

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Report: Operational Fleet –Replacement

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 To update Members on the forthcoming replacement of the Council's two vehicles and agree a phased approach to procurement.

1.2 The proposed approach is to procure the replacement panel van in line with the existing vehicle being returned in April 2027 and defer the decision on replacing the tipper until the Council's future street-cleansing arrangements are known (Tipper contract end date Nov 2027).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

1. **NOTE** the existing fleet contract expiry dates.
2. **APPROVE** the separate procurement of the two replacement vehicles.
3. **APPROVE** officers commencing procurement of a replacement panel van for delivery before April 2027.
4. **AGREE** that a replacement tipper is not procured at this stage and that its requirement and specification are reviewed following the outcome of the Council's grounds maintenance/street-cleansing review.
5. **AGREE** that, if subsequently required, the tipper specification should avoid the more costly hydraulic swing/lifting-arm conversion unless a clear operational requirement can be demonstrated.
6. **NOTE** the indicative costs within this report for 2027/28 budget planning.

3. DETIAL

3.1 The Council currently operates two vehicles under 48-month contract hire arrangements:

Vehicle	Contract End
Citroën Dispatch 1400 Driver Pro – LB71 WPK	2 April 2027
Citroën Relay 35 L3 2.2 BlueHDi – CN73 FPZ	12 November 2027

3.2 The Dispatch is the immediate priority. Its replacement needs to be delivered and operational before the existing vehicle is returned in April 2027.

3.3 The Relay remains available until November 2027, providing additional time to determine the next steps. However, dependant on the level of body modifications, dictates the lead time.

3.4 Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Review

3.4.1 The Council's existing Grounds Maintenance Contract, which provides the majority of public realm grounds and landscaping activity across the parish, expires in July 2027.

3.4.2 The associated procurement and options appraisal includes consideration of the future delivery of street cleansing, including the potential for elements of the service to be brought in-house.

3.4.3 This could materially change the Council's fleet requirements. Officers therefore recommend not committing to a replacement tipper until the future service model is known.

3.4.4 Procuring the vehicles separately also avoids asking a supplier to hold pricing or vehicles across two delivery dates approximately seven months apart.

3.5. Replacement Panel Van

3.5.1 The requirement for a medium panel van isn't dependent upon the street-cleansing review.

3.5.2 Initial market testing has used a Nissan Primastar as an example.

3.5.3 The vehicle will require:

- suitable internal racking/storage and roof carrying system
- Chapter 8
- reversing camera/sensors and appropriate warning equipment
- approximately 7,500 miles per annum; and
- full servicing, maintenance, tyres and breakdown provision.

3.5.4 The current indicative quotation is £513.30 inc VAT per month (£430+VAT), equivalent to £6,159.60 per annum

3.5.5 This is a market-testing figure only. Competitive pricing will be obtained through the formal procurement exercise.

3.6. Potential Replacement Tipper

6.1 If the service review confirms that a tipper remains required, officers recommend a practical high-sided tipper with secure/vented tool storage, appropriate load restraint and Chapter 8/safety equipment.

3.6.2 Initial market testing considered both a standard conversion and a more extensively modified vehicle incorporating specialist hydraulic lifting equipment:

Diesel example	Monthly incl. VAT	5-year rentals
Proportionate conversion	£1,024.97	£61,498
Extensive conversion	£1,214.37	£72,862
Additional cost	£189.40	£11,364

3.7. Electric Vehicles

3.7.1 Electric alternatives should remain open within the procurement where they can meet the Council's operational requirements.

3.7.2 Initial market testing for the tipper demonstrates the following indicative difference:

Example	Monthly incl. VAT
Diesel – proportionate conversion	£1,024.97
Electric – proportionate conversion	£1,139.85

3.7.3 The Council doesn't currently have suitable dedicated EV charging infrastructure. An electric option would therefore need to be assessed on whole-life cost, including charger installation, electrical capacity, energy costs, range, payload and operational suitability.

3.7.4 The procurement will request an EV alternative and separately identify the cost of providing the necessary charging infrastructure.

3.8. Safety and Training

8.1 Vehicles will be specified with appropriate safety features, including Chapter 8 markings, reversing assistance, warning beacons where required, load restraint and manufacturer driver-assistance systems.

3.8.2 Staff will receive appropriate vehicle familiarisation and training. Where applicable this will cover vehicle checks, load security, tipping/tail-lift operations and any specialist equipment. EV training will be included if an electric vehicle is selected.

3.9. Existing Vehicle Returns

3.9.1 Officers will review both existing vehicles before return, including:

- mileage against contract allowance;
- servicing and maintenance;
- bodywork, tyres and interior condition;
- fair wear and tear;
- removal of Council equipment/branding; and
- contractual notice and collection arrangements.

3.9.2 The replacement van will be programmed for delivery before the Dispatch is returned to avoid operational disruption or short-term hire costs.

3.10. Procurement

3.10.1 The replacement van will be competitively procured. Suppliers will be asked to price three- and five-year arrangements where available, approximately 7,500 miles per annum, full maintenance, required fit-out, safety equipment and delivery.

3.10.2 Evaluation will consider whole-life cost, operational suitability, safety, maintenance/support and delivery, rather than monthly rental alone.

3.10.3 The second vehicle will be subject to a separate procurement if the service review confirms that it is required. This avoids premature commitment and the risk associated with suppliers being required to hold prices until late 2027.

4. FINANCE

4.1 The current vehicle rental budget (100/5030) is **£18,450**.

For budget planning, the following annual allowances are considered reasonable based upon current market testing:

Provision	Indicative annual cost excl. VAT
Replacement panel van	£5,500
Potential diesel tipper	£10,000
Potential electric tipper	£11,500
Current annual vehicle budget	£18,450

4.2 On current indicative figures, a replacement van and tipper could therefore be accommodated within the existing vehicle budget, subject to the outcome of formal procurement.

4.3 No budget commitment for the second vehicle is recommended at this stage.

5. TIMELINE

Action	Target
Finalise van specification and procurement	Autumn 2026
Award/order van	Winter 2026/27
Replacement van operational	March/early April 2027
Return Dispatch	2 April 2027
Confirm future street-cleansing model	Spring/Summer 2027
Determine second vehicle requirement	Spring/Summer 2027
Procure second vehicle if required	2027
Return Relay	12 November 2027

5.1 Lead times for the second vehicle will need to be established before procurement. If the service review is not concluded sufficiently early to achieve a November 2027 delivery, officers will bring contingency arrangements back to Members.