

AUDIT REPORT 24'014**POOL CARS SCHEME****Executive Summary**

The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 provides for a review of the Pool Cars Scheme. A pool car is a vehicle owned by the Council and made available for employees on a shared basis. At the time of the audit the Council's fleet of pool cars consisted of 118 vehicles, with 84 classified as general and 34 designated as service dedicated vehicles. The pool car system is administered by a software application managed by Fleet Services. Policies and procedures have been developed and are included within the Council website, detailing guidance and procedures for booking and using the vehicles.

The scope of this audit was to review systems and procedures in the management and use of pool cars. Policies and procedures were checked to ensure they provide appropriate operating guidance to officers in the booking and use of pool cars. The audit involved interrogation of the software application to randomly select a sample of previously recorded journeys undertaken by officers to ensure usage is in accordance with the Pool Car Employee Guide. Enquiries were also undertaken to assess if a further expansion of the Pool Car Service could provide additional value for money opportunities to the Council.

The audit was carried out in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

The areas identified for management attention include:-;

- Policies and procedures have been developed to detail the arrangements for the booking and use of pool cars. However, it was noted that most of these documents had not been reviewed for several years. Policies and procedures should be regularly reviewed and if required, updated to reflect best practices. Thereafter, they should be promoted and included within the Council Intranet to ensure officers are aware of their requirements and conditions.
- Detailed guidance in the use of pool cars is included in an Employee Guide. The audit included a review of pool car usage by randomly selecting pool car journeys from the tracking information contained within a software application detailing the locations visited, including the speed travelled. Findings highlighted concerns, where journeys undertaken, require further explanation from the officer concerned regarding the use of the pool car. Senior management has been informed to allow for further investigation.
- Recovery of costs for fuel, vehicle maintenance and depreciation against capital expenditure on general pool cars is based on an hourly rechargeable rate. However, it was noted that this rechargeable rate has not been reviewed for a number of years. A costing exercise should be undertaken by Fleet Service in consultation with the Accountancy Service to ensure the current rechargeable

rate remains appropriate to recover the costs for delivering a pool car service.

The Internal Audit Section provides Management with an opinion on the internal control environment and also categories risk ratings for recommendations as high, medium or low. The audit recommendations for this review have been classified as follows:

Risk Ratings for Recommendations		
High	Medium	Low
Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.
2	2	3

Recommendations

Risk Ratings for Recommendations						
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	Low	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	
No.	Audit Recommendation	Priority	Accepted (Yes/ No)	Comments	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Implementation
Key Control: Policies and procedures for the administration of pool cars are in place, up to date and adequate.						
5.01	All policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated on a regular schedule to ensure content remains current and valid. Thereafter, they should be promoted and included within the Council Intranet to ensure officers are aware of their requirements and conditions.	Medium	Yes	A review and if required an update will be undertaken of all policies and procedures and annually thereafter. This will be done by the Compliance & Training Officer. This post is currently vacant, but it is hoped that it will be filled shortly. The implementation timescale is reflective of current staffing arrangements.	Fleet Manager / Compliance & Training Officer	31/12/2024
Key Control: Effective controls in place in the management, booking and use of pool cars.						
5.02	Services should be reminded that if an officer books a	Low	Yes	Pool car webpage on the	Fleet Manager	30/09/2024

Risk Ratings for Recommendations						
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	Low	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	
No.	Audit Recommendation	Priority	Accepted (Yes/ No)	Comments	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Implementation
	vehicle and is later not required, the booking must be cancelled immediately.			interchange will be updated to make this clear.		
5.03	Senior Management should be informed to remind all officers that the use of pool car vehicles must be in accordance with the Employee Guide.	High	Yes	Three minute brief will be issued to all Heads of Services to remind officers of the Employee Guide detailing acceptable use of pool cars.	Fleet Manager.	31/04/2024
	Service Managers should receive monthly reports from Fleet Services of any identified instances where the use of a pool car is not in accordance with the Employee Guide.	High	Yes	To be implemented once the Compliance and Training Officer has been recruited.	Compliance & Training Officer	31/12/2024
5.04	Fleet Service in consultation with the Accountancy Service should review the	Medium	Yes	Rechargeable hourly rates will be reviewed in	Fleet Manager	30/06/2024

Risk Ratings for Recommendations						
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	Low	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	
No.	Audit Recommendation	Priority	Accepted (Yes/ No)	Comments	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Implementation
	rechargeable hourly rate used for funding the pool car service. Consideration should also be given to recharging these costs to Services every month.			consultation with the Accountancy Section after year end. Monthly recharging is to be introduced.		
5.05	A review of the current pool car fleet should be undertaken to determine whether there are any further value for money opportunities to increase the efficiency of the Service.	Low	Yes	A review of the current pool car fleet will be undertaken on appointment of the vacant Compliance and Training Officer role.	Compliance & Training Officer	31/12/2024
5.06	Regular physical inspections of pool car vehicles should be introduced to ensure essential documentation and equipment are maintained in all pool car vehicles.	Low	Yes	Inspection of items already undertaken & process in place to review on a 13wk rota.	Vehicle Service & Compliance Manager	Implemented