



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

PROVIDED CAR SCHEME

Report of the Clerk and Treasurer to the Fire Authority

Date: 28 February 2020

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to Members of a recent review of the Principal Officers' Provided Car Scheme and consider options to align the scheme to current strategies.

Recommendations:

That Members approve the revisions to the Principal Officers' Provided Car Scheme as articulated in Section 2.7 of the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Principal Officers are provided with cars in recognition of their contractual requirement to be continually available for duty, and also the high level of business mileage undertaken on behalf of the Authority. The provision of a car is also part of the package offered to the officers and is therefore considered contractual.
- 1.2 Since the formation of the Fire Authority in 1998 the Chief Fire Officer has been provided with a car to the value of 33.3% of their salary. Furthermore, all other Principal Officers are provided with a car to the value of 70% of the Chief Fire Officers'. If items such as phone connection, satellite navigation, rubber mats, front and rear parking sensors are not included within the vehicle, these are added and funded above the value limit.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The provision of a provided car has been a long-standing arrangement for Principal Officers in recognition of their continuous duty arrangements and the amount of mileage undertaken on behalf of the Authority.
- 2.2 The Principal Officers' Provided Car Scheme was last considered by Members in 2012. Since that time, a number of changes have taken place within the organisation and it was therefore considered appropriate to review the scheme.
- 2.3 Since 2012, the changes include the reduction in the number of officers from five to three, therefore reducing the overall cost of the scheme, and also increasing the amount of individual operational cover for each officer.
- 2.4 In recent years there have also been changes in the fleet strategy of the organisation with much more emphasis on the environment, safety and operational resilience. This means the fleet now contains vehicles with all-wheel drive capability, high level safety ratings for passengers and other road users and, hybrid, electric or alternatively fuelled vehicles.
- 2.5 These changes are not reflected in the current scheme and officers have a free choice in the vehicles they are provided with. It is therefore considered appropriate for the scheme to be updated to reflect the organisational aspirations, and stricter parameters put in place to ensure that the vehicles are fit for purpose and align with the organisational fleet strategy.
- 2.6 The current scheme also differentiates between the allowance for the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and that of the Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers. Furthermore, the limit is based on list price and does not allow for the Government incentives in place for low emission vehicles, or the significant discounts which can be achieved through procurement frameworks.

- 2.7 It is therefore proposed that the scheme is revised to include the following parameters:
- Principal Officers are provided with cars limited to a purchase cost of 30% of the CFO salary. This includes VAT and any cost associated with fitting home chargers for plug-in vehicles etc;
 - Also, the vehicle must have:
 - A hybrid, electric or other alternatively fuelled, low emission engine;
 - All wheel drive capability;
 - Integrated phone connectivity;
 - Satellite navigation;
 - High level safety ratings and features in line with the fleet strategy such as parking sensors, protective mats etc.
- 2.8 The revised scheme removes the differential between the CFO and the other two posts by lowering the CFO limit and increasing the limit of the others. It also moves to actual purchase price and must include all the features required by the Service. Although the overall purchase costs could be slightly higher for the Assistant and Deputy roles, this does create budget certainty and may reduce whole life costs of the scheme due to the increased economy of the vehicles, and reduction in the CFO budget.
- 2.9 In terms of implementation, the two officers currently in post and their Trade Union have been consulted and are accepting of the changes. All future appointments will be based on the revised scheme.
- 2.10 The revisions promote the Authority's commitment to the protection of the environment and road safety, as well as supporting operational resilience. Two of the current vehicles are scheduled for renewal immediately, and the third next year so the implementation time period will be short.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The current allowance for the Chief Fire Officer is £52,135 and the allowance for the Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers is £36,495. This is based on list prices and the Service can generally achieve discounts on these.
- 3.2 Additional costs are also incurred for features such as rubber mats, satellite navigation, parking sensors and phone connectivity etc. These are in addition to the allowance available to the officers and can vary dependent of the specification of vehicle.
- 3.3 The revised scheme provides an actual purchase allowance of £46,921 each for all three officers and will include the features required by the Service. This will create certainty in budget forecasting and could result in whole life costs being reduced due to the increased fuel economy of the vehicles.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Provided cars is part of the package offered to Principal Officers and is therefore contractual. The officers and their trade union have been consulted and they are accepting of the proposed changes.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications arising from this report, however, it should be noted that if an officer required adaptations to a vehicle, or a variation of the specification due to a recognised disability, then reasonable adjustments would be considered with any costs being met by the Service.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Officers undertake a significant amount of travel on behalf of the Authority and ensuring that the vehicles used are appropriately maintained, have high safety standards and are fit for operational purposes assists in reducing associated risks.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Where possible collaborative procurement frameworks will be used to secure the best purchase price possible.
- 9.2 The Service has invested in electric vehicle charging points and will continue to expand this provision in support of the environmental agenda. These facilities are available for use by staff, partners and visitors to the Services' premises. Further expansion of electric vehicles in the fleet will support this agenda.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the revisions to the Principal Officers' Provided Car Scheme as articulated in Section 2.7 of the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Malcolm Townroe
CLERK TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Charlotte Radford
TREASURER TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY