

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 18 July 2022

Title: Purchase of a Works Vehicle

Contact Officer: Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

Background

The council's current fleet of vehicles consists of two flatbeds and two, panel vans. One of the panel vans is reaching the end of its functional life with its reliability now becoming a problem. It is also the oldest and least fuel-efficient vehicle in the fleet.

Current Situation

The vehicles option are split down into three categories, standard panel vans (electric and diesel), small electric utility vehicles and electric UTV's (utility task vehicles). All of which are road legal and suitable for the tasks performed by the maintenance team. The ongoing cost of the small electric utility vehicles and UTVs would be reduced compared to standard diesel models.

Panel van

This would be seen as the first option by the council as this type of vehicle has always been used for maintenance team tasks. They are typically seen as a vehicle to supplement the larger flatbed trucks and simply travel from A to B with small tools. However, the area available for storage and engine power is never utilized. The cost of an electric option would be above what is available with the current budget. Additionally, at a cost, an EV charging point would also need to be installed. The best option for this type of vehicle due to the cost would be to purchase a newer more fuel-efficient diesel model instead of an electric model.

Small electric utility vehicles

These are becoming a popular choice through municipalities in Europe as the smaller wheelbase offers greater functionality to get through narrow historic streets and fulfil tasks. Also, the smaller size of the vehicle has enabled the electric motor and battery storage to be utilised better than that of a standard van. Another benefit of these vehicles is as they are smaller and easier to engineer the charging for them just requires a stand 3-pin plug, so the additional cost of an EV charge won't be required.

The big negative with these vehicles is they haven't been tested towing small trailers. The functionality and power in the motors are there for towing small weights but manufacturers haven't confirmed the capability. Also to reduce the cost to an affordable option these

vehicles would be supplied with lead-acid batteries instead of superior lithium batteries. In practice, this would increase the ongoing cost as the batteries would need replacing more regularly and would ultimately be superseded entirely by lithium batteries.

Officers have been to test drive two sets of these vehicles at separate price points. The first was a less expensive option imported from China, on appearance, these match the functionality of the higher cost models but on test drives, they struggle with inclines and mounting kerbs, two tasks which are required around Witney.

The more expensive options both manufactured in Europe are the Goupil and Ake. Both drove with the same capability of a normal vehicle and would be seen as a suitable replacement for the current panel van. Their build quality was far superior to that of the cheaper models and closely matched a panel van except for overall size. Both come with full cabs and can be fitted with additions such as pressure washers and tipper beds.

UTV's

These vehicles like the small utility vehicles offer the same functionality and benefits but have the advantage of off-road usage and towing capabilities. The model that was test drove was complete with 4-wheel drive, diff lock and a winch, all of which are big advantages over the previous two vehicle options. The negative side of these vehicles is they haven't got full enclosed cabs, so in terms of a welfare solution in the winter weather, they do not suit, however, this is no requirement of any works vehicle and only an added benefit when available.

The 4-wheel drive advantage is an obviously a massive benefit in the meadow and country park of which the council have no vehicles suited to this work. The towing capability suits more than just the towing of trailers as there are many providers of engine-powered ground maintenance implants that can be towed by UTV and ATVs.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The conversion of the council vehicle fleet to electric is a massive step to achieve the council's goals of becoming carbon neutral.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The disadvantage of the small utility vehicles and UTV's is although they are road legal, due to their size they shouldn't be used on any dual carriageway for safety concerns. This does limit the functionality as they cant be used to collect from certain suppliers. However, the council still maintain 3 vehicles that are suited for those tasks.

Financial implications

- There is an earmarked reserve of £29,200.00 for **electric vehicles**, this would supplement the renewal fund.
- The renewal of the Primastar (OV0GNN) is £9,649.00.
- There will be a re-sale value of the Nissan Primastar.
- Cost of an electric van Model Nissan EV-200 £30,300.00.
- Cost of a diesel Nissan NV-250 £16,000.00.
- Cost of a small electric utility vehicle Goupil lead-acid G4-N1 £25,000.00.
- Cost of electric UTV Hi-Sun vector E1 Lithium 15kw £23,995.00.
 - Full glass cab additional £3,100.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Review the information in the report and narrow down the vehicle selection for a final officer decision based on application weighed out against cost.
2. Designate the final configuration of the vehicle to officers.