

Report to:	Pay and Grading Committee	Date of Issue:	28 November 2022
	Cabinet		5 January 2023
Subject:	Recruitment and Retention Initiatives for Council Staff		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cabinet Member- Communities and Housing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report seeks approval of three elements in respect of payments to employees of the Council.

Two of these elements are applicable to all Council employees and relate to staff travel, whilst one is applicable only to staff employed within Children's Social Care and relates to retention payments.

Following consideration by Pay and Grading Committee, Cabinet will be requested to approve changes as set out.

Recommendation(s):

The Pay and Grading Committee are asked to recommend **that Cabinet approves:**

- (1) The removal of the 50% reduction in the Out of Borough car mileage rate.
- (2) The introduction of Essential Car Mileage which attracts a lump sum payment and shall be applied only to posts that meet the criteria as set out in this report.
- (3) The increase in the annual retention payment for social workers within the Children's Social Care locality teams from £2,000 to £5,000 in accordance with the criteria detailed within the report; and
- (4) For any services impacted by the changes contained within this report, the costs must be fully funded and vired from existing budgets in accordance with the council's financial procedure rules before any offer or change is proposed to employees.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The recommendations will support the recruitment and retention of staff within the council and also reflect the additional cost of running a vehicle for use on council business at this time.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

All revenue costs must be contained within existing budgets- budget virements in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules must be completed before any changes are proposed to staff or the implementation of any of these proposals within a service

(B) Capital Costs

There are no capital costs arising

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): Any resources implications are detailed in the report	
Legal Implications: All legal implications have been considered	
Equality Implications: The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated as much as possible.	
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y
The proposals within this report should not increase the use of cars by staff within the borough, merely appropriately re-imburse the cost of doing so	
The use of alternative public transport is to be maintained unless the business need justifies the use of the car.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: This report will support recruitment and retention especially within Children's Social Care which will in turn help to support the boroughs most vulnerable residents
Facilitate confident and resilient communities:
Commission, broker and provide core services:
Place – leadership and influencer:
Drivers of change and reform:
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Chief Executive Officer (FD 7013/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5213/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

The proposals have been shared with the recognised Trade Unions and consultation will continue as appropriate and any comments have been recognised.

(B) External Consultations

Not Applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet Member decision.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council continues to review the terms and conditions for its staff within the context of the Green Book- following the latest review there are 3 proposed changes that are presented for member decision. In presenting these options it is intended that the sum payable for using a car for those staff who are required to do so will be more comparable to the cost incurred.
- 1.2 In addition, it is proposed to increase the retention payment for social work staff within the locality teams to improve recruitment and retention.

2.0 Proposals for approval and implementation

Out of Borough Car Mileage Rates

- 2.1 At present the car mileage rate is 45 pence per mile for journeys that take place within the Borough. For journeys outside of the Borough this is reduced by 50% and has been for some time. This policy reflected the aim of encouraging staff to use alternative transport methods.
- 2.2 The Council like most councils has a proven track record of using alternative methods (e.g., trains) than previously. However, taking into consideration the current petrol prices and the cost associated with 'wear and tear' on vehicles, it is recommended that the 50% reduction should be removed.
- 2.3 It is estimated based on car mileage claimed for in 2021/22 that this will cost around £10,000 in year. This will need to be met from existing budgets within individual Service areas who will need to review potential claims and identify the budget to cover the claims before completing a budget virement, in accordance with financial procedure rules, to meet the cost. This exercise must be completed before the system becomes live.
- 2.4 It should be noted that there will be instances where the use of a private car is the best mode of transport for out of borough journeys in order to meet the council's business need. E.g., a member of staff within Children's Social Care is supporting a child/young person by travelling together. Where a member of staff is travelling out of borough for other council business, the claim should only be processed to reimburse the cheapest mode of transport that is available. For instance, if the train fare is cheaper than the car mileage that would be due, if the employee chooses to use their car, they may only make a claim for the cost of the train fare. This must be applied to all cases of this nature.

Essential Car User

- 2.5 The Council has not supported certain posts attracting the status of 'essential car user' for some time. Again, this was to reflect the financial environment the council was in and to encourage non car travel. There are however some posts where it may be appropriate for that post to attract that status, for example, where the postholder is required to have a car available for work and where the postholders duties will involve travelling many miles over the course of the year and therefore additional financial support is required to cover additional cost of running the vehicle.
- 2.6 If such posts are determined, the costs again must be met from existing individual Service area budgets with a budget virement taking place in accordance with financial procedure rules before any offer is communicated to an employee. It is important that any such award is made to the post and not a person and Executive Directors and Assistant Directors must be cognisant that a specific job description can cover multiple employees who would receive such an award.
- 2.7 As such, Executive Directors should seek approval from the Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources if they wish to award an essential car user allowance based on the following criteria: -
- a. The post being required to always have a car available for the role; and
 - b. The post being expected to travel over 1500 business miles in a financial year i.e., April to March.
- 2.8 Both criteria a and b must be met with the latter being evidenced by the travel claims made and recorded within the council's core system for the previous year. Upon identification of posts where it is proposed to make an essential car user award, the relevant job description and person specification must be updated, and details shared with the relevant recognised trade unions and staff members as appropriate. The above criteria must be in place before any award is made and if there are certain members of staff on the same job description who will not receive the user allowance then this should be justified in writing for communication to trade unions and staff. All allowances will be reviewed every 12 months by Executive Directors and if the key criteria are not met in the previous 12 months the allowance will be removed.
- 2.9 There may be instances where the criteria set out in paragraph 2.7 can not be met for example if the claims history does not amount to 1500miles. In such circumstances, based on required business need and the view of the Executive Director being that the role will be required to have a car available for the post and will complete 1500 miles in the forthcoming year an award can be made- in this case this will be formally reviewed after 12 months and if the mileage has not been completed the allowance will be removed. Approval in this circumstance will again come through the Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources

Retention Payments- Children's Services Locality Teams

- 2.10 Members will recall that approval was previously provided to offer an annual £2,000 supplement to particular social worker posts within Children's Services to

support recruitment and retention. From review, it is considered that this offer has had limited success in some teams at a time when the challenges remain.

- 2.11 As a result, it is proposed that this retention payment be increased from £2,000 per annum to £5,000 per annum from 1 February 2023. This will be payable in 1 lump sum at the end of the 12-month period for those staff in the identified social work locality teams within Children's Services only. The previously agreed annual retention measures will remain in place within Children's Services, with their impact continuing to be reviewed after a further 12 months. Thereafter, if extended further, it will also be reviewed annually.
- 2.12 If the member of staff leaves within 12 months of receiving the payment a sliding scale of repayment will apply to recover this payment, i.e., if the employee leaves in the month after receiving the sum, they will need to repay the additional £3,000- this sum will reduce by £250 in each subsequent month.
- 2.13 In accordance with the previous 2 measures in this report and the current recruitment and retention measures in place, this proposal will be met and be contained within existing and approved budget provision with the appropriate budget virement being completed in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.