

TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE POLICY

DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL

Date	Author	Version	Status	Reason for Change
	SEStran	1.0	FINAL	Policy Adopted
Oct 2017	SEStran	1.1	FINAL	Adoption of version control
March 2019	SEStran	1.2	FINAL	Minor Amendment to rail travel options
May 2026	SEStran	1.3	FINAL	Amendment to mileage allowance

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures relating to official travel and the entitlement to travel and subsistence (T&S) claims.

The provisions of this policy are designed to ensure that best value for money is achieved. The policy identifies the most appropriate arrangements for T&S costs.

In addition to the above, SEStran also has an obligation under Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to act:

- In a way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- In a way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme, and
- In a way that it considers most sustainable

Adherence to the guidance within this procedure will ensure that business travel arrangements are safe, cost effective and compliant with SEStran's environmental and legal obligations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of SEStran, any consultants employed by SEStran and all Members/Observers of the SEStran Partnership Board while engaged on SEStran business. SEStran is committed to delivering best value and encouraging greener travel and as such this policy endorses the following objectives:

- To reduce the need to travel
- To increase awareness among staff of travel choices and their implications
- To encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport on official business

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that employees, Members and other personnel are aware of their individual responsibilities to ensure the policy is adhered to.

- Use the Business Travel Hierarchy as below
- Ensure that personal vehicles are insured for business use and have current MOT certificates (if applicable);
- Ensure that all subsistence claim forms are completed in accordance with the guidance provided within this policy.

Line Managers

- Ensure that only essential travel is undertaken and that alternative options and forward planning are used to achieve best value
- Ensure that all subsistence claim forms are completed in accordance with the guidance outlined within this document before providing authorisation.

BUSINESS TRAVEL HIERARCHY

When employees, Members and other personnel are required to travel for official purposes (official meetings, seminars or workshops, training courses) they must consider the business travel hierarchy as laid out below. This hierarchy considers both environmental and economic impact.

1. Is there a need for travel – can a telephone call, video conference or email deliver the same outcome
2. Walking/Cycling – These are the healthiest, most sustainable and lowest cost travel options, however only viable for journeys over a short distance.
3. Bus/Rail – Public Transport provides an alternative to car-based business travel. Benefits include lower CO2 emissions and increased efficiency allowing for the ability to work while travelling.
4. Taxi/Private Car – It is recognised that sometimes this may be the most time-efficient mode of transport however this results in congestion and high carbon emissions. If this mode of transport is used multi-occupancy trips should be encouraged where possible.
5. Air Travel – This method of transport may be more efficient in terms of cost and travel time however it does result in the highest CO2 emissions and should be the last option considered for domestic travel.

TRAVEL PLANNING

Travel arrangements should be planned to keep the total expense to the minimum taking account of business needs and efficiency. As walking/cycling are only viable for journeys over a short distance, public transport should be considered the preferred mode of business travel for most journeys unless it significantly increases door-to-door travel time. Travel should be booked as far in advance as possible to ensure the best available priced ticket. It is recognised that public transport will not be a practical option for all employees/Members. In these cases, it is acceptable to consider alternative travel options instead. Those with travel concession passes should use these where possible to reduce the cost of travel.

Rail

Rail travel should be restricted to specific train times to allow staff to purchase lower cost 'advance' tickets. Flexible tickets should only be purchased when those travelling cannot be sure of when their meeting/event will end. First class travel may be permitted when a staff member has a discounted rail card and/or is travelling long distance, or the overall cost of the first-class ticket represents value for money when factoring cost of subsistence. Authorisation of the Partnership Director will be required.

SEStran will purchase railcards on behalf of employees or Members who travel regularly on SEStran business, if the purchased railcard can be used to reduce the cost of their business travel.

Personal Vehicle

For round trips a personal vehicle can be used at the discretion of the employee and authorising officer if it represents the most efficient option in terms of travelling time and/or no alternative method of undertaking the journey is practical. The vehicle must have an up to date MOT certificate and insurance to cover business travel. Mileage will only be paid for approved business journeys. The vehicle's odometer should be used to determine the journey distance. Online route planning websites such as Google Maps can assist in providing mileage if required. Mileage will be claimed at the below rates:

Miles Claimed	Rate Per Mile
0 – 10,000	55p
10,000 +	25p

Air Travel

This method of transport may be more efficient in terms of cost and travel time however it does result in the highest CO2 emissions and this should be taken in to consideration when arranging travel. All fares booked will be the lowest cost economy class ticket that satisfies travel requirements. Availability of lower cost air fares is generally greater when reservations are made significantly in advance of travel, although the optimal advance booking time will vary for each destination. Employees and Members should therefore request travel bookings as far in advance as possible.

SUBSISTENCE

Subsistence should not be claimed where SEStran, or any other body, provides a suitable meal free of charge.

SEStran will only reimburse subsistence expenses incurred by an employee if they meet the following qualifying conditions:

- The employee/Member is travelling on behalf of the SEStran in performance of their duties, in the case of attending Partnership Board meetings, Performance & Audit committee and any other pre-authorised activity.
- The employee/Member incurred a cost of a meal (food and drink) after starting the journey

Subsistence claims must be supported by receipts stapled securely to the form. Reimbursement of subsistence expenses will be limited to the benchmark rates provided by HM Revenues & Customs as detailed below:

Rate	Description	Value
Breakfast	Where an employee leaves home before 6am and has to buy a meal which they would normally had at home.	Up to £5.00
5 hour	Where an employee has been away from home for a period of at least 5 hours and has incurred the cost of a meal	Up to £5.00
10 hour	Where an employee has been away from home for a period of at least 10 hours and has incurred the cost of a meal or meals	Up to £10.00
Late evening	Where an employee has to work later than usual and has to buy a meal which they would normally have had at home	Up to £15.00

Only three 'rates' can be claimed in a 24-hour period. A meal is defined as a combination of food and drink. Exceptions to the above rates may be pre-agreed with the Partnership Director when employees/Members are travelling outwith the SEStran area e.g. attending a conference in London/Europe.

COMPLETING THE TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

Travelling and subsistence claims must be authorised by line managers for staff and Partnership Director for Board Members. Claims must be submitted for payment within 90 days of the expense being incurred or journey undertaken. Expense claims submitted outside of this 90-day limit will only be paid in exceptional circumstances. Claims will be paid a month in arrears.

STAFF PURCHASE CARDS

The above restrictions in terms of travel & subsistence also apply to any costs incurred on SEStran purchase cards. For further information on use of the purchase cards please refer to the SEStran purchase card rules and procedures.

REVIEW

This policy is designed to encourage a change in employee and Member business travel modes to be more financially efficient and to reduce the organisations CO2 emissions. This will be monitored through the following provisions:

- Carbon emissions will be reported under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 which requires SEStran to publish details of compliance with climate change duties.
- A report on Members' allowances will be published annually, under the SEStran financial regulations.

This document will be reviewed annually by SEStran.