



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 1 July 2024

Topic: Vehicle fleet maintenance performance

Report by: Steven Howlett, Fleet Contract and Transport Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In line with recent (2024) audit recommendations, this paper provides members with an update on the performance of the vehicle & maintenance contract which was implemented on the 1st October 2021.
- 1.2. This report looks to outline the benefits of the externalised service from an operational point of view.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that members 'note' this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To comply with audit recommendations and keep members updated on the performance of the contract.
- 3.2. To ensure that NDC is able to continue to meet its statutory duties to collect waste and recycling across the district, as well as ensuring the cleanliness of the district, streets and toilets.

4. REPORT

- 4.1. It was recommended and agreed at the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting in March 2021 that SFS be appointed as the primary contractor on the 1st October 2021 for a seven year contract (with the option to extend for a further seven years).
- 4.2. Prior to entering the contract with SFS, NDC had an aging waste and recycling collection vehicle fleet, which needed to be replaced and updated. Maintenance of the fleet was undertaken by the in-house workshop. It was a continual challenge to carry out the legally required vehicle inspections and react to the breakdowns and other repairs that are required due to the age of the vehicles and the consequential frequency of breakdowns.
- 4.3. At that time, NDC purchased vehicles and maintained them until their end of life. The option for the gradual replacement of the fleet had been explored. At the time, the Council purchased vehicles and maintained them until end of life. Other councils had opted to enter into leasing arrangements and so in order to assess this option, a tender exercise was carried out jointly with Somerset West and Taunton Council and SFS were instructed.

- 4.4. Since the 1st October 2021, NDC has acquired 11 x 26t Refuse Collection Vehicles, 17 x 12t Romaquip recycling, 2 x 7.5t Romaquip recycling, 16 x vans, 2 x precinct sweepers, 2 forklift trucks and 2 x mowers (for the Parks team) through the contract.
- 4.5. The benefit of a single point of contact has simplified repairs and time spent on chasing external contractors.
- 4.6. The benefit of contract hire is that NDC can replace vehicles mid-term. This flexibility will be increasingly beneficial as NDC explores more sustainable transport options. Currently, NDC is in the process of replacing two diesel vehicles for electric ones. This is in line with our corporate priority of reducing any harmful effects on the environment, including carbon creation
- 4.7. NDC have 12 refuse collection vehicles, five of which were replaced in October 2021, which resulted in immediate service improvements. In October 2023, the remaining six vehicles were replaced and as a result, missed collections due to vehicle breakdowns, have decreased. With two spare 26t vehicles and one spare 16t vehicle on site, refuse collections can continue to operate seamlessly when breakdowns occur. Furthermore, SFS have access to additional 26t and 16t vehicles through its hire business CTS, these can be swiftly commissioned to minimise service failures where identified
- 4.8. The HGV recycling fleet has now been completely replaced as of April 2024 with the introduction of 14 brand new vehicles and one dedicated spare. The fleet of 2014 registration vehicles were old and problematic. The collection service now provided to residents is vastly improved, with rounds not being completed due to breakdowns and unreliability being at an all-time low.
- 4.9. Fleet availability including spare provision is set at 95% which is met monthly.
- 4.10. Staff morale has improved with the introduction of new vehicles and this has helped to provide a real sense of ownership.
- 4.11. An overtime saving of £30,000, has been achieved.
- 4.12. The contract is achieving expected results.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

N/A

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

N/A

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda:



8.1.2. Improving customer focus – positive.

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development – positive.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Chief Executive, Finance Manager, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Head of Environmental Enhancement, Waste and Recycling Manager

add name and job title.....Steven Howlett, Fleet Contract and Transport Manager