



Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
8

8 February 2024

Report of	Head of Neighbourhood Services	Author	Robert Doran 01206 282612
Title	Colchester City Council Fleet Transition Strategy		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The new Colchester City Council Fleet Transition Strategy sets out a pathway for Colchester to transition to a zero-tailpipe emission fleet. It shows the requirements needed including infrastructure, personnel, and capital investment.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the content of and endorse the approach to the proposed new Colchester City Council Fleet Transition Strategy.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 One of the key priorities of the Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026 is “responding to the climate emergency” and “delivering modern services for a modern city”. A key element is to reduce the carbon footprint and to remain on track for the Council to be net zero by 2030.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Options are set out within the Colchester City Council Fleet Transition Strategy that consider the commitment to transition the fleet to fully electric vehicles, the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a drop in fuel or continuing the with the replacement of vehicles with the latest Euro engine diesel vehicles.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 On 17 July 2019, Colchester City Council declared a climate emergency, acknowledging that urgent action was required to mitigate the impact of climate change. One of the key priorities of the strategic plan 2023-2026 is to 'respond to the climate emergency'. A key element is to improve air quality and reduce the Council's direct carbon emissions and achieve a carbon neutral carbon footprint by 2030.
- 5.2 The Climate Emergency Action Plan identifies the Council's fleet as accounting for approximately 25% of its total emissions. As the grid continues to decarbonise and purchased electricity becomes 'greener', emissions from the Council's fleet will become an increasingly larger portion of the overall footprint. An action from the Plan is to take a phased approach to renewal of the fleet as new technologies and associated infrastructure become available.
- 5.3 At its meeting on 17 December 2020, the Environment and Sustainability Panel considered and endorsed the introduction of a Fleet Transition Forward Plan. Three years on and following the first tranche of electric and hybrid powered vehicles, the plan has been refreshed with a proposed new Colchester City Council Fleet Transition Strategy.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment for the Council's Procurement Strategy can be found [HERE](#)
- 6.2 Through the Council's procurement strategy, officers will ensure that all procurement and purchasing documentation recognises, understands, and supports the Council's policies with regards to equal opportunities, diversity, and human rights.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 Fleet operations are a key element of the way the Council delivers its services to residents and businesses and therefore underpins much of the activity that will deliver against the strategic priorities. The proposal directly links to the vision, themes, and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2023-26 – A City Fit for the Future: Respond to the climate emergency.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Frontline staff and service managers involved in the operational management of core services that require vehicles will be consulted and will continue to be involved at all stages of the procurement and selection process to ensure that vehicles are fit for purpose and appropriate.
- 8.2 Demonstration electric vehicles will continue to be tested with teams and feedback received will be considered.

- 8.3 Continued networking with other Local Authorities that have tried and tested alternatives to diesel fuelled vehicles will be made to gain real world knowledge in how these vehicles perform over a long period.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The introduction of EV and hybrid fleet vehicles is a demonstration of the Council's commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency and demonstrates positive progress on the journey to being net zero carbon for Council operations by 2030. Public communications will reflect this commitment when new vehicles come on board.
- 9.2 The vehicle fleet underpins many of the Council's core frontline teams and is a highly visible asset out in communities supporting services that benefit residents, local businesses, and visitors to Colchester. Livery will be attached to the vehicles as appropriate.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 A fleet replacement programme is in place and will require capital investment in the future per the programme. As set out in the strategy, careful consideration and business cases will be devised for any replacement vehicles to determine the most appropriate type of vehicle to purchase. Additionally, through the procurement process, due consideration will be given to the comparison and value for money provided by outright or leasing.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Less tailpipe emissions from the council's fleet will have health benefits not only for staff but for the public. As recycling collection vehicles service each property within the city, reduced or no tail pipe emission will be welcomed. With fully electric vehicles the driving experience for a driver and crew where applicable is more pleasant due to a quieter driving experience.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 The Council has a corporate responsibility to ensure that all fleet and transport operations comply with national standards.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 The Council will seek to mitigate against any potential risks by following a compliant procurement process and ensure contingency plans are in place for any failure of vehicles that may impact on core services.
- 13.2 Without these vehicles it would make it difficult for the Council to undertake its duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The consideration of environmental and sustainability implications of the decision being taken is set out in the table below:

Sustainability theme	Positive environmental impact	Neutral impact/ Not applicable	Negative environmental impact	What are the positive and negative impacts on carbon reduction / environment?	How will positive impacts be enhanced/ encouraged? And negative impacts minimized or eliminated
Energy	Y			<p>Positive impacts are reducing tailpipe emissions as the council transitions to a fully electric / Hydrogen or alternative fuel in the short term.</p> <p>Switching to electric vehicles will increase electricity use but using electricity will have less emissions associated with it than diesel production and use.</p>	<p>Introducing an electric fleet to the council will enhance our goal to be carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>Communications can be shared throughout Colchester showing residents and businesses the commitment to making Colchester a cleaner environment for both residents and visitors.</p>
Waste				N/A	N/A
Procurement	Y			<p>Procurement will follow the council rules.</p> <p>Services will be involved in vehicles requirements and specifications before decisions are made to procure.</p> <p>The fleet strategy shows a criterion before vehicles are purchased which includes if a vehicle is required, what size vehicle is required and if there is a more</p>	

				environmentally friendly alternative option.	
Biodiversity and green spaces		Y		N/A	N/A
Transport	Y			<p>Within the Fleet Strategy services will be asked to ensure the following principles are agreed and considered at each stage,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the data systems in place to track, monitor and evaluate the fleet. • Undertake robust evaluation of operational need and financial viability. • Challenge the number and size of vehicles. • Explore both lease hire and purchasing options, considering existing budgets. • Base decisions on expert recommendations and guidance 	The council continues to view all future fleet requirements and looks to procure vehicles producing less greenhouse gas emissions.
Adaption		Y		n/a	n/a
Water			Y	The mining of materials for electric vehicles does use a large amount of water which is difficult to mitigate.	n/a
Digital		Y		A majority of the fleet will be fitted with telematics to monitor fleet journeys and determine efficiency of trips.	n/a
Community	Y			Positive impacts on a carbon emission reduced fleet, alongside other benefits such as reduced noise and improved local air quality	

				The council will be role-modelling and may demonstrate to others action they can take to reduce their environmental impact	
Housing/ Development		Y		n/a	n/a
Carbon Emissions saving	Y			<p>Transitioning the fleet to alternative lower emission fuels or electric vehicles will have a positive impact on the environment including staff and residents.</p> <p>Although the carbon emissions associated with mining materials for electric vehicles are high, the lifetime emissions of using electric vehicles over fossil fuel alternatives is lower.</p>	A continued vehicle replacement cycle will factor in low carbon emission vehicles at every stage.