



REPLACEMENT OF CLEANSING VEHICLES

Report by Head of Municipal Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 To homologate the purchase of a precinct sweeper and to seek the authority to purchase replacement Cleansing Service vehicles and equipment through Asset Rental Borrowing or leasing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cleansing and Waste Management related duties require reliable vehicles to ensure efficient service delivery. Some of these vehicles have reached the end of their useful working life or have component issues rendering them unsuitable for use.
- 2.2 A built precinct sweeper with only 357 hours became available from Aebi Schmidt, who are on the Scotland Excel Framework. Purchase of this used vehicle meant that the normal 12-month lead time was avoided. In addition, the vehicle was available for circa £15k less than the cost of a new vehicle. As the offer of this vehicle was time critical, approval was sought and granted by the Chief Financial Officer to procure the vehicle. The purchase price of £85k was funded through the Asset Rental Borrowing arrangements with the Trading account, consistent with current practice.
- 2.4 The Cleansing Service has two refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) that have been out of use for a significant period with one unlikely to be fully operational again (MJ72 YRZ) and the other with no return date confirmed (SY23 AET). The Service has been keeping a 12-year-old RCV (VX63 HBC) in service, at significant repair costs, due to the ongoing issues associated with the inoperable RCVs.
- 2.5 It is proposed to procure or lease a new RCV of the required specification to replace the 12-year-old RCV (VX63 HBC) to ensure that the cleansing fleet can provide a reliable efficient service. If procured this vehicle will be funded through the Asset Rental Borrowing arrangements with the Trading account, consistent with current practice.
- 2.6 It is proposed to explore options to re-body the chassis of the inoperable RCV (MJ72 YRZ) with a suitable body and bin lifts. The chassis has only covered 10K miles so this, if successful, would be effectively equivalent to a new vehicle. The funding mechanism for any works will be agreed with the Chief Financial Officer, prior to progressing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle agree to:
 - (a) homologate the decision of the Chief Financial Officer to approve the replacement of hired precinct sweeper, direct from Aebi Schmidt, at a cost of £85k, funded through the current Asset Rental agreements from within the Cleansing Services Trading Operation budget;
 - (b) the replacement of refuse collection vehicle VX63 HBC, either by leasing or funded through the current Asset Rental agreements from within the Cleansing Services Trading Operation budget; and
 - (c) rebody the inoperable refuse collection vehicle (MJ72 YRZ), if viable and cost effective, with a suitable body and bin lifts if funding is available and agreed with the Chief Financial Officer.

Contact Officer: Iain N Campbell Cleansing Services Manager Ext. 213 614
Appendix: None
Background Papers: None

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	Required to avoid increasing vehicle maintenance costs and consequential costs due to breakdown and repair. Funding is through the current Asset Rental agreements from within the Cleansing Services Trading Operation budget. Funding for rebodding the inoperable RCV will have to be identified and agreed with Finance, prior to progressing.
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	Replacement of existing assets.
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	Continued use of existing vehicles will increase risk of service interruption due to breakdowns.
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	None
Environmental Impact	Reduced emissions due to newer engines.
Consultation	N/A

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Cleansing Services undertake a variety of waste and recycling operations which require reliable vehicles to ensure efficient service delivery. Due to financial pressures the previous fleet replacement programme has not been followed for several years which has resulted in a number of aging vehicles in the fleet that have significant unbudgeted repair costs.
- 5.2 The Service is planning a refreshed fleet replacement programme (which will hopefully be tied into a wider Comhairle fleet replacement programme) so that in future there will be a report at the beginning of the year seeking the approval for the procurement of vehicles highlighted in the programme for replacement in that year, subject to budgets and borrowing being available. This will give wider scope for the Service to plan procurement and consider the cost benefits of different procurement options over the lifespan of a vehicle by comparing new vehicles against leased vehicles and available second-hand vehicles.
- 5.3 Cleansing Services vehicles are funded through the Asset Rental Borrowing arrangements with the Trading account, consistent with current practice.

STREET SWEEPER

- 6.1 At the end of 2023 the Precinct Sweeper (AK17 MHF) developed a major oil leak resulting in the garage advising that a replacement engine would be required to remain operational. At the same time several other component failures were identified which would require the sweeper to be stripped down to a chassis and rebuilt. Due to the age of the sweeper, the number of hours required to carry out the repairs and the costs associated with the necessary repairs it was agreed that it was beyond economic repair. Cleansing contacted various manufacturers of Precinct Sweepers to sample demonstrators to determine a suitable replacement which included Aebi Schmidt, Bucher Municipal, Johnston and Scarab.
- 6.2 All the manufacturers provided Cleansing with a variety of demonstrator vehicles to trial, but none were available to buy at the time and were all subject to an order and a build process with an 18-month lead time.

- 6.3 While attending a trade show in May 2024 Cleansing were offered a high spec demonstrator from Bucher Municipal, and if suitable was available on a long-term rent to buy agreement. The Bucher Municipal Precinct Sweeper was similar in size to our previous sweeper and had a similar specification. Unfortunately, when the sweeper arrived it was not equipped with all wheel steering and when put into full service it became apparent that the suction capability was not as powerful as that offered by the Aebi Schmidt machine.
- 6.4 Aebi Schmidt had a fully registered precinct sweeper available with only 357 hours on the clock and it was offered at a competitive price in comparison to specifying new a build from the Scotland Excel Framework. The base price for the chassis, body and brushes is £92K and optional extras such as cameras, workshop hopper prop, independent brush lift, swivelling castors on the suction nozzle all add to the costs. The current framework price for this vehicle is circa £99K. The current lead time for a new build is estimated at 12 months.
- 6.5 The vehicle was being offered directly from Aebi Schmidt for £85K inclusive of delivery. Aebi Schmidt are on the Scotland Excel Framework for Street Cleansing Vehicles. As it is vital that we have a reliable Precinct Sweeper to carry out Street Cleansing duties including cleaning of hard-to-reach areas this replacement vehicle equipped with all wheel steering allows for this.
- 6.6 As the offer of this vehicle from Aebi Schmidt was time critical, approval was sought and granted by the Chief Financial Officer to procure the vehicle.

REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES

- 7.1 Cleansing took delivery of a split body Refuse Collection Vehicle late in 2022 which was procured through the Scotland Excel Framework. This Refuse collection Vehicle (MJ72 YRZ) was supplied by Geesink Norba. Geesink Norba were the manufacturer of the compaction body and bin lifters, the chassis supplier was Mercedes Benz. The Geesink product was the first of its kind to be utilised within Cleansing and was £20K cheaper than the Dennis Eagle chassis and compaction body with Terberg lifters.
- 7.2 Unfortunately the Geesink product was unreliable from the outset which resulted in the Geesink Norba carrying out multiple visits to site to try and rectify issues. Geesink Norba provided Cleansing with a hired vehicle while continuing investigative work into the issues.
- 7.3 Geesink Norba went into administration and Cleansing have been left with a vehicle that is currently unsuitable for service. Cleansing has a Refuse Collection Vehicle which is now 12 years old (VX63 HBC) which was kept in service due to the ongoing issues with the Geesink Norba product.
- 7.4 In addition the electric RCV has been unusable since January 2024 due to faults with both the chassis and the compaction body. The chassis issue was due to the batteries being unable to take a full charge overnight and the maximum battery capacity was around 80%. The vehicle was sent back to the chassis manufacturer in January 2025 to have the charging issues resolved, and now that the vehicle battery capacity has been restored, a specialist is working to resolve the compaction issues. We have not yet been given a date for when this vehicle will return to service. Since taking delivery of this vehicle, it has covered less than 5000 miles.
- 7.5 A new RCV vehicle similar to the specification required from the Scotland Excel Framework would be circa £280K with a 9-month lead time, however officers will look at the available second-hand vehicles over the next few months to see if there are any suitable as well as exploring leasing costs.

- 7.6 If procured the vehicle will be funded through the Asset Rental Borrowing arrangements with the Trading account, consistent with current practice. Leasing will be considered if costs, including maintenance are comparable to outright purchase.
- 7.7 Cleansing would also like to have the option to re-body the RCV chassis (MJ72 YRZ) with a suitable body and bin lifts. The chassis has only covered 10K miles so is effectively equivalent to a new vehicle. Again, any costs to re-body this chassis will be discussed with Finance to ensure that Cleansing can fund the work and will only proceed with the agreement of the Chief Financial Officer.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 As the offer of the precinct sweeper from Aebi Schmidt was time critical, approval was sought and granted by the Chief Financial Officer to procure the vehicle at a cost of £85k, and the Comhairle is asked to homologate this decision.
- 8.2 The Refuse Collection Vehicle VX63 HBC is due for replacement and to allow the service to explore best value options, including the potential purchase of a second -hand vehicle, approval is being sought either lease a vehicle or buy a new or a suitable second-hand vehicle.
- 8.3 It makes commercial sense to re-body the RCV chassis (MJ72 YRZ), therefore approval is sought to explore and progress this as an option.