine petrol or diesel cars, which will have lower carbon emissions despite being powered by fossil fuels. Less than 1% of grey mileage is currently undertaken in electric or other low emission vehicles.



2.8 Grey fleet mileage data is now also available to assist with understanding the length of individual trips undertaken by employees, and therefore inform which are the most appropriate travel choices for essential journeys. Key findings are:

- Less than 0.5% of claims are for journeys of 5 miles or less and only 2% for 10 miles or less. Whilst a low percentage of overall mileage, there is potential to target up to 245,000 miles annually by providing increased travel choice for active travel and public transport which are more appropriate for short journeys.

- 79% of journeys are less than 100 miles and a further 11% between 100 and 200 miles. Consequently, the highest opportunity for grey fleet mileage reduction will be to further increase the use of online meeting software, encourage use of bus and rail travel, and replace diesel and petrol car journeys with low emission car journeys e.g. electric vehicles.



Forward Programme

- 2.9 An update on the range of interventions available to employees to support more sustainable travel choices was provided to the Committee at its previous meeting. This report now sets out a forward programme of work that will be completed to support a further reduction in grey fleet mileage and associated carbon emissions.

1. Children’s Services Pilot Grey Mileage Reduction

- 2.10 Children’s Services Department has been highlighted as having a Service with the highest grey mileage. Two pilot exercises have been included into the proposed forward programme to work closely with Children’s Services employees to better understand business travel requirements and to how carbon emissions can be reduced. The intention is to use the pilot exercises to develop a proposal that can then be replicated and implemented across the Council.

Pilot Group 1: Generic Children's Services grey mileage group – Fostering Team

2.11 The overall aim is to promote actions that could lead to the reduction in carbon emissions from Children's Services Grey Mileage. The pilot will be led by the Climate Change team and will:

- Understand grey mileage patterns in Children's Services and the potential to change how journeys are planned and undertaken.
- Develop a hierarchy of low carbon travel options to consider and understand how the Council can change behaviour to ensure success.
- Co-design actions/solutions that could be implemented to reduce grey mileage, including provision of information and tools, e.g. a grey mileage toolkit.
- Promote and monitor these actions to understand their success.

Pilot Group 2: Children's Services group with access to electric vehicle pool car hubs – High Peak Electric Vehicle Hub

2.12 Overall aim is to co-design a method for promoting the use of electric vehicles as the first vehicle of choice. The aim will be to understand the level of travel demand and to how the available electric vehicle fleet can be optimised to meet that demand. The pilot will be led by the Climate Change team and will:

- Understand which journeys are suitable for electric vehicle pool car use.
- Understand the how electric vehicles are used in the Hub and develop a hierarchy of other options to reduce grey fleet emissions.
- To co-design actions/solutions that could be implemented to reduce grey mileage, including provision of information and tools.
- To promote and monitor these actions to understand their success.

Forward Programme: Estates Electric Vehicle Charging network

2.13 In July 2023, the Council established a focused Project Delivery Group (PDG), with representatives from key services to develop the Council estates electric vehicle charging network. The Council's Sustainable Travel team facilitates the PDG meetings and provides overarching project management support. As this project develops it will require increasing levels of support and input from the various services involved.

- 2.14 PDG responsibilities include the delivery of pilot sites and the work required to provide a comprehensive, estate wide charging network. With the former acting as a proof of concept of a Council owned charging system. The pilot phase is currently working to deliver up to 12 electric vehicle charge-points across six sites. Notably focusing initially on the urgent need to provide this service to the Adult Social Care and Health and Childrens Services to support a reduction in grey fleet mileage. Taking this phased approach will allow the Council to evaluate the model, test reporting mechanisms (including energy off-setting and cost recouping), as well as providing an opportunity for testing operating systems away from County Hall such as vehicle booking, vehicle management, fault and issue reporting, and service performance.
- 2.15 Further development of a comprehensive charging network – the Strategic Roll out – where multiple sites, use cases and vehicles are involved will require a far more detailed investigation. This will include, but not be limited to, detailing both existing and forecast demand, site feasibility, electric capacity assessments, and engaging with suppliers to further understand the options available and the cost and energy impacts of a large-scale installation.

Forward Plan: Smarter Travel Hub

- 2.16 The Committee received a report on the various interventions available to support employees to adopt smarter and sustainable options for their journey to work, for business travel, and to reduce travel. Whilst the range of measures is considered effective to support increased sustainable travel choices it is proposed to review how these measures can be brought together more effectively as a one-stop-shop to provide easy access to smarter travel options. This will include:
- Refresh of the Miles Better – travel to work campaign and extend this to encourage use of sustainable travel modes for business travel.
 - Promotion of the county-wide car share scheme provided by 'Kinto Join' which enables a journey matching service to support employees making shared journeys.
 - Promote the availability of electric vehicles and charge-point locations across the County.
 - Encourage further uptake of the cycle to work scheme (over 900 bicycles purchased under this scheme to date), including purchase of an electric bicycle – up to £3,000.
 - Further development of an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme.
 - Promotion of public transport options and the availability of discounted travel tickets.

Grey fleet emissions targets

- 2.17 Targets for grey fleet emissions have been developed for each Department, starting from a baseline of 2021-22. It was assumed that the proportion of emissions for each Department remains the same with a linear trajectory to zero by 2031-32. Each departmental management team is encouraged to incorporate these targets into Departmental and Divisional Service Plans with each Department taking responsibility for achieving the target.
- 2.18 Targets will be achieved through reduction in grey fleet mileage (e.g. through use of corporate vehicles) and through gradual improvement of vehicle emissions.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 There is no consultation associated with this paper. As each workstream and project is developed and implemented, engagement with Council staff, senior officers and members is undertaken where necessary and appropriate.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Option 1: No action - Taking no action to reduce the environmental impact of business travel would not support the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to reach the Council's target to achieve net zero emissions across the County by 2050.
- 4.2 Furthermore, officers will continue to consider, review, and explore all existing, new and alternative schemes and initiatives that can further reduce the environmental impact of travel for businesses purposes by Council staff.

5 Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 None identified.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

8 Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a) Notes the current Staff Travel Policy in place and to how this is implemented to minimise grey fleet mileage.
- b) Notes the analysis of grey fleet mileage data and current trends.
- c) Notes the proposed forward plan to further reduce carbon emissions associated with employee business travel.

9 Reason for Recommendations

- 9.1 To ensure appropriate information and understanding of the various work programmes to reduce carbon emissions and encourage more sustainable travel.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The Estates charging project has secured a Capital budget of £300,000 secured across three years (2022-2025) for the installation of electric vehicle charge points on Council premises to serve fleet and pool vehicles.
- 1.2 All projects detailed in this paper are live and ongoing, and are being delivered by the Climate Change and Sustainable Travel teams using existing budgets. There is no requirement for any further financial commitments from the Council at this time.
- 1.3 Where additional spend is required, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Legal

- 2.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Human Resources

- 3.1 It is expected that the current staffing arrangement within the Sustainable Travel, Climate and Fleet Management teams will be adequate to deliver on ambitions stated in this report.

Information Technology

- 4.1 Bookable services such as car share schemes, Electric Vehicle charging points, rail ticketing etc require reliable digital connectivity. Such implications are considered at project development stage to ensure deliverability.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The delivery of specific actions within this paper may have Equalities Impact implications for the Council. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The actions set out in this paper support the Council's commitments to tackling climate change and reduce vehicle borne emissions, as set out

in the Derbyshire County Council Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025) and Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy (2019-2029).

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 Environmental sustainability considerations are embedded in the overall programme of work described above and in the individual projects.