



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources
Subject:	Publication of Employee Travel Costs
Date:	18 June 2010
Reporting Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance & Resources, Ext. 6083
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Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that they approved the Policy for Staff Attending Events at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24 October 2008. As part of that policy, it was agreed that information relating to staff attending events and the associated travel would be published on an annual basis, starting with the information relating to the year 2008/2009. The information was to be published annually by 30 June.

The information for 2009/10 is now prepared for publication on the council's website.

Key Issues

The analysis of staff travel for the year 2009/2010 and the comparison with previous years is outlined below:

Staff Travel Costs

Year	Cost*	No Visits	No Events
2005/2006	£312,942	1052	687
2006/2007	£299,381	971	645
2007/2008	£318,020	1081	695
2008/2009	£221,882	713	516
2009/2010	£157,073	570	433

*the cost of travel does not include the fees associated with attendance at training courses, seminars, conferences, etc..

The cost of travel has reduced by £64,809 (29.21%) from the previous year, the number of trips has reduced by 143 (20%) and the number of events by 83 (16%) over the same period. The cost of travel is lower in 2009/2010 than in any of the previous years.

An analysis on the reasons for travel shows that the cost relating to employee training and development represents 41% (35% in 2008/09). The cost relating to improving our services was 43% and the percentage relating to Promoting Belfast represents 16% of the total spend.

Summary of Travel Locations – 2009/10

	GB	ROI	Europe	USA	ROW	Total
Total in 2009/10	85,069	6,122	53,397	9,702	2,783	157,073
Percentages	54%	4%	34%	6%	2%	100%
(Decrease) from 2008/09	(48,228)	(3,962)	(3,347)	(5,285)	(3,987)	(64,809)

Travel within Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland accounted for 58% of the total; the percentage of travel to Europe represented 34% and the rest of the world 8%.

Publishing Staff Travel

As last year it is proposed that the most effective way to present the information is the category of the event in date order. There will be four categories:-

- Employee Training and Development
- Improving our Services
- Promoting Belfast
- Cost Recouped from customers

The following information will be published for each event attended:-

- Department
- Job title and staff number
- Date of the event
- Description of the event
- Event location – GB, ROI, Europe and rest of world
- Cost of Travel
- Cost of Accommodation and subsistence
- Gross cost
- % of external funding
- Funding Body
- Net cost to the council

There will be a front page explaining the categories and the information provided. A copy of this is attached at Appendix 1. The full details of the proposed published information can be provided to members on request.

Further Proposed Control on Staff Travel

It is vital that staff travel is only occurred where it is appropriate and justified and that the Council has appropriate controls in place to ensure that this is the case. While a significant number of controls are already in place to ensure that any travel is justified and appropriately approved, it is proposed that a further control is added in relation to travel by officers outside the UK and ROI. It is therefore recommended that such travel must be approved either directly by members through the Committee process or by the appropriate Director **and** the Director of Finance and Resources or Chief Executive.

Resource Implications

The cost of staff attending events has reduced in the financial year 2009/2010 which represents a reduction in financial cost to the council.

Recommendations

Members are requested to :

- (a) note the report and the publication of the information on the council's website;
and
- (b) agree that travel by officers outside the UK and ROI must be approved either by the relevant Committee or the relevant Director and the Director of Finance and Resources or Chief Executive

Decision Tracking

None

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Information relating to the publication of details on staff travel