

POLICE & CRIME PANEL – 9 JULY 2019

POLICE PROCUREMENT – VEHICLE FLEET DEEP DIVE

REPORT BY CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

To provide the Panel with an update on the OPCC work to review Dorset Police's vehicle fleet.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Panel considered a report in June 2018 with an update on the OPCC's work to review Dorset Police's vehicle fleet, the vehicle replacement policy and budgets. The PCC had requested this review as a result of feedback from officers concerning certain vehicles.
- 1.2. It was noted that some vehicles in the fleet were old, worn, and with faded livery, while at the same time the vehicle budget was not all being spent.
- 1.3. The review had sought to look at areas where improvements could be found. The Panel was concerned that as much as 35% of the fleet was being "run on" past their established mileage or age thresholds. They had expectations that the consideration of whole life management of vehicles and value for money considerations should be clearly in evidence. The Panel therefore requested an update on progress of the implementation of agreed actions at the July 2019 meeting.

2. GOVERNANCE

- 2.1. Dorset Police and Devon & Cornwall Police operate a joint Fleet Strategy Board chaired by the Dorset Assistant Chief Officer. The Fleet Strategy Board has oversight of the vehicle replacement programme for both forces. The programme looks at vehicle class in order to determine the most appropriate replacement plan.
- 2.2. The Fleet Services department is responsible for identifying, procuring, maintaining and disposing of Force vehicles across the three counties for a fleet consisting of approximately 1,500 vehicles (Dorset <500). They are also responsible for monitoring the vehicles via the Vehicle Management System and Vehicle Intelligence Data Recorders (VIDR) system.
- 2.3. The Dorset joint Force/OPCC Resource Control Board provides ongoing oversight on the delivery of the actions arising from the previous recommendations as well as the budget queries identified below.

3. VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. Dorset Police Fleet Services department adopts ISO9001:2015 quality management accreditation and adhere to the standards dictated within for all the processes carried out.

3.2. For this accreditation the Force Quality Assurance Team, in collaboration with the Fleet Department have created written management processes for each area of Fleet, including a number of instructional flow diagrams for the responsible officers to adhere to when purchasing and carrying out work on vehicles.

3.3. These instructional flow diagrams have been designed to cover areas such as:

- New Vehicle Acquisitions
- Used Vehicle Acquisitions
- Vehicle Arrivals
- Vehicle Commissioning
- Vehicle Disposal
- Vehicle Security
- Demo and Loan Vehicles
- Collision Damage
- Integrity of Building
- Fuel Ordering
- Driver Controls
- Damage controls
- Defect reporting

3.4. This provides comprehensive quality assurance, on the procedures in place, to a recognised standard.

3.5. Allocation of vehicles to stations

Vehicles are allocated to stations on a needs analysis basis. This entails the Fleet Service department looking at telematics data from vehicles in the fleet and the number of operational officer requirements for each station/unit. Elements considered are:

- How many operational officers are based at the station
- How many are double-crewed, on 'foot-patrol', detached etc.
- Using telematics data; how many miles each vehicle travels daily, how often vehicles are not in use

This data allows the team to make fully informed decisions regarding fleet allocation.

3.6. Requests for new/additional vehicles (uplift in establishment)

Any unit requesting an uplift has to complete a business case form. The business case form is provided to the Fleet Operations Manager for initial consideration. If the Fleet Operations Manager deems the case to be acceptable it is submitted to the Fleet Strategy Board for sign-off by Chief Officers. Prior to the purchase of additional vehicles, the Fleet Operations Manager will assess the current vehicle fleet in an attempt to re-allocate a vehicle. The vehicle fleet is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the establishment is appropriate for the Force's requirements.

3.7. Decommissioning of Vehicles

Vehicles which have reached one of the recognised mileage or age thresholds or become damaged are disposed of either through sale or scrap. Vehicles deemed as still being serviceable; i.e. hold a valid MOT, are sold via auction and the proceeds are retained for future purchases. Vehicles deemed to be no longer serviceable are either disposed of via a breakers yard, or sent for scrap.

3.8. Vehicle Replacement Policy

As identified in the last report it is still considered that a formal Vehicle Replacement Policy (VRP) should be drafted and implemented across the Alliance to ensure efficient and effective management of the vehicle fleet, providing the high level framework and transparency for vehicle management decisions. This has been raised through the Resource Control Board.

3.9. “Run-ons”

When last reported, the Panel was concerned at the high proportion of vehicles in use beyond the established mileage or age thresholds. At the time there were 174 vehicles (circa 35% of the fleet); 162 retained for additional years and 12 with excess mileage. This has reduced to 95 vehicles (circa 19%); 86 for additional years and 9 with excess mileage. An improved position, and one which will be kept under review.

It is noted that this is an inexact science. Different vehicles are put to very different uses; for example, Armed Response Vehicles generally cover high mileages at high speeds, and vehicles are specified to meet those operational requirements. Vehicles used by the Rural Crime Team must meet a very different set of criteria, and generally cover significantly lower mileage on an annual basis. Similarly, different vehicles have different manufacturer warranty periods, and some can be maintained and repaired more economically than others.

This complexity means that a single threshold for mileage or age, covering all force vehicles, might be inappropriate. This highlights the need for a more nuanced vehicle replacement policy to be developed.

4. BUDGET

- 4.1. Fleet capital expenditure for the past five years amounted to £5.8m. Costs would be expected to increase in the future if vehicles are to be replaced in accordance with the current policy, and the current medium term plan forecasts may prove to be inadequate.
- 4.2. A review of the medium term costs for vehicle replacements over a 10 year period will support better medium term financial planning and help to ensure that the budget is adequate, or at least that an informed choice has been made in terms of resource allocation.
- 4.3. This will be kept under review by the Resource Control Board, and will help inform the next budget and medium term plan.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Panel note this report.

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