

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

19 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR, AND CORPORATE POLICY

JOINT PROTOCOL – MILEAGE RATES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek Council approval to adopt the Joint Protocol for Mileage Rates in Local Authorities in Wales as a temporary arrangement.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The mileage rate is a locally agreed term and condition of employment. Established as part of the Council's Single Status Collective Agreement, the mileage rate for cars at 47p per mile for the first 8,500 miles, was implemented on 1 September 2013.
- 3.2 Both employers and trades unions recognise the impact of the current cost of living crisis on the workforce and the immediate pressures presented because of unprecedented increases in fuel costs.
- 3.3 At a national level, Leaders at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Executive Board on 17 July 2022, requested the development of a joint protocol, for local authorities to consider for adoption, to temporarily increase mileage reimbursements rates in the short term to address current market volatility in fuel rates.
- 3.4 Meanwhile, representations were made directly by employees and through trade union representatives about the prevailing cost of fuel and the mileage rate paid to employees. It was considered that there was a risk in some service areas that rising costs for work related mileage essential to service delivery would have a negative impact on employees and potential recruitment and retention.
- 3.5 In anticipation of a national protocol on mileage rates, an urgent delegated decision was made on 5 August 2022 to temporarily increase the mileage expenses rate for employees from 47p per mile to 50p per mile, backdated to

take effect from 2 July 2022 (payable with the August salary). It was agreed that the temporary uplift would be reviewed by 30 September 2022, to take account of the cost of fuel, the national position and any other relevant factors.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The joint protocol on mileage rates, attached at **Appendix 1**, has been approved by Group Leaders on behalf of the WLGA Executive Board, and shared with the Joint Council for Wales (JCW) Executive, and trade unions have formally agreed the proposal and requested its implementation at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.2 The national protocol is effective from 26 September 2022 which is timely given Council's earlier decision to implement the recommended rate of 50p per mile in the short term, subject to review by 30 September 2022.
- 4.3 The protocol is clear that it is not intended to replace current local arrangements but offers, through mutual employers' and trade unions' agreement, a temporary arrangement that is triggered by an increase in fuel rates that exceed an agreed threshold, the arrangement is similarly removed when fuel rates reduce below that same threshold.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 This protocol will temporarily amend the mileage expenses rate as stated in the Single Status Collective Agreement.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 An initial EIA screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this information report.

Involvement	Consultation has taken place with members of Cabinet, Corporate Management Board, the HR, legal and finance departments, and trade unions.
Long term	Whilst this is a short-term recommendation, it does provide a framework for decision making going forward. Also, options are being considered in relation to the use of electric vehicles in some service areas.
Prevention	The actions being taken are intended to support recruitment and retention in an ever-increasing challenging employment market.
Integration	The actions will apply to all employees and supplements the Council's existing policies.
Collaboration	This protocol has been developed through mutual agreement between local government employers and

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The full annual cost of implementing this new rate, based on the 2021/2022 levels of work mileage is estimated at £50,000 per annum. This can currently be funded from within existing mileage budgets as a result of lower than usual mileage at the current time. Should mileage increase then this funding availability may be at risk. Most of the reduced mileage is in respect of meetings/training/conferences now being held virtually instead of in-person rather than front line service delivery e.g., social care workers. As there is a move towards more in-person meetings spend on mileage will increase and spend against budgets will be closely monitored.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
- approves the adoption of the Joint Protocol for Mileage Rates in Local Authorities in Wales from 26 September 2022 to 31 March 2023;
 - delegates authority to the Chief Executive to approve any extension, should the protocol be extended for a period up to six months.

Kelly Watson
CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE
POLICY
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Backdown documents: None