



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Publication of Employee Travel Costs
Date:	19 August 2011
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Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that a Policy for Staff Attending Events was approved at a meeting of 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 to be published annually by 30 June.

Further to this at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20 August 2010 further controls over travel by officers outside the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland were agreed as follows:

1. Where an officer is travelling with members, then the relevant committee must approve the travel
2. Where an officer is not travelling with members, then the appropriate director and the Director of Finance and Resources must approve the travel
3. In cases under 2 where the officer travelling is the Director of Finance and Resources or where the Director of Finance and Resources is not available, then the appropriate director and the Chief Executive must approve the travel
4. In addition, in cases under 2 and 3, the relevant committee must also approve the travel, if in the judgement of the Director of Finance and Resources / the Chief Executive either:
 - a. The cost of the event is likely to be questioned or
 - b. Attending the event is potentially controversial or of interest to the media or the public.

These controls along with the awarding of the travel contract to Knock Travel have led to further reductions in the cost of travel.

The information for 2010/11 is now prepared for publication on the council's website.

Key Issues

The analysis of staff travel for the year 2010/2011 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
2010/2011	£109,557	417	334

*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 £47,516 (30.25%) from the previous year and that the number of trips has reduced by 153 (26.84%) and the number of events by 99 (22.86%) over the same period. The cost of travel is lower in 2010/2011 than in any of the previous years and represents 0.07% of council expenditure.

An analysis on the reasons for travel shows that the cost relating to employee training and development represents 43.25%. This is 2.22% higher than the previous year (41.03%).

The categories of service/operational visits, research, study or best practice and professional networking will be published as 'improving our services'. The cost relating to these activities was 24.71%. This is a reduction of 18.25%% on the previous year (42.96%).

The percentage relating to Promoting Belfast represents 32.04% of the total spend. The previous year was 16.01%.

Summary of Travel Locations – 2009/10

Department	GB	ROI	Europe	USA	ROW	Total
Chief Executives	2,757	160	1,464	1,360		5,741
Development	16,705	2,378	38,111	8,342	2,783	68,319
Finance & Resources	15,607	975	659			17,241
Health & Environmental	30,708	1,304	6,697			38,709
Parks & Leisure	13,168	1,305	4,887			19,360
Property & Projects	6,124		1,579			7,703
Totals	85,069	6,122	53,397	9,702	2,783	157,073
Percentages	54.16%	3.90%	34.00%	6.18%	1.77%	100.00%
Increase (Decrease)	/(48,228)	(3,962)	(3,347)	(5,285)	(3,987)	(64,809)

Summary of Travel Locations – 2010/11

Department	GB	ROI	Europe	USA	ROW	Total
Chief Executives	1,556	836				2,392
Development	18,504	565	22,400	7,404		48,873
Finance & Resources	4,191	572	2,294			7,057
Health & Environmental	20,613	209	4,479		1,214	26,515
Parks & Leisure	10,783	10	2,969			13,762
Property & Projects	9,217	377	1,364			10,958
Totals	64,864	2,569	33,506	7,404	1,241	109,557
Percentages	59.21%	2.34%	30.58%	6.76%	1.11%	100.00%
Increase / (Decrease)	(20,205)	(3,553)	(19,891)	(2,298)	(1,569)	(47,516)

Travel within Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland accounted for 61.55% of the total; the percentage of travel to Europe represented 30.58 % and the rest of the world 7.87%. This compares to 58.06%, 34.00% and 7.94% respectively for the previous year.

Publishing Staff Travel

As last year it is proposed that the most effective way to present the information is use 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.

Resource Implications

The cost of staff attending events has reduced in the financial year 2010/2011 which represents a reduction in financial cost to the council.

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the report.

Decision Tracking

None

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

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

Appendix 1

Staff expenses

Council employees must travel outside Northern Ireland as part of their job. There are several reasons for this, including:

- **Training and development** - For example, staff may attend events, such as training courses and professional conferences, which are not available in Northern Ireland. This represents 43.25% of the net cost.
- **Improving our services** - Employees may visit other councils or businesses, engage in national professional networks or attend seminars and conferences which are not available in Northern Ireland. This represents 24.71% of the net cost.
- **Promoting Belfast** - Employees may attend trade fairs and best in field awards which showcase what the council does and what Belfast has to offer. This represents 32.04% of the net cost.
- **Costs recharged to customers** - Our employees also travel on business which is rechargeable to customers and provides income to the council. There was no net cost to the council for this travel.

You'll find information about our employee travel details, broken down into each of these four categories, for April 2010 to March 2011 here.

- Download [staff expenses](#)

We have also provided details about:

- **Department** - the department where the employee works
- **Job title and staff number** - the employee's job title and their staff number
- **Date of event** - the date when the conference, seminar or visit took place
- **Description of event** - a brief description of the conference, seminar or visit
- **Event location** - where the event took place, for example, Great Britain (GB), Republic of Ireland (ROI), Europe or Rest of World (ROW)
- **Travel** - this includes all the travel costs associated with attending the event, for example, public transport and taxi costs and motor mileage allowances
- **Accommodation and subsistence** - this includes hotel and meal costs
- **Gross cost** - this is the total cost before any deductions are made for funding received from external bodies
- **Percentage actual funding** - this represents the percentage of any external funding received, for example, EU funding or charges to customers
- **Funding body** - this is the organisation which provided the external funding
- **Net cost** - this is the cost to the council after deducting any funding received from external bodies.

All payments to employees comply with council policies and procedures.

We pay travel, accommodation and fees directly to the provider and reimburse other costs to our employees on an actual cost basis, that is, only when they provide receipts for valid expenditure