



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Publication of Employee Travel Costs</b>
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance & Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance

### Relevant Background Information

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.

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 2013/14 is now prepared for publication on the council's website.

## Key Issues

The analysis of staff travel for the year 2013/2014 and the comparison with previous years is outlined below:

**Table 1: 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
2011/2012	£118,682	405	292
2012/2013	£147,702	421	307
2013/2014	£156,350	538	360

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

The cost of travel in 2013/14 increased by £8,648 (5.85%), but is still below the level of costs prior to 2010/11 and the number of trips and events has increased by 117 (27.79%) and 53 (17.26%) respectively over the same period. The increased costs incurred related to one off trips associated with specific events or initiatives including leisure transformation, the investment programme, city financing and the super connected project.

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

- Employee Training and Development (22.41%)
- Improving our Services (27.91%)
- Promoting Belfast (49.69%)
- Cost Recouped from Customers (Nil)

**Tale 2: Summary Costs of Travel Locations – 2012/13**

Department	GB (£)	ROI (£)	Europe (£)	USA (£)	ROW (£)	Total
Chief Executives	4,667	573	2,166	2,066	0	9,472
Development	16,323	2,975	35,437	8,313	0	63,048
Finance & Resources	13,308	337	825	0	0	14,470
Health & Environmental	20,388	799	5,777	0	1,586	28,550
Parks & Leisure	8,743	28	7,801	0	0	16,572
Property & Projects	5,566	346	9,679	0	0	15,591
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68,997</b>	<b>5,058</b>	<b>61,685</b>	<b>10,379</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>147,702</b>
Percentages	46.71%	3.42%	41.76%	7.03%	1.07%	100.00%
<b>Increase / (Decrease)</b>	<b>8,297</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>17,913</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>29,021</b>

**Table 3: Summary Costs of Travel Locations – 2013/14**

<b>Department</b>	<b>GB (£)</b>	<b>ROI (£)</b>	<b>Europe (£)</b>	<b>USA (£)</b>	<b>ROW (£)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Chief Executives	8,547	738	1,412	0	0	10,697
Development	16,958	1,782	18,877	17,884	6,806	62,307
Finance & Resources	19,045	685	586	1,095	0	21,411
Health & Environmental	21,011	647	4,197	0	852	26,707
Parks & Leisure	19,930	782	2,272	0	0	22,984
Property & Projects	8,475	521	3,248	0	0	12,244
<b>Totals</b>	<b>93,966</b>	<b>5,155</b>	<b>30,592</b>	<b>18,979</b>	<b>7,658</b>	<b>156,350</b>
Percentages	60.09%	3.30%	19.57%	12.14%	4.90%	100.00%
<b>Increase / (Decrease)</b>	<b>24,969</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>(31,093)</b>	<b>8,600</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>8,648</b>

Travel within Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland accounted for 63.40 % of the total; the percentage of travel to Europe represented 19.57 % and the Rest of the World 17.04 %. This compares to 50.14%, 41.76% and 8.10% respectively for the previous year.

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

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.

<b>Resource Implications</b>
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The cost of staff attending events in 2013/14 was £156,350 which was an increase of £8,648 on the previous year, but is still below the level of costs prior to 2010/11. The number of trips and events increased by 117 (27.79%) and 53 (17.26%) respectively over the same period and the increased costs incurred related to one off trips associated with specific events or initiatives.
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<b>Recommendations</b>
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Members are requested to note that the report.
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<b>Decision Tracking</b>
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None
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<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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None
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix 1 – Information relating to the publication of details on staff travel
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## 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 22.40% 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 27.91% 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 49.69% 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 2013 to March 2014 [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