

Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

Subject: CSNPC Fleet Arrangements

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Date: 15th April 2026

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an initial update on the Council's current vehicle fleet arrangements and to outline the process that will be required to secure replacement vehicles ahead of the expiry of existing hire agreements.

This report is intended as an early briefing to ensure Members are aware of the timetable, risks and interdependencies associated with future fleet replacement.

The report also highlights the renewal of the Council's Ground Maintenance Contract, which may influence the Council's future internal vehicle requirements.

As the Council has May elections, it is proposed that the detailed procurement exercise and any associated award recommendations are progressed later in the year by the new Council, once it is in a position to consider the outcome of the relevant options appraisal and confirm future service requirements.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. **Note** the current status of the Council's operational fleet and the relevant contract end dates.
2. **Note** the requirement to undertake a procurement exercise for replacement vehicles during the 2026/27 municipal year.
3. **Note** the link between future fleet requirements and the renewal of the Ground Maintenance Contract.
4. **Note** that a further report will be presented in due course seeking approval to commence the formal procurement exercise once future operational requirements have been confirmed.

3. Background

The Council currently operates two leased vehicles to support operational activity and service delivery within Central Swindon North Parish.

The vehicles are held under 48-month contract hire arrangements and are due to come to an end in 2027.

Although replacement vehicles will be required, there is no immediate need to commence procurement at this stage. However, due to lead-in times for vehicle manufacture, conversion, and delivery, together with the need to coordinate this work with wider service planning, it is appropriate to bring an initial report to Members.

This enables the current Council to note the position and the likely next steps, while allowing the detailed procurement exercise to be considered by the new Council following the May elections.

4. Current Fleet Position

The Council's current fleet consists of the following vehicles:

Registration	Vehicle	Hire Start Date	Contract End Date
LB71 WPK	Citroen Dispatch 1400 Driver Pro	03 April 2023	02 April 2027
CN73 FPZ	Citroen Relay 35 L3 2.2 Blue HDi	13 November 2023	12 November 2027

Both vehicles will require replacement, or alternative provision will need to be made, before the expiry of the existing agreements.

At the end of the hire term, the vehicles will need to be returned in accordance with the contract conditions. This will require officers to review:

- termination notice requirements;
- permitted mileage and any excess mileage exposure;
- vehicle condition and fair wear and tear standards;
- pre-return inspection arrangements; and
- timing of return relative to delivery of replacement vehicles.

These matters will form part of the preparatory work undertaken ahead of the future procurement exercise.

5. Related Ground Maintenance Contract Review

Members will be aware that the Council's Ground Maintenance Contract, which currently delivers public realm, grounds and landscaping activity across the parish, is due to terminate in July 2027.

Due to the scale and significance of that contract, review & procurement activity is expected to commence from August 2026.

Before that process begins, officers will undertake an options appraisal in relation to future service delivery arrangements.

The outcome of that work may affect the Council's own operational vehicle requirements. For example, a change in service delivery model could alter the number or type of vehicles required by the Council directly.

For that reason, it would be premature to undertake detailed fleet procurement before this wider review work has been completed.

6. Current Context

Although the formal procurement exercise is not expected to take place until later in the year, it is good governance to provide Members with early sight of the issue and the likely process.

This allows Members to understand:

- the current contractual position;
- the relationship between fleet replacement and other service contracts;
- the likely lead-in time for future procurement;
- the need for preparatory work in advance of tendering; and
- the fact that the substantive procurement decisions will fall to the new Council after the May elections.

7. Anticipated Vehicle Requirements

Final requirements will be confirmed following the options appraisal and review of operational need. At present, the Council anticipates that replacement provision is likely to include:

- one medium panel van with integrated storage/racking and roof racking; and
- one high-sided tipper vehicle with tail lift, hydraulic lifting capability and vented storage provision.

All future vehicles will need to meet operational and statutory requirements, including:

- compliance with relevant UK vehicle legislation.
- Chapter 8 visibility and safety requirements.
- appropriate safety equipment and driver assistance features; and
- operational suitability for Council use.

Expected usage remains approximately 10,000 miles per annum per vehicle, although this will be reviewed as part of the next stage of work.

8. Safety, Training and Environmental Considerations

Any future procurement exercise will need to take account of vehicle safety, staff training and environmental considerations.

In relation to safety, the Council is likely to require modern vehicle safety features as standard, including items such as reversing assistance, visibility aids, warning beacons where appropriate, and other manufacturer-standard safety systems.

The introduction of replacement vehicles may also require staff familiarisation or training, particularly where specialist equipment, lifting functions or new technology is involved.

The future procurement exercise will also consider lower-emission vehicle options, including electric vehicles where operationally and financially viable.

Where electric vehicles are proposed, consideration will need to be given to charging infrastructure, installation responsibilities, ongoing maintenance, and the overall suitability of such vehicles for the Council's service needs.

9. Overall Cost and Value Considerations

At this stage, no final cost recommendation is being made. A detailed financial appraisal will be undertaken as part of the future procurement process.

That appraisal will need to consider whole-life value rather than headline cost alone, including:

- lease or purchase costs;
- maintenance and servicing;
- fuel or electricity costs;
- infrastructure requirements;
- downtime and resilience;
- staff training; and
- end-of-contract or disposal implications.

Leasing is currently expected to remain a strong option given the benefits of predictable costs, reduced maintenance risk and operational flexibility, but this will be assessed through the next stage of work.

The future procurement exercise will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders & Financial Regs, and relevant public procurement requirements in force at the time.

10. Procurement and Market Risks

Members should note that vehicle procurement can involve long lead times, particularly where specialist bodywork or conversions are required.

There may also be market risks around:

- the length of time suppliers will hold pricing;
- inflationary or supply chain pressures;
- split delivery of vehicles;
- temporary overlap or short-term hire costs; and
- the availability of electric vehicle infrastructure.

These risks reinforce the importance of timely preparatory work, while also supporting the view that formal procurement should be aligned with the wider service review and progressed by the new Council later in the year.

11. Indicative Timeline

Activity	Target Date
Initial member briefing report	15 th April 2026
May elections / new Council in place	May 2026
Ground Maintenance options appraisal	June 2026
Ground Maintenance procurement activity begins	August 2026
Formal fleet procurement exercise	October / November 2026
Vehicle replacement required	Before April 2027 and November 2027