

23 September 2025**SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY AND EXPENSES POLICY - FOR APPROVAL****Issue**

The purpose of this paper is to:

1. Update on progress towards implementing the actions set out in the 'towards sustainable travel in the Forestry Commission' document which was agreed with the Executive Board in October 2024.
2. To seek EB approval of the refreshed Expenses Policy and new Sustainable Travel Policy (attached).
3. To provide an update on review of the CAPES company car scheme
4. To provide an update on the implementation of telematics in Forestry Commission fleet assets.

Background

An update was provided to the Executive Board on the 30th June 2025, outlining progress on actions arising from the earlier paper 'towards sustainable travel in the Forestry Commission' which was agreed with the Executive Board in October 2024.

The main item covered in the June update was progress with development of the refreshed Expenses Policy and new Sustainable Travel Policy.

Following the 30th June update, the draft Expenses Policy and Sustainable Travel Policy have now been through several rounds of consultation:

1. 09/06/2025 to 27/06/2025 – Internal technical consultation (HR, payroll, finance, etc)
2. 07/07/2025 to 25/07/2025 – Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research
3. 11/08/2025 to 01/10/2025 (subsequently extended to 19/09/2025) - FCTU travel sub-committee

The draft documents were sent to the FCTU travel sub-committee on 11th August for consultation; however no feedback has been received to date.

FCTU engagement

The FCTU have put forward the position that the Expenses and Sustainable Travel policies should be taken forwards on a 'negotiate' basis. This is contrary to the Forestry Commission position and legal advice which has identified these as 'consult' issues.

Following the most recent letter received from the FCTU's on 10th September, the FCTU's appear to have conceded that the policies will be progressed on a 'consult' basis. They are however proposing a lengthy and involved consultation process.

The Executive Board are requested to provide a steer, as to whether implementation of the policies is progressed as per the current consultation timeline (i.e. with any feedback received by 19th September), or whether implementation should be delayed to allow for a further 30 day consultation period. Note that delays to implementation of the policies will reduce the transition period, prior to the new grey fleet emissions taking effect from April 2026.

Note that the implementation of telematics is being progressed separately. Documents are nearing completion to commence a separate 30 day consultation period for this.

Next steps

The Executive Board are asked to review and approve the attached draft Expenses policy and Sustainable Travel policy. The policies will be implemented as approved. If any substantial changes are viewed to be necessary as a consequence of FCTU feedback, further approval will be sought from the EB by write around.

CAPES Review

Following the previous 30th June update, a consultant has now been commissioned to review the Forestry Commissions company car scheme. This includes presenting proposals for how the scheme could be revised to increase uptake of a zero-emissions company car scheme and ensure an equitable balance of costs between the employer and employee.

The consultants draft report has been received and is now under review and discussion, prior to being finalised. This will be shared at the next Executive Board meeting, at which approval will be sought to implement a revised company car scheme model.

In advance of this meeting the Executive Board is asked for a steer on eligibility for entrance into the scheme. The current scheme requires employees to undertake a minimum of 5,000 business miles per year to be eligible.

To transition more grey fleet drivers into zero-emissions CAPES vehicles, it is proposed to reduce the threshold for entry into the scheme. The Forestry Commission could provide a company car scheme to an employee who undertakes no business miles. In this scenario, the employee would be responsible for the full cost of the vehicle lease, with the Forestry Commission facilitating access to a lease provider and administering the scheme.

The Executive Board is invited to share views on whether the Forestry Commission should have a minimum mileage threshold for employees to access the scheme, or alternatively, what minimum mileage threshold would be appropriate.

Telematics

Planning for the implementation of telematics in the Forestry Commission vehicle and machinery fleet is now well progressed, as follows:

1. A small working group has been formed to guide development of the project.
2. A supplier has been identified for potential award of a minimum three-year contract, subject to completion of due diligence on their system.
3. A small trial has taken place in several Forestry Commission assets to assess system capabilities and the functionality required.
4. A draft telematics policy, Data Protection Impact Assessment and Privacy Notice have been authored.

The next steps for implementation, require consultation on the telematics policy, DPIA and privacy notice internally in the Forestry Commission and then with the FCTU's.

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Date: 15/09/2025