

Staff Travel - Grey Fleet Review 2024

Introduction

This review aims to assess the current state of East Staffordshire Borough Council's (ESBC) grey fleet – employee-owned vehicles used for business purposes.

The objectives are to understand the scale of grey fleet usage, its environmental impact, and associated costs. This review utilises data from the council's mileage claims, financial records, and the 2023 Staff Travel Survey.

The purpose is to identify areas for potential improvement in efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and environmental sustainability of business travel.

Review Findings

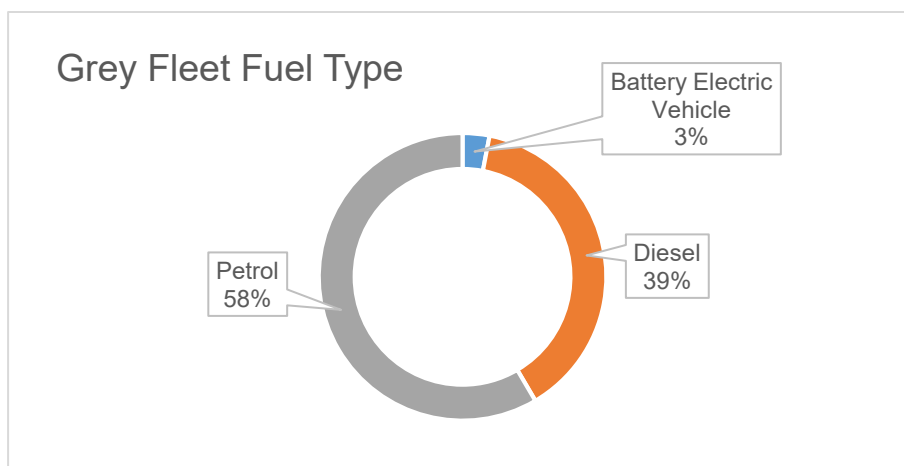
- Total ESBC employees: 671 (including 37 Councillors, 199 full-time, 75 part-time, 25 casual, 5 temporary, 322 Election-only, and 2 IR35 staff)
- 62 employees claim mileage regularly

Mileage and Usage:

- Average monthly business miles claimed: 4,924.65
- Total annual mileage: 59,095.6 miles
- Average trip length: 23.92 miles

Vehicle Types and Emissions:

- Petrol vehicles: 34,545.6 miles
- Diesel vehicles: 22,768 miles
- Electric vehicles: 1,782 miles



Emissions:

- Petrol vehicles: 8.42 tonnes CO₂e
- Diesel vehicles: 5.68 tonnes CO₂e
- Electric vehicles: 0.16 tonnes CO₂e
- **Total emissions: 14.26 tonnes CO₂e**

Financial Data:

- Total spent on mileage reimbursement (April 2023 - March 2024): £24,616.91
- Average monthly spend: £2,051.41

Policy and Procedures:

- No minimum standards policy for grey fleet vehicles
- Drivers must sign a declaration before reimbursement

Work-Related Visits (from 2023 Staff Travel Survey):

- 37% of respondents report making work-related visits
- 82% use personal cars for these visits
- 93% of work-related journeys are to sites across East Staffordshire Borough

Analysis and interpretation

- **Grey Fleet Usage:** With an average of 4,924.65 business miles claimed monthly, there's significant reliance on personal vehicles for business travel.
- **Environmental Impact:** The grey fleet contributes 14.26 tonnes of CO₂e annually, with petrol vehicles being the largest contributors. Electric vehicles having the lowest emissions per mile.
- **Financial Implications:** The council spends an average of £2,051.41 monthly on mileage reimbursements, totalling £24,616.91 annually.
- **Vehicle Mix:** The majority of miles (96.99%) are driven in fossil fuel vehicles, with only 3.01% in electric vehicles.
- **Trip Characteristics:** The average trip length of 23.92 miles suggests a mix of local and longer journeys, potentially offering opportunities for alternative transport modes.
- **Policy Gaps:** The absence of minimum standards for grey fleet vehicles may be leading to the use of less efficient or higher-emitting vehicles.

- **Work Patterns:** The high percentage of employees making work-related visits (37%) and the dominance of personal car use (82%) for these trips indicate a significant area for potential intervention.

Recommendations

- **Implement a minimum standards policy** for grey fleet vehicles, considering factors like emissions standards (e.g., Euro 6 for diesel, Euro 4 for petrol) and maximum vehicle age.
- **Develop a strategy to increase the proportion of electric and hybrid vehicles** in the grey fleet, potentially through incentives or preferential mileage rates.
- **Explore the feasibility of introducing a pool car system for work-related visits**, potentially using electric vehicles to reduce emissions and costs.
- **Explore the feasibility journey planning system** to optimise routes and encourage car-sharing for work-related visits where possible.
- **Review the mileage reimbursement policy** to potentially offer higher rates for low-emission vehicles and lower rates for high-emission vehicles.
- **Provide training to staff on eco-driving techniques** to reduce fuel consumption and emissions.
- **Encourage alternatives to physical visits**, such as video conferencing, where appropriate.
- **Consider implementing an electric bike pool** system for short work-related journeys.
- **Regularly review and analyse** grey fleet usage data to track progress and identify further areas for improvement.
- Engage with staff to **understand barriers to using more sustainable travel options** and develop targeted solutions.

By implementing these recommendations, ESBC can work towards reducing the environmental impact and costs associated with its grey fleet while maintaining the flexibility needed for work-related travel.