

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	18 February 2010
DIRECTOR	Annette Bruton
TITLE OF REPORT	Essential Car User Scheme
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/10/05

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

As part of the Equal Pay and Modernisation Agreement, the Essential Car User Scheme was revised and new arrangements were put in place for those staff covered by the agreement.

The purpose of this report is to ensure parity across staff groups in terms of entitlements under the Essential Car User Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee approve the attached Essential Car User Scheme for those staff covered by Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) terms and conditions of employment.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently, there are 25 staff on SNCT terms and conditions of employment who are in receipt of existing car user allowance. This group comprises a number of specialist teachers, a music co-ordinator and educational psychology staff. Under existing arrangements, all 25 individuals are assessed as being entitled to 100% of the allowance, although this is pro-rated in respect of part time staff. The current annual cost of essential car user allowance for these staff is £19,317. Under the proposed revision of the scheme, the mileage rate will increase, but the lump sum payment will decrease.

It is not possible to give an actual cost under the new scheme until staff are assessed against the new criteria, however it is estimated that a saving in the region of 32% per annum may be accrued under the revised scheme.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Community Plan identifies Getting It Right For Every Child as a key priority for the Council. The Essential Car User Scheme can facilitate travel from establishment to establishment for those staff who meet the criteria, thus allowing

staff to respond quickly to the needs of individual children. This also applies to the commitments in Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking to:

- Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the City.
- Make greater provision within the City for young people with additional needs to avoid placements out of the area.

Some of the individuals who currently receive ECU are visiting specialists. These teachers support the commitment in Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking to:

- Recognise the role of Sport and the Arts in tackling anti-social behavior

In order to ensure equality across staff groups in the Council, it is important that the same Essential Car User Scheme is applied to all employees (including Teachers).

The involvement of the Head of Human Resources in applying the criteria and monitoring the application of the Scheme will ensure equality and consistency throughout the Council.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Replacing the existing Essential Car User Scheme with the revised Scheme will potentially have a modest financial impact on members of staff. Staff could become disaffected as a result, and morale could decrease. However, the new scheme has been agreed for all staff who are not Teachers or covered by SNCT provisions, and it would not be equitable to run two different schemes for different groups of staff.

Should it be the case that staff previously deemed to be essential car users no longer meet the criteria, they may choose not to use their own vehicles for work but rather to use public transport to travel around the City. This will improve the City's carbon footprint, but could have implications in terms of travel time between establishments for these staff.

6. REPORT

The scheme proposed in this report is the scheme that has already been approved and agreed for all other Council employees. Approval to apply the revised scheme to those staff on teaching terms and conditions of employment will ensure parity across the Council.

All posts will be reviewed against the new criteria set out in the attached Scheme, and where appropriate essential car user payments will be made to staff as detailed in the Scheme.

Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant professional associations, and the revised Essential Car User Scheme was agreed at the meeting of the Teachers' Consultative Forum on 4th December 2009 and the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers on 5th February 2010.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Refer to any sources used in the writing of your report. Please note that it is a statutory requirement that any papers that are listed must be made available to the public on request.

None

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Revised Essential Car User Scheme

1. Essential Car User Status

ECU status will be allocated to specific posts and NOT be automatically applied to generic job titles e.g. Social Worker, Planner etc. The post will be identified as an ECU where it meets the criteria (see attachment)

If the post is identified as an ECU it will then be assessed in relation to the employee and be deemed to be appropriate by the Head of Service. Where the Head of Service deems the ECU to be appropriate to the employee this will then be offered on a contractual requirement.

Should the person refuse to provide a car for work purposes, this may be viewed as a breach of contract and dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

2. Benefits of ECU Status

There will be four levels of ECU

Level 1

Where the post meets the ECU criteria and it is assessed the employee will do under 1,200 business miles per annum*. In these cases the ECU designation will entitle the employee to a parking permit, to claim all mileage at Inland Revenue Rates and to an ECU lump sum of £120 per annum.

Level 2

Where the post meets the ECU criteria and it is assessed the employee will do between 1,201 and 5,000 business miles per annum*. In these cases the ECU designation will entitle the employee to a parking permit, to claim all mileage at Inland Revenue Rates and to an ECU lump sum of £250 per annum.

Level 3

Where the post meets the ECU criteria and it is assessed the employee will do between 5,001 and 7,500 business miles per annum*. In these cases the ECU designation will entitle the employee to a parking permit, to claim all mileage at Inland Revenue Rates and to an ECU lump sum of £500 per annum.

Level 4

Where the post meets the ECU criteria and it is assessed the employee will do over 7,501 business miles per annum*. In these cases the ECU designation will entitle the employee to a parking permit, to claim all mileage at Inland Revenue Rates and to an ECU lump sum of £800 per annum

**The lump sum ECU Allowance will be assessed on the mileage of the employee over the preceding 12 month period (April- March.) All lump sum allowances will be reviewed on 31 March each year. New starters with an ECU will have mileage estimated based on usage of the previous post-holder or a similar post if the post is new.*

Actual Annual Business Mileage	Annual ECU Allowance
Under 1,200 miles	£120
1,200 – 5,000 miles	£250
5,001 – 7,500 miles	£500
Over 7501 miles	£800

Employees with an ECU **MUST** have a car available **at all times** for better performance of duties (the exception is when the car is subject to repair/maintenance or other substantial reason for temporarily not having their car available for work purposes.) It is not permissible for an ECU not to have a car available during any part of the working week, failure to have a car available without reasonable explanation could result in the employee being subject to action under the disciplinary process.

3. Corporate Consistency

To ensure a consistent approach to the application of the criteria the list of posts approved for ECU will be held corporately by the Head of Human Resources.

Any Head of Service wishing to add a post within their remit to the list of ECU designated posts must make a case on the attached pro-forma to the Head of Human Resources. The case will be assessed by an independent Corporate Director and Head of Service, advised by the Head of Human Resources or nominee. The decision of this group will be final with no appeal provisions.

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Essential Car User Criteria

1. Emergency Response

Where there is a frequent and regular (this needs to be evidenced) and ongoing requirement of the job for the employee to be immediately mobile to respond physically to attend emergency situations to undertake normal duties.

An emergency situation is seen where the employee must be in attendance to perform a statutory or significant public service to ensure the safety or well being of the community or local environment.

2. Carriage of Equipment to undertake the role

Where as a frequent and regular (this need to be evidenced) part of the job an employee is required as part of their duties to transport bulky equipment. This includes the transportation of but not limited to

- bulky measuring equipment to undertake normal duties on site
- bulky aids, adaptations or equipment for service user independent living

It does not include the transportation of

- Lap-top computers, files or paperwork
- Presentation equipment e.g. flip charts, projectors screens
- other people or service users

Mobile and Remote Working Justification

The Council has certain posts where mobility is inherent to the everyday aspect of the job. i.e. the job cannot be done if the employee is not mobile virtually all day every day. In these cases the employee must occupy a post where

- mileage WITHIN THE CITY is likely to be significant i.e. over 6,000 miles per annum
- important daily services are provided to customers or clients that are in remote locations not serviced by public transport
- numerous visits/meetings at different sites or work locations are made on a daily basis