Alternatives to Travel in the Public Sector

Summary Report

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JMP Consultants Limited
3 Harbour Exchange Square
London E14 9GE

T 020 7536 8040
F 020 7005 0462
E docklands@jmp.co.uk

www.jmp.co.uk

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1 Alternatives to Travel in the Public Sector

Introduction

1.1 Reducing the need to travel is an important objective in the public sector. The cost and carbon savings of avoiding travel, in favour of alternatives such as telephone conferencing or home working are well recognised, although the exact levels of savings in relation to the cost incurred when providing for these alternatives are less well understood.

1.2 This report contains an overview of the Department for Transport (DfT) funded Alternatives to Travel (ATT) support programme for public sector organisations. The programme, delivered from July 2011 to March 2012, has helped four local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester Council, Dorset County Council, Kent County Council and Swindon Borough Council) to progress their ATT agendas to affect work related journeys, and understand more about the potential cost and carbon savings that could be achieved. All of the local authorities have been able to demonstrate cost and carbon benefits of ATT through reduced travel due to increased use of ATT measures.

1.3 For the purposes of the grant programme ATT measures included: home working and remote working, flexible working and staggered hours, teleconferencing, videoconferencing (including tele-presence) and web conferencing for the purpose of travelling to, and for, work. This definition is in line with the DfT's 2011 call for evidence on ATT which is reported at http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/alternatives-to-travel-next-steps/.

Benefits of ATT within an organisation

1.4 The rising importance of ATT within national transport policy has raised awareness of the potential for ATT measures to reduce congestion and vehicle miles, and therefore realise benefits in economic efficiency, reductions in carbon emissions, health, social inclusion, safety and air quality. However, ATT can also deliver many 'non-transport' goals e.g.

- Reductions in operational costs due to rationalisation of office space resulting from increased home and remote working;
- Reductions in business mileage and expenses due to increased video, web and teleconferencing;
- Reductions in business mileage and expenses due to more efficient working practices from remote and mobile working;
- Improvements to overall productivity, through more working options being available; and
- Improvements to employees' work/life balance and the knock on benefits of reduced absenteeism.

Understanding Transport Benefits

1.5 With all these benefits, ATT programmes are already well developed in many organisations. What is often not acknowledged is the transport benefit of ATT programmes. It is therefore important for transport professionals to:

- Understand the potential transport benefits of ATT;
- Build a business case for ATT which focuses on the cost savings to be made from travel reduction; and

- Understand how to develop or influence an existing ATT programme.

1.6 The focus of the support programme was therefore to build upon existing work on ATT within the public sector, by focusing solely on transport impacts in order to enable transport professionals to understand and maximise the transport benefits of ATT.

The ATT Support Programme

1.7 The support programme enabled the four local authorities to learn how to create a baseline of their current transport patterns and associated costs by using an ATT Assessment Tool and then start to test the effect of ATT on transport by introducing pilot studies. Going forward, the baseline data gathered through the support programme will enable each local authority to build a business case for ATT by collecting the same data annually and comparing the datasets to realise the transport efficiencies achieved.

1.8 Although the timescale of the support programme only enabled one study to be carried out at each authority with a small selection of staff, the outcomes of the pilot studies have provided a useful starting point from which the likely impact of ATT on the wider scale can be projected.

Key Messages from the Support Programme

1.9 The key messages from the case studies are:

- Existing preconceptions may suggest that there is no potential to increase the use of ATT measures but, through promotion, ATT use can be maximised and travel reduced (Dorset County Council and Swindon Borough Council).
- Promoting ATT through short email guidance is low cost and can have an immediate impact on reducing travel (Dorset County Council and Kent County Council).
- Providing clarity of what is expected of staff can be an essential first step in encouraging ATT. The links between ATT and potential cost and carbon savings from travel (as well as other savings) should be clearly communicated to staff that have the ability to change their behaviour (Cheshire West and Chester Council and Kent County Council).
- Starting communications well in advance of efforts to change behaviour is also beneficial, to give staff the chance to absorb information being provided to them, ask questions, and to plan how they might change their behaviour (Dorset County Council).
- Desk based employees are perhaps easier to influence in terms of maximising home and remote working than more mobile employees (Swindon Borough Council). Mobile employees require a more targeted approach which provides them with appropriate job-specific IT solutions (Cheshire West and Chester Council).
- A targeted approach can be very effective in achieving travel behaviour change through the use of ATT measures. Although resource intensive, the approach enables ATT measures to be tailored specifically to the needs of individuals within teams and ensure that any investment in ATT is well considered (Cheshire West and Chester Council).
- Delivery methods for ATT should be on the local level to ensure that the bespoke needs of departments, teams or individuals can be addressed. Even in the instance where wide scale uptake of ATT needs to be achieved, the diverse needs of individuals and their roles need to be taken into account (Cheshire West and Chester Council).

- Often the perception is that technical training is the most significant barrier to uptake of new ATT measures. However, other barriers exist e.g. in the context of remote/mobile and homeworking, a culture of 'managing by presence' may prevent uptake of ATT measures. (Swindon Borough Council).
- Existing ATT programmes, such as office rationalisation programmes, normally do include communications, training, awareness, and facilities all together, but the messages are not always about travel. It is important that the messages to staff about the benefits of travel reduction are clear (Cheshire West and Chester Council, Swindon Borough Council).

1.10 Table 1.1 overleaf provides a short summary of the pilot studies carried out at each local authority and the outcomes achieved. Further detail about each of these studies can be found in the following sections and full details can be found in the Case Studies Report.

1.11 This summary report contains three chapters:

- This chapter which introduces the potential transport benefits of ATT and the DfT support programme;
- The second chapter which summarises the work that was carried out through the support programme at four local authorities, explaining how this work can be replicated at other public sector organisations; and
- The last chapter which lists the tools and resources that are available to help other public sector organisations progress ATT.

Table 1.1 Key Outcomes

	Home and Remote Working		Flexible Working		Technology			Findings	
Public Sector Organis-ation	Home-working	Remote-working	Staggered hours	Compressed hours	Tele-conf.	Video-conf.	Web-conf.	What was implemented?	What changed?
Cheshire West and Chester Council	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	A bespoke package of IT solutions were provided to a small group, with supporting communications.	Home working and teleconferencing increased, and mileage reduced.
Dorset County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓				Staff were asked to try and avoid travelling 2 days per week by working from home or remotely, or amending hours.	Total commuting decreased.
Kent County Council					✓			A promotion of teleconferencing was carried out via email bulletins, and taster sessions.	Face to face meetings decreased, and teleconferencing increased.
Swindon Borough Council	✓	✓						Workshop to encourage home and remote working was provided.	There was an increase in home and remote working for the office-based pilot group.

2 The Support Programme

Introduction

2.1 The ATT support programme was introduced to help realise the DfT's joint transport aims of stimulating the economy and reducing carbon. Acknowledging the far reaching benefits of ATT, the programme was introduced in order to develop a better understanding of the transport benefits of ATT.

2.2 Ten days of support were provided to each of the four local authorities covered by the programme between July 2011 and March 2012, who also contributed ten days of resource. Support was provided from a team of experts including transport planners with expertise in the field of influencing travel behaviour and psychologists with specialism in sustainable transport and changing behaviour in working environments. The support team provided direction and guidance, although the work was predominantly carried out by the local authorities.

Local Authorities Involved

2.3 The local authorities involved were selected based on their need and motivation to progress ATT in the short term, and included Cheshire West and Chester Council, Dorset County Council, Kent County Council and Swindon Borough Council.

Cheshire West and Chester Council

2.4 Following local government reorganisation in 2008 the new Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) developed a Staff Travel Strategy to address the way in which staff travel to, from and during work. The strategy involved the development of a travel plan for the council's new HQ building which also considers business travel policies and practice.

2.5 CWaC's priorities for the support were to increase usage of ATT measures by introducing some new IT technologies in order to support their staff travel strategy.

Dorset County Council

2.6 Dorset County Council (DCC) was already exploring ATT through their 'Efficiencies and Change Programme', and the ATT support programme was utilised to help them include transport efficiencies into their calculations.

2.7 DCC also used the support programme to inform decisions about how best to reduce localised congestion levels in preparation for traffic associated with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games.

Kent County Council

2.8 In recent years Kent County Council has introduced a range of ATT measures to support their flexible working policy and to enable staff to achieve a balance between their work and personal lives in the best interests of both service delivery and the wellbeing of individuals.

2.9 Through this work a number of barriers have been identified which are affecting the uptake of some of the measures provided e.g. teleconferencing. The priority for the ATT support in Kent was to explore and understand some of these barriers in more detail in order to help overcome them and increase the use of teleconferencing.

Swindon Borough Council

2.10 Swindon Borough Council has recently consolidated its office space and relocated staff to achieve efficiencies in accommodation and travel costs.

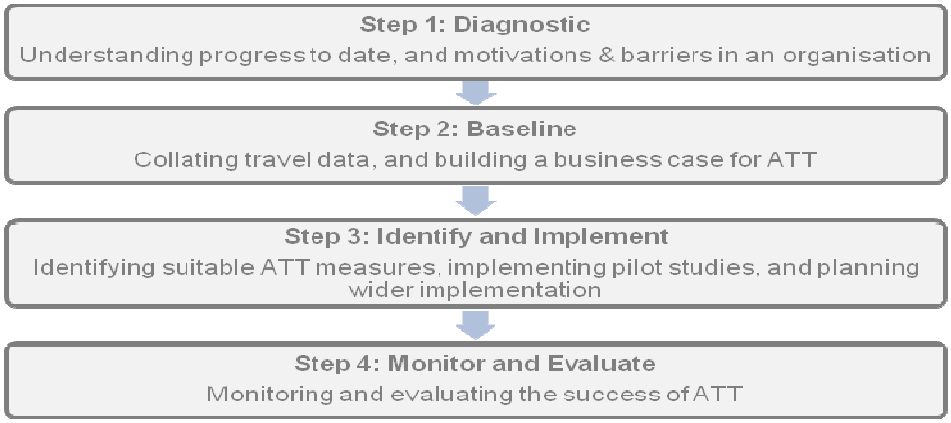
2.11 Swindon's priorities for the support were to gain a better understanding of the role that management styles have to play in enabling adoption of ATT measures.

Work Carried Out

Overview of the Approach

2.12 Figure 2.1 shows the four stages of support that were carried out with each local authority. These steps can also be followed by new organisations wishing to introduce ATT.

Figure 2.1 Staged Approach adopted for the Support Programme



Step One: Diagnostic

Understanding the Starting Point and Planning the Way Forward

2.13 The first step was to understand how much progress each organisation had already made with ATT by looking at the work already done e.g. what facilities were available, which policies and processes were in place, and what motivations existed. By understanding work to date, barriers could also be understood and explored. A checklist has been developed that can be used by other organisations to get started; details of which are contained in the following chapter.

2.14 Each local authority found this initial stage straightforward to carry out, and it enabled them to start an internal engagement process on ATT.

Key Lessons Learned from the Diagnostic Stage

- ATT is a cross cutting agenda that requires involvement of a number of departments including IT, HR, facilities and property
- It is likely that ATT is already well developed in one or more of these departments, and transport professionals may be able to begin working with these departments to align work in order to understand the impacts on travel in more detail.

Step Two: Baseline

Understanding the Current Travel Impact and Making Projections

2.15 The next step was to prepare a baseline of current travel carried out within the organisation, so that the business case for achieving a reduction in travel could be quantified. Data needs to be collected from a variety of departments and collated into a spreadsheet. A readymade tool called the ATT Assessment Tool has been developed through the grant programme to help collate data, which also performs a calculator function to demonstrate the cost or carbon efficiency savings that can be achieved through ATT measures. The ATT Assessment Tool is also detailed in the following chapter.

2.16 The local authorities had varying experiences of completing the baseline stage, depending on the size and complexity of their organisation and how their transport data is collected and stored. However, all the local authorities were able to collect some data from existing records to identify the overall mileage, cost and/or carbon impact of the travel carried out by the whole of their organisation. The table below shows the total impacts of business travel that were calculated:

Table 2.1 Cost and Carbon Impact

Organisation	Total annual car travel mileage	Total annual car travel expenditure (£)	Total annual car travel carbon emissions (tonnes)
Cheshire West and Chester	3,049,168	-	1,185
Dorset County Council	6,399,208	-	2,488
Kent County Council	15,844,131	£5,117,904	6,159
Swindon Borough Council	1,372,421	£769,162	534
All organisations	26,664,928	-	10,366

2.17 Some key lessons learned are identified below:

Key Lessons Learned from the Baseline Stage

- Delays in data collection can be experienced when requests for data needed to be made from different departments. Start requests for data as early as possible, to prevent a delay to work programmes. For example, request data whilst still completing the diagnostic stage.
- Data is not always provided in comparable formats between departments; so always provide clear and specific requests for data, stating the time period, the coverage, and enquire about any known problems with the data.
- It might not be possible to obtain all of the data required to prepare a robust baseline, however it is better to start the data collection process and begin to build a business case gradually. Business case calculations can be made based on assumptions until more accurate local data is obtained.

Step Three: Identify and Implement

Understanding the Potential of ATT and the Barriers

2.18 Once the business case had been prepared, the next stage was to identify which ATT measures would be most effective at reducing travel. The baseline data input into the ATT Assessment Tool can be used to identify a specific common journey that could be managed through ATT e.g. a high number of taxi rides between two offices, or a specific department with particularly high travel expense claims might be focused on first.

2.19 A 'Rapid Assessment Tool' is also available to help make projections of the potential cost and carbon savings that could be achieved if travel was to be reduced through ATT. The Rapid Assessment Tool is also detailed in the following chapter.

2.20 To progress implementation, carrying out a pilot study can collect evidence of the potential of ATT, and help understand barriers to ATT in the organisation. Each local authority implemented a pilot study to gain an understanding of the potential reductions in travel that could be achieved if ATT was provided and/or promoted directly to staff. All pilot projects were monitored using before and after surveys. The headline findings in terms of potential travel reductions and associated savings are summarised below:

Cheshire West and Chester Council

2.21 A bespoke package of IT solutions were provided to a small group of staff at Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC), with supporting communications.

2.22 The participants of the CWaC pilot study reduced their business travel mileage by an average of 12 miles per employee per day, equating to 2,434[1] miles saved per employee per year. This is a carbon emissions saving of 946 kg and cost saving of £779 per employee per year. This is a significant decrease in mileage and if replicated across just 5% of CWaC employees, would reduce business travel mileage by 1.1m miles in a year. This would result in a carbon emissions saving of 428,000 kg and cost savings of £355,000 per year from business related car travel.

2.23 Survey results from CWaC also show an increase in home-working during the pilot programme from 0.2 days per week to 0.7 days per week per participant. One day per week of home-working can reduce an individual employee's commute time by 56 minutes per week. In addition, employees could reduce their mileage by 17.2 miles per week, or 884 miles per year.[2]

"All pest control officers are now live with Blackberry smartphones and are managing their calendars online, remotely and should now not have need to come back to the office. I think this is simply the start of a number of changes and improvements we will be doing in that area

The wider Lync pilot is concluding and this is now progressing to full organisation rollout, all of the 15 pilot users either already have Lync or should now be set-up with it

It's taken a bit of effort but I'm really pleased"

Chris Marsden, Senior ICT Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council (April 2012)

[1] *All business travel carbon, cost and mileage savings based on car travel. Figures for average business travel mileage and modal split taken from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey (http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/national-travel-survey/commuting.pdf). Business travel cost savings calculated using Kent County Council's average cost per mile from their Baseline Assessment.*

[2] *All commuter travel carbon, cost and mileage savings based on car travel. Figures for average commuter travel mileage and modal split taken from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey*

Dorset County Council

2.24 The staff of two departments at Dorset County Council (DCC) were asked to try to avoid travelling 2 days per week by working from home or remotely, or amending hours.

2.25 Among the participants, there was a 16% reduction in the number of days that staff travelled to their usual place of work. Based on their average commuting distance of 17.2 miles daily, this represents a reduction in car travel of 42 miles per day factored up for the 23 participants[3]. This is a carbon emissions saving of 16 kg per day. If this could be replicated across 5% of Dorset's employees, a total of 57,200 commuter miles could be saved each year. This would collectively result in carbon emissions savings of 22,000 kg.

Kent County Council

2.26 A promotion of an existing teleconferencing service was carried out in two departments at Kent County Council, involving email bulletins and taster sessions for staff.

2.27 After the promotion, the number of face to face meetings that were carried out reduced from an average of 6.47 to 4.81 per person in a week. The total decrease of 1.65 face to face meetings per week represented 1.28 meetings outside of usual workplaces, and 0.37 meetings at the workplace, that would otherwise have taken place.

2.28 The number of meetings held via teleconference also increased by 1.04 meetings, from 0.12 to 1.16 meetings, on average, per person, in a week.

2.29 If it is assumed that an employee travels only 5 miles each way to a meeting, and avoids one meeting per week by using teleconference, the authority could save 78,000 miles of car travel per week if this was applied across all staff. This would result in a carbon emissions saving of 30,000 kg and cost savings of £25,000 from car travel per week.

Swindon

2.30 Workshop to encourage home and remote working was provided to managers of two teams at Swindon. One team was predominantly office based and one team was more mobile in nature.

2.31 After the training sessions, the teams involved increased the amount of time they spent working away from the office by half a day a week (0.52 days), which represents a percentage reduction in office-based work of 10.4%. The authority could save 7,155 commuter miles per day if this was applied across all staff at Swindon Borough Council. This would collectively result in a carbon emissions saving of 2,781 kg for car travel.

2.32 Interestingly, the changes in behaviour were greater in the team that is predominantly office based. The office based team decreased their number of days working in their usual location by 14%, with corresponding increases in home and remote working, suggesting that there may be more potential to affect the travel behaviours of office based staff than remote workers, whose travel requirements may be more complex and tied into their job requirements.

[3] *The average commuter modal split from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey has been applied.*

"It was really good for us as a transport team to involve other parts of the organisation in this project; we were able to streamline our activities with that of our IT and business transformation teams to complement each other's work, and also to bring transport issues onto the agenda of different departments.

Collecting information for the ATT Assessment Tool was a challenge as it highlighted to us how all our information is stored ineffectively across different systems. This isn't something we have been able to resolve, but now that it has been highlighted it is certainly something we can look to improve on.

Overall, just getting people to think about the journeys they make, and how and why they need to make them has proved effective and challenged the way we traditionally work."

Claire Fleming, Swindon Travel Choices, Swindon Borough Council (April 2012)

In Summary

2.33 A range of interventions were therefore introduced across the pilot studies via the support programme, for example promoting existing underused facilities, or introducing new ATT measures in one department to understand how they might be more widely introduced. Key learning points from the identify and implement stage are outlined below:

Identifying ATT Measures

- Make projections based on possible scenarios in order to achieve buy-in; and
- If you have enough data, consider which ATT measures will realise the most benefits.

Implementing ATT Measures

- Introduce a pilot study first;
- Repeat further pilot studies, or apply on the wider scale; and
- Maintain records of work carried out and continue to build the business case.

Step Four: Monitor and Evaluate

Understanding Travel Savings Achieved, and Monitoring On-Going Progress

2.34 To demonstrate the benefits of ATT, an on-going monitoring programme was prepared that each local authority would manage, so that the evidence for ATT could be collected. It is recommended that the ATT Assessment Tool is completed annually, using to the same data sources and recording like for like data to understand transport efficiencies that have been achieved.

2.35 The local authorities will gain a fuller picture of their progress as they track change over an extended time period. For example, when transport reductions have been achieved it may be possible to evaluate the return on investment of ATT measures, by comparing the cost savings in terms of reduced travel costs, with the costs incurred from providing for ATT.

Next Steps

Enabling Knowledge Transfer within the Public Sector

2.36 The ATT programme has created a legacy in knowledge transfer that will be maintained after the support programme has ended. A package of tools have been prepared and tested through the support programme that can be used by any organisation in the future. Guidance on the use of these tools is available in the Guidance Document, and from the group of public sector organisations that have received support through the programme.

Support Provided to Additional Organisations

2.37 Support has already been extended to a further nine public sector organisations. Each of the local authorities that received support committed at the outset to pass the knowledge gained to other organisations in their local area that also had an interest in progressing ATT. At the end of the programme each local authority also publicised the tools available.

2.38 The following additional organisations were engaged through the support programme and completed Step 1 (Diagnostic) and Step 2 (Baseline). They have been provided with an action plan to follow in order to progress to the implementation and monitoring steps of the ATT process.

- Bristol University;
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust; and
- East Dorset District Council and Christchurch Borough Council.

2.39 The following additional organisations were engaged through the support programme and completed Step 1 (Diagnostic). They have been provided with an action plan to follow in order to progress to the baseline, implementation and monitoring steps of the ATT process.

- Research Council offices in Swindon;
- Great Western Hospital, in Swindon.
- The Environment Agency in Bristol;
- Bristol City Council;
- Swale Borough Council and Ashford Borough Council; and
- North Dorset District Council.

3 Tools and Resources

3.1 This chapter contains an overview of the tools that were produced through the ATT programme and are available for new organisations to use to help them progress ATT. These tools have already been used by a wide range of public sector organisations, and could also be used in the private sector.

3.2 More detailed step by step guidance for the use of each tool is also available in the Guidance Document.

The Diagnostic Checklist Form

3.3 A checklist has been prepared that provides a framework to carry out the initial diagnostic stage. The checklist asks a series of questions to establish progress to date in ATT, objectives for ATT, and data that will be available to work with in order to build the business case.

3.4 The checklist requires engagement with a range of different departments that will have an interest in ATT to gather information. This is because ATT is a cross cutting agenda that requires partnership working between a range of different departments.

3.5 The diagnostic checklist form is a simple four page document that can be found in the appendixes of the Guidance Document.

Action Plan Template

3.6 A template is also available to prepare an action plan on completion of the diagnostic checklist form, to identify the tasks required to progress ATT.

3.7 The template follows the staged approach (Step 1: Diagnostic, Step 2: Baseline, Step 3: Identify and Implement, Step 4: Monitor and Evaluate), and is also available in the appendixes of the Guidance Document.

Figure 3.1 The Action Plan Template

ATT Grant Programme:

	Task	Detail	Timescale
Mobilise	Ensure reporting structure is in place and senior buy in is achieved		
Baseline	Complete baseline assessment tool		
Identify	Plan ATT measures to be introduce/expanded/promoted		
Implement	Implement measures/ carry out a pilot project		
Monitor	Repeat baseline assessment		
Evaluate	Evaluate the results to understand ROI/ROO		

The ATT Assessment Tool

3.8 The ATT Assessment Tool is presented as an excel spreadsheet for collating and recording transport data. The ATT Assessment Tool contains a series of work sheets:

1. Baseline Assessment Tool (a) is for recording the first year of organisation wide baseline data, such as total mileage by rail, pool cars, and lease vehicles, and it calculates the total cost and carbon impact from travel;
2. Baseline Assessment Tool (b) is for recording data that will help set priorities for ATT, such as the top 50 drivers, or the five most frequent taxi journeys;
3. Baseline Assessment Tool (c) is for monitoring the pilot projects;
4. Rapid Assessment Tool (a) is a calculator that can project various scenarios, such as the carbon and cost savings that could be achieved if the same reduction in travel achieved in pilot studies were achieved on a wider scale;
5. Rapid Assessment Tool (b) is a copy of this calculator for making projections one year later;
6. Post Assessment Tool (a) is for recording the second year of organisation wide data, so that change can be monitored;
7. Post Assessment Tool (b) is for recording subsequent years, and can be copied as required for the future.

3.9 The ATT Assessment Tool contains a series of pink and blue cells. Pink cells are to be completed and blue cells contain formulas that will self-populate, as illustrated in figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2 The ATT Assessment Tool

Headline Travel Information

	Expenditure (£)	Distance Travelled (miles)	Emissions (kg of CO_2e)	Emissions (Cost £)	Emissions Sense Check (kg of CO_2e)	Emissions Sense Check (Cost £)	Air Quality (g NOx)	Air Quality (£)	Congestion
Car Travel (all modes)				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Rail Travel				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Air Travel - Domestic				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Air Travel - Short Haul				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Air Travel - Long Haul				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Taxi				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Other									

Vehicles

	Expenditure (£)	Distance (miles)	Emissions (kg of CO_2e)	Emissions (Cost £)	Emissions Sense Check (kg of CO_2e)	Emissions Sense Check (Cost £)	Air Quality (g NOx)	Air Quality (£)	Congestion
Pool				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Company Car				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Hire				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Grey Fleet				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Car Club				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	
Taxi				£0.00	0.00	£0.00	0.00	£0.00	

Pilot Study Resources

3.10 Organisations can also benefit from the experiences gained through the pilot studies carried out at each local authority. The following resources are available in the appendixes of the Guidance Document, and may be of use when planning and delivering similar projects at new organisations:

- The home working trial that was implemented at Dorset County Council, consisting of the list of options and a simple monitoring process;
- A teleconferencing promotion delivered via five email bulletins to Kent County Council employees; and
- A workshop that was delivered to managers in Swindon Borough Council.

3.11 Full details of each pilot study can also be found in the Case Studies report, and the action plans that were produced for each organisation that received support can be found in the appendixes of the Case Studies report.