

Policy on the Private Use of Council Vans

Version 2
August 2007

1. Introduction

The Council has a duty to manage its fleet of vans in line with current tax rules. At April 2005 the tax rules changed so that there was no longer a tax charge (previously borne by the Council) on certain insignificant private use of Council vans. This is where an employee is required to take a van home for operational reasons and this use has been properly authorised in line with a formal Council Policy. Any private use other than this continues to bear a tax charge and therefore this policy clearly sets out allowable and prohibited use of vans.

This policy sets out guidance on the acceptable and unacceptable private use of Council vans in order to comply with tax rules, ensure appropriate insurance cover and set a level of conduct acceptable for Council staff.

In order for the policy to operate effectively it is important that all affected employees are briefed on the policy and the implications of it not being followed.

This policy specifically relates to **vans**, as a result of tax changes coming into force in April 2005. For the purpose of this policy a van is defined as a vehicle primarily suited to the carrying of goods or a burden and not exceeding 3,500 kg in weight.

The policy was amended in August 2007 following the findings of a report by Internal Audit (ref: HH15/002).

2. Policy Statement

Generally the use of Council vans is restricted to authorised use on Council business.

Employees authorised to take Council vans home for operational

reasons can make limited private use of the van. Operational reasons for taking a van home are limited to;

- ◆ carrying out the duties associated with a post,
- ◆ availability of the vehicle for standby duties, and
- ◆ security of the vehicle.

Examples of acceptable and insignificant private use allowed under this policy include:

- ◆ Regularly making a slight detour to a newsagents on the way to work,
- ◆ Calling at the dentist on the way home from work

Examples of unacceptable personal use prohibited under this policy include:

- ◆ Using the van for any business other than official Council business
- ◆ Using the van to make a specific trip to the supermarket
- ◆ Using the van to make a specific trip to the rubbish tip
- ◆ Taking the van away on holiday
- ◆ Using the van outside of work for social activities

These examples are not exhaustive. Where an employee wishes to use a Council van for any other private purpose they should not do so without discussing the details of the journey with their line manager and receiving authorisation.

Whether the van is being used for official Council business or acceptable private use only the following authorised passengers should be carried:

- ◆ Council employees on official Council business
- ◆ Council employees on the journey to the workplace or from the workplace to home
- ◆ Authorised non- employees (e.g. contractors), who are engaged on official Council business
- ◆ Passengers carried in the event of an emergency
- ◆ Passengers being carried as part of a Council service

Private use of Council vans, other than for operational reasons and acceptable private use, is prohibited, as is the carrying of unauthorised passengers.

Failure to observe this policy would result in the employee being liable for tax on the journey. The driver would not be covered by the Council's insurers and would be liable to costs if an accident should occur.

It is important that accurate records are kept of authorisation given to allow employees to take Council vans home for operational reasons. Line managers are responsible for maintaining and annually reviewing records and making these available for audit purposes.

At the end of each tax year employees will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that no private use, other than that allowed within this policy, occurred in the previous tax year.

3.

Consultation and Communication

Trade Union representatives have been consulted on the detail of this policy and its implementation and will be further consulted on any subsequent review of its operation.

This policy will be communicated to all affected existing employees and to new employees at induction.

4.

Breach of the Policy

Deliberate breach of this policy is a fraudulent act. Where there have been allegations or evidence that an employee has breached the policy the matter will be investigated in line with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

5.

Monitoring and Review

Application of the policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.