

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	4iii
Report No	CCC/11/25

Committee: Climate Change

Date: 21 May 2025

Report Title: Net Zero Thematic Group Update – Sustainable Business Travel

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 29 January 2025, the Climate Change Committee recommended the approval of six project templates for inclusion in the Net Zero Programme. These included projects focused on elected member travel and a review of staff business travel. It was agreed that high-level updates on these areas would be brought back to the Committee in May.
- 1.2 This report presents a summary of the data relating to both elected member travel and staff business travel during 2024/25.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to: -
- i. **Scrutinise** and **note** the high-level data relating to Elected Member Travel as outlined in the report and presented in Appendix 1; and
 - ii. **Scrutinise** and **note** the high-level data relating to Staff Business Travel as outlined in the report and presented in Appendix 2.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – Staff business travel data will be fully analysed to identify opportunities to reduce costs, improve operational efficiency, and lower carbon emissions.
- 3.2 **Legal** - The Council must meet statutory climate change reporting duties and contribute to Scotland's legal target of net-zero emissions by 2045. Travel data is included in the Council's annual submission under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties.

- 3.3 **Risk** – Travel is a necessary part of service delivery across the Highlands. Nonetheless, data analysis will support cost reduction, efficiency, and emissions cuts, without compromising service standards
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – Fleet operations continue to follow the [Council's Fleet Management Policies and Procedures](#) to ensure safety and legal compliance.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Elected Member Travel

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** presents the high-level travel data for elected members in 2024/25, which shows:-

- Total miles travelled: **185,293 miles** (excluding passenger miles);
- Emissions: **49,101 kg CO₂e** (49.1 tonnes);
- Private car usage: **96%** of all travel (178,614 miles);
- Car sharing: **1%** of travel, avoiding approx. **506 kg CO₂e**;
- Active travel (e.g. cycling): **0.02%**; and
- Car club use: **0.33%**

Total cost of travel: £83,221- broken down as follows:-

- £80,080: Reimbursement for private vehicle use (includes cars, motorbikes, bicycles, and passenger miles);
- £1,197: Payroll reimbursement for miscellaneous public transport (taxi, bus, etc.) – further breakdown not currently available;
- £273: Car club usage; and
- £1,671: Flights, rail, and car hire bookings

5.2 Forward Plan

The approved project template includes a milestone to develop and test a dashboard integrating elected member travel data. Progress is constrained by limited data availability.

For example, the Committee requested fuel type breakdowns (petrol, diesel, hybrid, electric) for car travel. This information is not currently gathered through mileage claims.

Historically, claimants provided vehicle registration numbers, enabling verification of fuel type through DVLA. This is no longer required. Reintroducing this requirement would necessitate a policy change approved by Council.

6 Staff Business Travel

6.1 **Appendix 2** contains high-level staff travel data for 2024/25, highlighting the following:-

Light Fleet:-

- the total number of fleet vehicles has remained stable, but the **average vehicle size has increased**, raising average CO₂ emissions;
- **87%** of fleet vehicles are used by staff in the **Place** cluster; **10%** in **People**; and
- **22%** of fleet vehicles are under-utilised (travelled fewer than 4,000 miles in 2024/25).

Car Travel:-

- Car travel includes private vehicles (grey fleet), car club, casual hire, and fleet cars;
- Vehicles under long-term hire (>28 days) may not be fully captured due to data gaps;
- Total car miles: **Over 4.5 million miles**;
- Emissions: **1,181 tonnes CO₂e**; and
- Cost: **Over £2.3 million**

Cluster Breakdown:-

- **People Cluster**: 61% of all car miles; 67% of grey fleet; 62% of car club; 65% of casual hire.
- **Place Cluster**: 31% of car miles.
- **Corporate Cluster**: 8% of car miles.

Efficiency Note: An estimated **18,500 working days** are lost annually due to travel time, with hidden costs in productivity.

6.2 Forward Plan

Detailed analysis of staff travel data is ongoing to identify opportunities for:-

- cost optimisation;
- improved efficiency; and
- reduced emissions

Work is underway to provide managers with access to dashboards to inform data driven decisions. Further detail will be brought to a future meeting of the Climate Change Committee.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 17 April 2025

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Andrew Morgan, Climate Change Coordinator (Data)
Fiona Daschofsky, Programme Manager, Climate Change & Energy Team

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Elected Member Travel data
Appendix 2 - Staff Business Travel data

Members Travel 2024/25

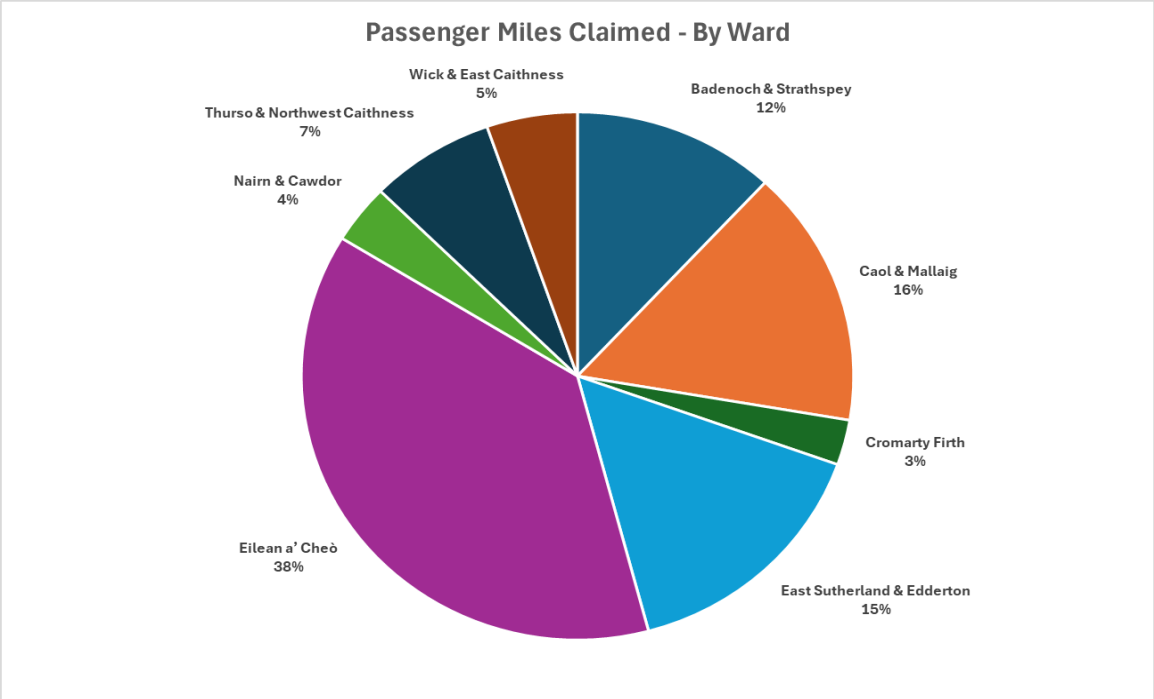
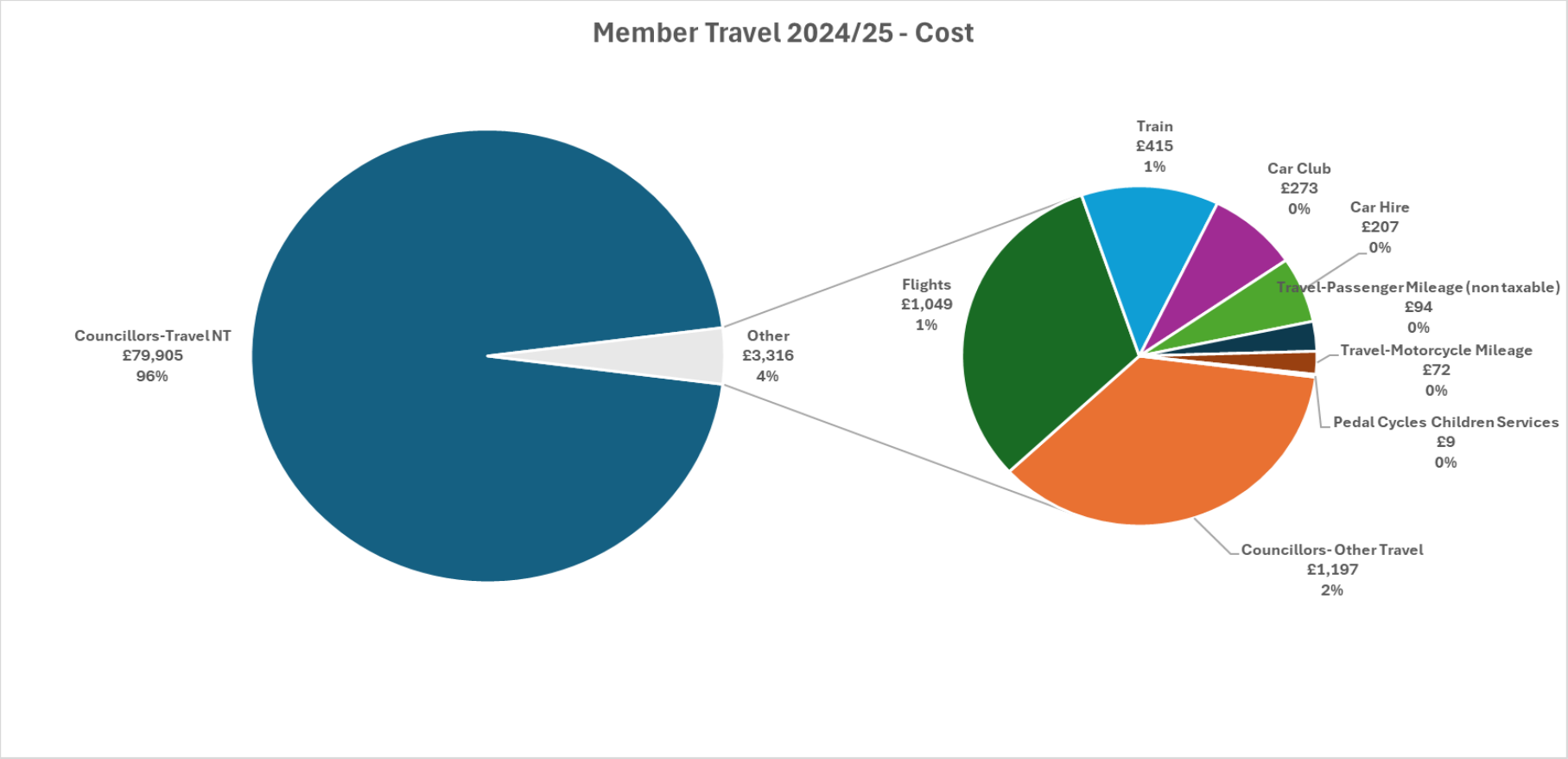
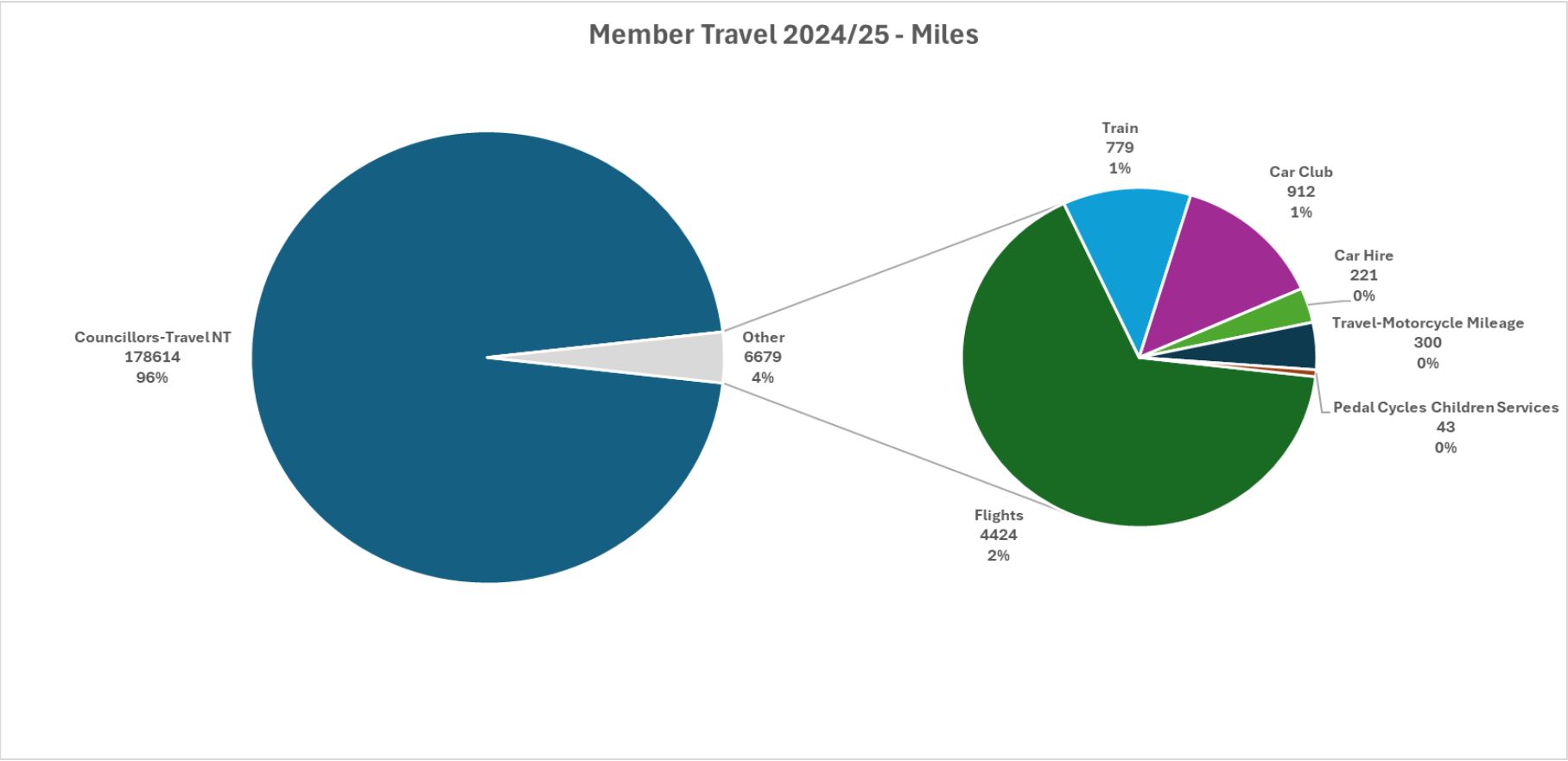
Miles travelled and claimed by Members, along with travel booked through the Council's Travel Desk/Self Service are presented in the following table and graphs.

Members travelled a total of 185,293 miles, with an additional 1,822 claimed for passenger miles, which suggests car sharing.

The Councillors-Travel NT mode (mileage reimbursement for using own vehicle) accounts for 96% of both mileage and costs. Second to this in terms of cost is Councillors-Other Travel, accounting for 2% of costs, however a further breakdown is not available. These costs are likely to relate to taxi fares, local bus or any other out of pocket expenses relating to business travel.

The latest emission factors from DESNZ have been used as per 'Average Car - Unknown Fuel'. This provides an average based on current mix of car sizes and fuel types (including ULEV). A breakdown of fuel type for car travel e.g. petrol, diesel, hybrid and electric is not currently gathered as part of the process for claiming mileage travelled in a private vehicle. A separate emission factor, specific to 'Average Type' of bike has been applied in respect of motorcycle mileage .

Travel Mode	Miles	Kg Co2e	Cost
Councillors-Travel NT	178,614	47,976	£79,905
Councillors- Other Travel	(unknown)	(unknown)	£1,197
Flights	4,424	749	£1,049
Train	779	17	£415
Car Club	912	245	£273
Car Hire	221	59	£207
Travel-Motorcycle Mileage	300	55	£72
Pedal Cycles Children Services	43	-	£9
Travel-Passenger Mileage (non taxable)	1,882	-	£94



Appendix 2.

Light Fleet

Findings; Although the total number of vehicles within our own fleet (leased, contract hired or purchased) has remained largely the same, the over all average size of vehicles has increased. This has subsequently had a detrimental effect on average CO2 emissions per vehicle category as detailed within the graph/tables below. For example, smaller hatchback cars have been replaced with estate and pick-up styled replacements.

The data provided does not take in to consideration any vehicle transfers between services throughout 2024/25. Comparison made between 01/04/2024 and 24/03/2025.
Pick-up style vehicles (Ford Ranger double cab type) have been classed as 'Car' due to recent HMRC guidance. Within the fleet, pick-ups are typically acquired in replacement for cars, albeit can carry heavier/bulkier loads or used for towing.

	Apr-24	Mar-25	Change	Change (%)
Total Number of Vehicles				
White Fleet Total	714	715	⬆️ 1	⬆️ 0.1%
Total Number of Vehicles by Vehicle Category				
Car	110	115	⬆️ 5	⬆️ 4.3%
Light Fleet	578	571	⬆️ -7	⬆️ -1.2%
Minibus / MPV (<14seats)	26	29	⬆️ 3	⬆️ 10.3%
Total Number of Vehicles by Fuel Category				
Diesel	607	609	⬆️ 2	⬆️ 0.3%
Electric	31	30	⬆️ -1	⬆️ -3.3%
Hybrid Petrol/Electric	55	63	⬆️ 8	⬆️ 12.7%
Petrol	21	13	⬆️ -8	⬆️ -61.5%
Total Number of Vehicles by Vehicle Sub Category				
Car - 3 DOOR HATCHBACK	11	4	⬆️ -7	⬆️ -175.0%
Car - 5 DOOR HATCHBACK	77	72	⬆️ -5	⬆️ -6.9%
Car - ESTATE	5	15	⬆️ 10	⬆️ 66.7%
Car - PICK-UP	17	24	⬆️ 7	⬆️ 29.2%
Light Fleet - CAR DERIVED VAN	7	6	⬆️ -1	⬆️ -16.7%
Light Fleet - DROPSIDE LORRY	30	32	⬆️ 2	⬆️ 6.3%
Light Fleet - LIGHT GOODS	6	6	⬆️ 0	⬆️ 0.0%
Light Fleet - LUTON VAN	7	8	⬆️ 1	⬆️ 12.5%
Light Fleet - PANEL VAN	429	423	⬆️ -6	⬆️ -1.4%
Light Fleet - TIPPER	91	87	⬆️ -4	⬆️ -4.6%
Light Fleet - VAN - SIDE WINDOWS	8	6	⬆️ -2	⬆️ -33.3%
Light Fleet - SPECIALLY FITTED VAN	0	3	⬆️ 3	⬆️ 100.0%
Minibus / MPV (<14seats) - MPV	26	29	⬆️ 3	⬆️ 10.3%
Total Number of Vehicles by Service				
Place	619	621	⬆️ 2	⬆️ 0.3%
Corporate	24	23	⬆️ -1	⬆️ -4.3%
People	70	68	⬆️ -2	⬆️ -2.9%
Unknown	1	3	⬆️ 2	⬆️ 66.7%
Average Co2 Emissions by Vehicle / Fuel (g/km) (DVLA rating / Manufacturers rating where DVLA data not avail.)				
Car - Diesel	162.4	189.1	⬆️ 27	⬆️ 14.1%
Car - Electric	0.0	0.0	⬆️ 0	
Car - Hybrid Petrol/Electric	105.4	109.0	⬆️ 4	⬆️ 3.3%

	Fuel Type			
Average Annual Lease Cost / Vehicle	Petrol	Diesel	Hybrid	Electric
Car	🟡 £3,195	🔴 £4,381	🔴 £4,317	🟢 £2,460
Van 3.5 T	NA	🟢 £6,783	NA	🔴 £9,516
Van Up to 3.4T	NA	🔴 £6,656	NA	🟢 £4,489
Van Up to 3T	NA	🔴 £5,081	NA	🟢 £4,381
Van Up to 2.5T	NA	🔴 £4,767	NA	🟢 £4,016
Van Up to 2T	NA	🟢 £2,725	NA	🔴 £2,894
Minibus / MPV (<14seats)	🔴 £6,362	🟢 £4,063	NA	🔴 £6,876
Average MPG / Vehicle				
Car	52.3	41.6	63.9	0.0
Van 3.5 T	NA	36.7	NA	0.0
Van Up to 3.4T	NA	39.9	NA	0.0
Van Up to 3T	NA	43.9	NA	0.0
Van Up to 2.5T	NA	55.7	NA	0.0
Van Up to 2T	NA	63.1	NA	0.0
Minibus / MPV (<14seats)	44.1	42.6	NA	0.0
Average Fuel Cost per Mile / Vehicle (based on MPG)				
Car	🟡 £0.12	🔴 £0.16	🟡 £0.10	🟢 £0.06
Van 3.5 T	NA	🔴 £0.18	NA	🟢 £0.07
Van Up to 3.4T	NA	🔴 £0.17	NA	🟢 £0.06
Van Up to 3T	NA	🔴 £0.15	NA	🟢 £0.06
Van Up to 2.5T	NA	🔴 £0.12	NA	🟢 £0.04
Van Up to 2T	NA	🔴 £0.11	NA	🟢 £0.04
Minibus / MPV (<14seats)	🔴 £0.14	🔴 £0.16	NA	🟢 £0.06

Cost shown as an Average Annual Cost / Vehicle are based on the median price of all vehicles within the range, where yearly cost does not equal zero (potential data gaps within Tranman). N/A shows where no vehicles of that type were held within Fleet in the reported year.

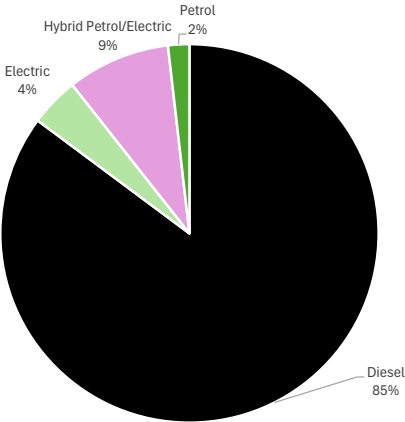
Median used in aim to reduce pollution of potentially incorrect data entry in the Tranman database.

Average MPG - some values supplied by DVLA appear incorrect or missing, therefore anything falling below 20mpg has been omitted when calculating averages.

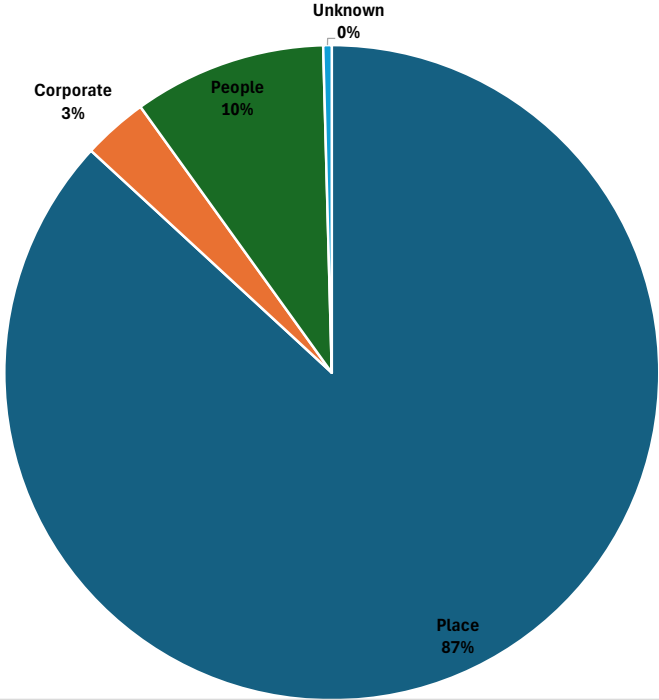
Average cost/mile based on manufacturers MPG along with fuel costs as of 08/04/25. Petrol = £1.39/litre, Diesel = £1.47/litre.
<https://allstarcards.co.uk/tools/uk-fuel-prices>

Car - Petrol	119.4	115.9	↓	-3	↓	-3.0%
Light Fleet - Diesel	166.1	169.7	↑	4	↑	2.1%
Light Fleet - Electric	0.0	0.0	↑	0		
Minibus / MPV (<14seats) - Diesel	168.4	167.1	↓	-1	↓	-0.8%
Minibus / MPV (<14seats) - Electric	0.0	0.0	↑	0		
Minibus / MPV (<14seats) - Petrol	150.0	150.0	↑	0	↑	0.0%
Light Fleet - Vans Only (excluding cars + minibuses) by Weight Category (gross vehicle weight)						
3.5 T	268	273	↑	5	↑	1.8%
Up to 3.4T	21	19	↓	-2	↓	-10.5%
Up to 3T	31	25	↓	-6	↓	-24.0%
Up to 2.5T	87	135	↑	48	↑	35.6%
Up to 2T	171	119	↓	-52	↓	-43.7%

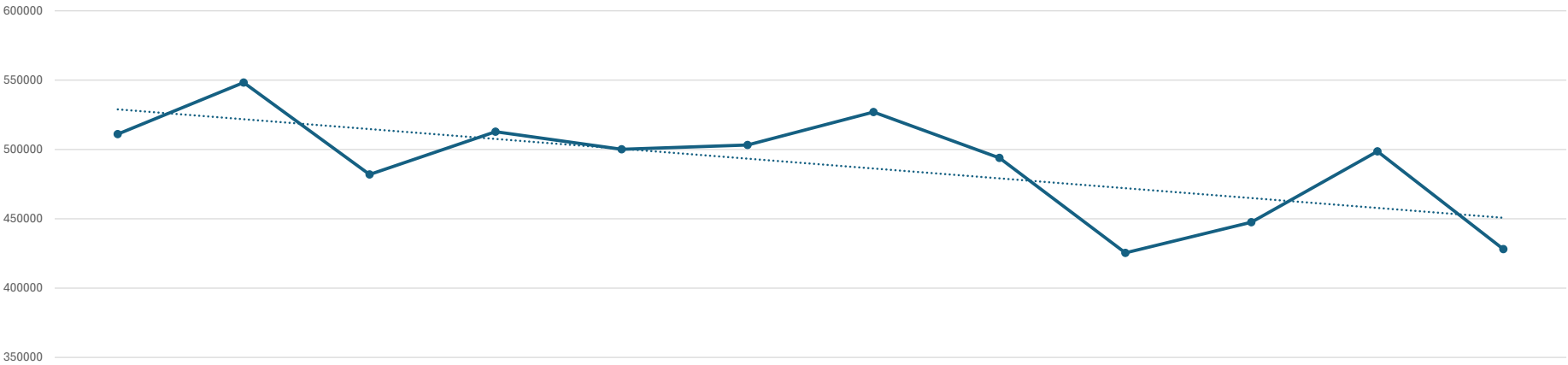
Light Fleet by Fuel Type - Mar-25



Number of Vehicles per Service (White Fleet, March 2025)



White Fleet (Telematics) - Mileage per Month 2024/25



300000

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

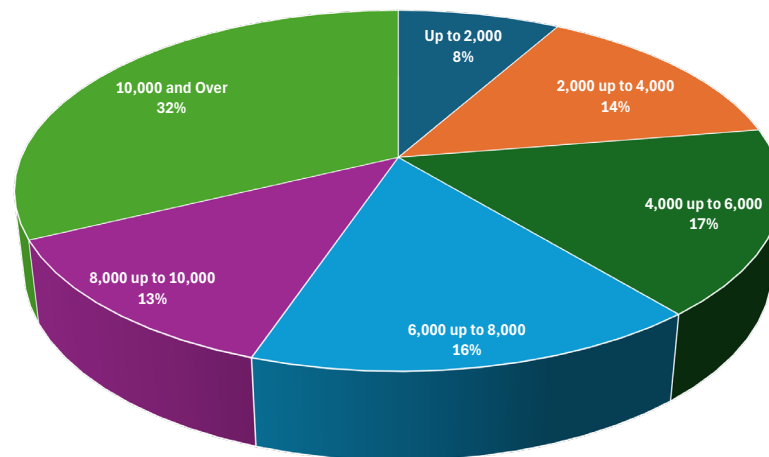
February

March

674 (94%) out of the current 715 light fleet vehicles are fitted with telematics to record mileage, and have been in service for over 60 days within FY 2024/25. Vehicle mileages have been forecast for any vehicle entering service within the reporting year to adjust for likely utilisation based on actual mileage recorded. For example, if a vehicle was in service for exactly half of the year, mileage would be doubled.

Although vehicles show within low utilisation brackets, some of these vehicle types may have modifications for specialist services.

Light Fleet Vehicles - by Annual Mileage



Car Travel - by Account

Findings:

Over 4.5 million miles were travelled by car over the period of 2024/25 resulting in 1,181 tonnes CO2e and over £2.3 million in costs. Cars are mainly utilised by non-vocational drivers, therefore these totals are assumed to relate solely to staff travel.

An additional cost can be attributed to the organisation through lost productivity e.g. time 'lost' through travelling/unproductive time behind the wheel. Assuming an overall average travelling speed of 35 mph and single car occupancy, it's estimated that over 18,000 days were spent travelling (this calculation assumes staff travel solely within working hours).

The Council has the minimum control over Grey Fleet in terms of cost and vehicle type (petrol/diesel/ULEV)

Car Club, Casual Car Hire and Fleet provisions have the potential to be targeted through placement of lower emission vehicles, and cost by focussing efforts on aspects such as utilisation, vehicle type and procurement costs.

NOTE:

Car Club - Costs exclude any claims for damage. Costs shown are those recharged internally - i.e. £3.50 per hour up to £21 per day, plus £0.15 per mile. A penalty charge of £20 per hour is incurred where a vehicle is booked and not driven to disincentivise misuse of the Car Club scheme. Car Club mileage relating to HLH is contained within a separate account, and was not available at the time of compiling this report. The actual cost to the Council for Car Club is £518,174 (monthly invoice covering vehicle hire, vehicle cleaning and administration of Car Club). The cost to the Council therefore equates to £0.65 per mile.

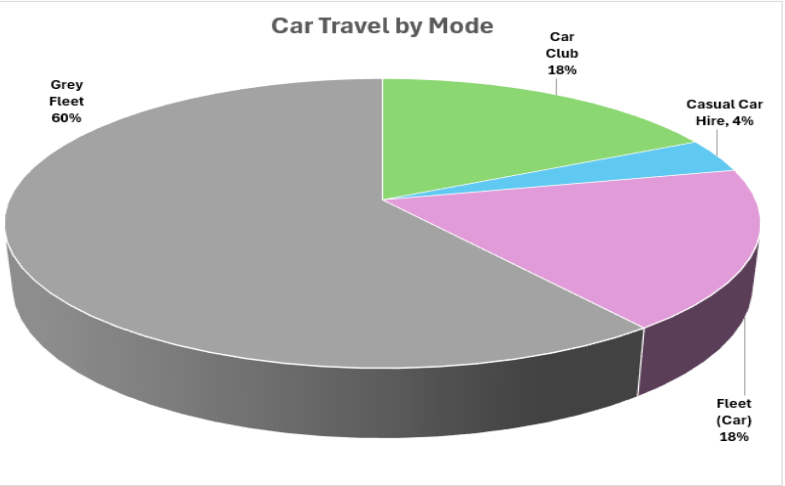
Casual Car Hire - A number of invoices are yet to be processed for FY 24/25. An average of other car hires have therefore been used to model this report, based on estimated mileage provided by the user at time of submitting each travel request. Casual Car Hire is defined as cars hired for up to a maximum of 28 days. Casual Car Hire only available from The Highland Council, booked through the Travel Desk. Any car hire booked outwith this process, including HLH is excluded.

Fleet Provided - The data used consists of all cars (up to and including pick-ups of a Ford Ranger size, by example) provided by Fleet, excluding MPVs, minibuses and vans. Where mileage data does not exist for individual vehicles, an average value has been used based on similar vehicle types. Costs have been obtained through Tranman, the Council's vehicle asset register, with costs added per mile at an estimate of £0.12 for petrol and diesel cars, £0.11 for petrol/hybrid and £0.06 for electric vehicles.

Source for estimated costs <https://www.drive-electric.co.uk/guides/general/electric-vehicles-vs-petrol-diesel-hybrid/>

Grey Fleet - Mileage excludes passenger mileage to eliminate double counting of miles travelled, however this has been added to grey fleet cost.

Kg CO2e has been calculated as per DESNZ published emission factors. These are calculated as 'Average car, unknown fuel', with exception of Fleet Provision, which is calculated per vehicle based on 'Average Car' and type of fuel.



	% Split Across Modes				Car Club			Casual Car Hire			Grey Fleet			Fleet Provided (Car)			Total - All Modes				Estimated Days 'Lost' Travelling Based on avg 35mph at 7hrs/day
	Car Club	Car Hire	Grey Fleet	Fleet (Car)	Miles	Cost	Cost/Mile	Miles	Cost	Cost/Mile	Miles	Cost	Cost/Mile	Miles	Cost	Cost/Mile	Miles	Cost	Cost/Mile	Kg Co2e	
Total	18%	4%	60%	18%	802,923	£467,724	£0.58	170,184	£121,244	£0.71	2,733,686	£1,169,077	£0.43	815,549	£598,724	£0.73	4,522,342	£2,356,769	£0.52	1,181,205	18,459
People	18%	4%	67%	11%	497,536	313,903	£0.63	111,061	74,831	£0.67	1,832,667	792,778	£0.43	310,780	170,438	£0.55	2,752,045	1,351,951	£0.49	702,715	11,233
Place	18%	3%	46%	33%	252,716	129,181	£0.51	44,820	34,538	£0.77	651,095	266,276	£0.41	475,833	393,732	£0.83	1,424,464	823,728	£0.58	359,176	5,814
Corporate	15%	4%	72%	8%	52,671	24,640	£0.47	14,303	11,874	£0.83	249,924	110,022	£0.44	28,512	34,182	£1.20	345,410	180,718	£0.52	119,315	1,410
Unknown			100%											424	373	£0.88	424	373	£0.88		2

* Casual Car Hire figures above only includes hires booked through the Fleet, Hire and Travel team

In addition to the above figures, long term car hire may add to this total. Data in relation to this is not currently available, however is thought to be minimal in comparison to the above four modes.