

**CABINET
24 MARCH 2020**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME VEHICLES

REPORT OF: THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – LEGAL & COMMUNITY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To confirm the leasing of two Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV). This will ensure that the Authority provides vehicles that are suitable for the Environmental Crime Officers to undertake their duties as well as supporting the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To approve the leasing of two Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) for the Environmental Crime Officers, and to note the financial implications of these and how this will be managed.

*Recommendation in respect of *Council motion 11/7/2019¹*

2.2 That in future (in respect of implementation of the above motion*) only proposals by the Council not to lease or purchase (ULEV) need to be presented to Cabinet for approval (subject to a value for money being assessed and any increased costs being managed in line with the financial regulations).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To ensure that Environmental Crime Officers are able to carry out their work duties effectively and safely and to support the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions.

3.2. To support the Full Council motion passed on 11th July to only lease or purchase ULEVs when the replacement of any council owned, or leased vehicle is due.

¹ <https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=136&Mid=2207&Ver=4> see item 32 decision

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. There is no alternative option. It is no longer possible to lease an appropriate vehicle that is within the current budget. There is very little difference in the leasing costs between those ULEV and non-ULEV models identified as being suitable. Therefore, a similar increase in budget would be required, irrespective of vehicle selected, to accommodate an overall increase in leasing and associated costs.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Executive Member for Community Engagement and the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure have been consulted. Both are in support of increasing the budget and leasing a ULEV compliant vehicle which supports the ULEV motion passed in July 2019 and the Climate Emergency motion in May 2019.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision; it was, however, first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 11 December 2019.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The current vehicles lease expired on the 12th December 2019. This has been extended by six months until 12th June 2020 to enable a comprehensive review of identifying and ordering a suitable replacement vehicle.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has two Environmental Crime Officers who are responsible for the investigation and enforcement of environmental crime issues, such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and dealing with unauthorised encampments within the district. The duties of these officers include significant patrolling across North Hertfordshire often in remote and very rural areas.
- 8.2 Due to the nature of the work, officers are often required to access poorly maintained and unpaved roads, such as bridleways public tracks and agricultural land/terrain, in order to conduct their investigations. Therefore, a key vehicle specification requirement in order for them to conduct their investigations is to have four-wheel drive with good ground clearance that enables them to deal with challenging terrain and all-weather conditions.
- 8.3 Following a motion presented to Full Council on 11 July 2019, it resolved;
- a. The Council undertakes to only lease or purchase Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (including Electric Vehicles and Plug in Hybrids PHEVs) when the replacement of any council owned or leased vehicle is due. This also includes any company cars used by officers;
 - b. The Council also undertakes to encourage all of its contractors to adopt similar measures;

- c. That the implementation of these undertakings shall be subject to agreement by the Cabinet.

8.4 The Community Safety team have conducted a thorough review of vehicles on the market and, subject to the requested increase in budget, are confident that a ULEV that meets the business requirements can be obtained.

8.5 This analysis demonstrates that the premium between standard (non- ULEV) and ULEV vehicles can be relatively small. The improved fuel efficiency of the ULEV is expected to reduce this difference further. To avoid Cabinet having to consider all new vehicle purchases or leases, recommendation 2.2. asks Cabinet to only require non-ULEV purchases and leases to be reported in future (i.e. it is assumed that all future vehicles will be ULEVs). The value for money for each lease/purchase will be assessed.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. The Council Constitution delegates to the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Service Directors as set out in 14.6.4 (ii) (General Authorisations), the authority to 'Enter(ing) into contracts to carry out works and/or for the supply of goods and services within approved budgets'.

9.2. At Full Council on 11 July 2019 it resolved that the implementation of the undertakings in the motion outlined in 8.3 should be subject to the agreement of Cabinet.

9.3. The Council's Constitution delegates Cabinet as set out in 5.6.8 'To monitor quarterly revenue expenditure and agree adjustments within the overall budgetary framework'.

9.4. There are no other legal implications arising from the report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The existing budget is £7,700 per annum. In each year this budget funds the leasing costs of two vehicles. Each time the vehicle lease ends and new leases start it also funds the additional one-off costs required for modifications (e.g. signwriting, installation of amber lights) and any costs to pay for repairs and/or damage not covered by the lease agreement or the Council's insurance.

10.2. Lease vehicle costs have increased since the current vehicles were leased over three years ago. The lease vehicle costs alone for a non-ULEV replacement would be about £7,700 for the two vehicles. The premium for the ULEV vehicles is relatively low at approximately £400 per vehicle.

10.3. Based on the current ULEV leasing costs and an estimate of one-off costs that will be incurred, it is forecast that there will be an overspend on this budget of £3k in 2020/21. This will be reported as part of the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report (for 2020/21). The additional ongoing costs will be included in the budget-setting process for 2021/22 onwards.

- 10.4. There are no specific capital implications or any other financial implications arising from the report. Although by procuring a ULEV compliant vehicle it is quite possible that the Authority will make some savings on running/fuel costs. However due to the nature of the Environmental Crime Officers role at this stage it is difficult to predict what the level of this saving will be.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There is a risk that a delay in this decision could result in a period where officers are without lease vehicles which will have a significant impact on the service. The current leasing company is unwilling to allow the Authority to further extend the leasing arrangement of the current vehicles after June 2020. The Management Support Unit, who procure and manage the Council's fleet vehicles, have advised that there is a minimum 10-week 'lead-in' period to obtain new lease vehicles.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. There are no equalities implications pertaining to this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Council purchases its lease vehicles through the 'Crown Commercial Fleet Portal Framework'. Under the framework there is the option to select a local dealership for delivery and where possible this option is selected in order to comply with the Council's 'Go Local' policy and support local businesses. The leasing of low emission vehicles will also provide the added social value benefit in the form of environmental benefits. Further specific social value criteria, set to NHDC requirements, is not possible due to use of the government framework and its accompanying standard terms and conditions.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no additional human resource implications related to this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 None

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1. Minutes from Full Council 11 July 2020 where Council resolved to only lease or purchase Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=2207&Ver=4>