

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION POLICY

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 This policy (the Nottinghamshire County Council Travel Policy) was approved by Nottinghamshire County Council on 7 October 2004. It covers the approval and booking arrangements for travel and accommodation required in connection with the Council's business. It does not apply to travel and accommodation required in connection with direct service delivery eg school, trips, service users' outings, where the relevant Departments will have their own procedures.
- 1.2 This policy replaces all previous policies, decisions and/or precedents relating to travel undertaken in connection with the business of the Council.
- 1.3 The power to amend this policy is reserved to the full Council.
- 1.4 The practices in this policy shall, as far as possible, reflect the contents of the County Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and the Terms and Conditions of Service for Employees. In the event of any differences, the terms of the policy will apply.
- 1.5 In the event that a conflict arises between this Policy and the Members' Allowances Scheme the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive will mediate and determine the matter.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The policy is based on the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 the proper conduct of business, and the overall efficiency of the Council;
 - 2.1.2 transparency and accountability;
 - 2.1.3 achieving Best Value in the use of the Council's resources, benefiting the community, the Council and councillors;
 - 2.1.4 meeting the needs of those with disabilities and/or health problems.

3. APPROVAL PROCESSES

- 3.1 The following travel may be undertaken without prior approval:
 - 3.1.1 day to day travel within Nottinghamshire in connection with Nottinghamshire County Council business;
 - 3.1.2 travel in connection with training and development events within the East Midlands which have been authorised in accordance with relevant policies.
- 3.2 All other travel must be approved in advance in accordance with the following:

Participant	Description	Approval required from
Councillors, Statutory and other co-opted Members	(a) All travel within mainland UK not described in Schedule 2 of the Members Allowances Scheme.	Administration Committee
	(b) Outside the UK	Administration Committee
Officers	(a) Within the UK	Relevant chief or other officer in accordance with departmental procedures
	(b) Outside the UK	Administration Committee

3.3 The County Council recognises that, in cases of genuine urgency, it may not be possible to obtain formal approval from the Administration Committee prior to the expected date of travel. In these cases, approval can be given by the Chief Executive following consultation with, and majority agreement of, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Administration Committee and the Deputy Leader of the Council and subject to a report back to the next available meeting of the Committee each time this urgency power is used.

4. BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 With the exception of travel by private car in connection with the day to day business of the Council, all arrangements and/or bookings for travel and accommodation approved under this policy must be made by Members' Support in the Chief Executive's Department.

4.2 Provisional bookings will not be made unless approval has been given in accordance with 3.2.

5. METHOD OF TRAVEL

5.1 At all times, the chosen method of travel must be the most cost-effective method, taking into account the value of time saved, anticipated subsistence and other expenses and any other relevant matters.

5.2 Travel within the UK (mainland)

5.2.1 Public transport should normally be used, unless the use of private/self-drive hire/civic cars is proved to be the most cost effective option, taking into account mileage charges, anticipated subsistence, other expenses and any other relevant consideration including but not limited to those at paragraph 5.1.

5.2.2 The use of private cars to attend events out of the County area must be determined in relation to the following criteria:

- 5.2.2.1 cost in comparison to other options;
 - 5.2.2.2 availability of public transport;
 - 5.2.2.3 business requirements;
 - 5.2.2.4 disability or health considerations.
- 5.2.3 Other options which must be considered prior to approving the use of private cars are:
- 5.2.3.1 car sharing;
 - 5.2.3.2 use of hire cars/pool cars;
 - 5.2.3.3 use of civic cars.
- 5.2.4 Any travel by train within mainland UK will usually be standard class fare unless travel by other classes of ticket is cheaper overall.
- 5.2.5 This policy acknowledges the ability of councillors or certain officers to be able to travel by first class train within the UK in connection with the Council's business. Any councillor or officer requesting first class rail travel must give reasons which shall be recorded in the register referred to in section 9 below.
- 5.2.6 Air travel within mainland UK will be permitted only where the cost/convenience brings benefits to the Council.

5.3 Travel to Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland/Outside the UK

- 5.3.1 Where available, and subject as follows, economy class should be used for all air, sea or land (ie rail) travel where this the most cost effective.
- 5.3.2 The County Council recognises that there will be occasions where it is not appropriate to use economy class ie where there are health or disability issues to be considered. In these cases, a higher class of travel may be permitted, subject to prior approval being by Administration Committee.

6. ACCOMMODATION

- 6.1 Mid range hotels of good standard with appropriate business facilities will be chosen within safe and reasonable access to where the business of the visit is to take place.
- 6.2 For conferences, the added value of all-inclusive packages will be evaluated against making separate hotel arrangements.

7. SUBSISTENCE AND OTHER EXPENSES

7.1 Within the UK (including Northern Ireland)

- 7.1.1 All costs of the approved method of travel will be paid by the County Council.

7.1.2 Subsistence allowances may be claimed. They will be the same for councillors, Statutory Co-optees, other co-opted Members and officers. Details of the amounts which may be claimed are in the Members' Allowances Scheme.

7.1.3 Claims should be made on the forms provided as follows:

7.1.3.1 officers – from their Department;

7.1.3.2 councillors and others covered by the Members' Allowances Scheme – from Members' Support.

7.1.4 Receipts should be obtained for all expenditure incurred.

7.2 Outside the UK

7.2.1 Accommodation will be booked and paid for by Members' Support on behalf of the County Council.

7.2.2 Subsistence allowance may be claimed for actual reasonable expenses incurred on meals, beverages, transport within the foreign country, laundry, 'phone calls etc.

7.2.2.1 The current maximum amount for subsistence per 24 hours for countries within the European Union is £75.00 (plus £10 per day for unreceipted out of pocket expenses).

7.2.2.2 For travel to other destinations, Members' Support will calculate a maximum amount for subsistence per 24 hours. That amount will be notified to Administration Committee when approval is sought for the travel to be undertaken.

7.2.3 The above rates assume that all meals (excluding breakfast) will have to be paid for from the subsistence allowance. If meals are provided as part of the visit and at no personal cost to the Council's representative(s) the daily allowance will be reduced by 20% for each meal provided.

7.2.4 Receipts must be obtained wherever practicable for all claimable expenditure. Where this is not possible, a written statement will be required from the person claiming allowances.

8. ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

8.1 All travel tickets and/or accommodation required under this policy must be booked through Members' Support in the Chief Executive's Department.

8.2 Before any bookings are made, Members' Support will require written confirmation of approval. Where the cost is to be met by a Department, the appropriate budget code(s) for the expenditure will also be required.

- 8.3 Subject to normal formalities, Members' Support can arrange advances of cash, foreign currency and travellers' cheques. Any unspent cash/currency or travellers cheques must be returned to Members' Support within one month of return from the visit.
- 8.4 All claim forms, together with receipts and details of expenses incurred must be submitted within one month of return from the visit.
- 8.5 County Council credit cards must only be used for claimable expenses incurred in carrying out the County Council's business and all receipts/vouchers in respect of any expenditure met in this way must be passed to Financial Services within one month of return from the visit.
- 8.6 Where the Council's representative wishes, for personal reasons, to extend their stay at the destination to which they have travelled, this is permitted on the strict understanding that no additional cost falls to be met by the Council and that all expenses in connection with the extension of stay are reimbursed before the date of outward travel.
- 8.7 Where the Council's representative is accompanied by a partner, the Council must be reimbursed for all expenses to be incurred in respect of travel arrangements made by Members' Support in respect of the partner before the date of outward travel.

9. RECORD KEEPING

- 9.1 Members' Support will maintain a public register of the following information in respect of each item or travel undertaken under this policy:
- 9.1.1 name of traveller/participant;
 - 9.1.2 purpose of travel/visit;
 - 9.1.3 dates of travel;
 - 9.1.4 destination;
 - 9.1.5 method/class/cost of travel and/or accommodation;
 - 9.1.6 cost of insurance;
 - 9.1.7 amount(s) of allowances paid;
 - 9.1.8 details of the date approval was given and the identity of the decision maker (including details of specific additional approvals from time given in respect of, for instance, travel by other than standard class);
 - 9.1.9 the date on which the Council's representative(s) submitted a report on the outcome/value of the visit, where appropriate.
- 9.2 The register shall be available for public inspection and shall be published on the Council's website.
- 9.3 Annual reports shall be made to the Standards Committee which shall give:
- 9.3.1 details of the totality of travel undertaken under this policy;
 - 9.3.2 information as to occasions upon which other than standard/economy class travel or its equivalent has been used.

