



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Publication of Employee Travel Costs</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23 August 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance & Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

### **1.0 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The 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.
- 1.2 Further to this at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20 August 2010 additional 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.

The information for 2012/13 is now prepared for publication on the council's website.

## 2.0 Key Issues

2.1 The cost of travel in 2012/13 was £130,699 which represents 0.07% of the Council's total expenditure in 2012/13. There were 421 trips and 307 events attended during the year, including one off trips associated with specific events such as the IBM World Cities Challenge, the award of the Urban Broadband Fund as well as preparation for the Giro d' Italia and the World Police and Fire games and best practice study visits in relation to Local Government Reform and Leisure Transformation

2.2 A summary of the percentage split of the net cost to the council by category of visits is as follows:-

- Employee Training and Development (24.82%)
- Improving our Services (35.35%)
- Promoting Belfast (39.83%)

### Summary Costs of Travel Locations – 2012/13

Department	GB (£)	ROI (£)	Europe (£)	USA (£)	ROW (£)	Total
Chief Executives	4,869	573	1,826	2,066	0	9,334
Development	16,326	1,452	25,676	8,313	0	51,767
Finance & Resources	13,308	337	825	0	0	14,470
Health & Environmental	19,718	799	5,777	0	1,586	27,880
Parks & Leisure	7,721	28	5,835	0	0	13,584
Property & Projects	5,566	346	7,082	0	0	12,994
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67,508</b>	<b>3,535</b>	<b>47,021</b>	<b>10,379</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>130,029</b>
Percentages	51.92%	2.72%	36.16%	7.98%	1.22%	100.00%

Travel within Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland accounted for 54.64 % of the total; the percentage of travel to Europe represented 36.16% and the Rest of the World 9.20 %.

### ***Publishing Staff Travel***

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

### **3.0 Resource Implications**

The cost of staff attending events in 2012/13 was £130,029 which represents 0.07% of the Council's total expenditure in 2012/13.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

Members are requested to note that the report.

### **5.0 Decision Tracking**

None

### **6.0 Key to Abbreviations**

None

### **7.0 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 24.82% 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 35.35% 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 39.83% 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 2012 to March 2013 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