

Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board

24st September 2021

Report of the Head of Engineering & Transport

D.W Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Ward Affected: All

Zero Emissions Fleet Transition Plan

Purpose of the Report:

To seek approval to implement a Fleet Transition Plan which will see the Council's Fleet of vehicles move from carbon based fuels to Zero emission vehicles in line with Welsh Government's guidance and ambition for a Low Carbon Wales.

Executive Summary:

Members will be aware that the U.K Government has announced an end to the sale of new petrol, diesel cars and vans by 2030, and the end to the sale of all Hybrid vehicles by 2035.

In Welsh Government's Prosperity for All Document 2019, a Low Carbon Wales, Proposal 4 stipulates that all new cars and light goods vehicles in the Public Sector fleet are ultra-low emission by 2025 and where practicably possible, all heavy goods are ultra-low emission by 2030.

The Council has been working with the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) to establish a base line for emissions produced by the Council's current fleet of vehicles, to identify what needs to be put in place to transition to Electric Vehicles (EV's) and what impacts the transition will have on budgets, staff and working practices.

The proposed Fleet Transition Plan (Appendix A) has been developed taking into account the fleet renewals programme and provides a step by step guide indicating when and which vehicles are scheduled to be replaced. It should be noted that the proposed plan can only be implemented if there are suitable zero emission vehicles on the market,

and if not, how the transition will be managed. The Plan has also acknowledged that going forward, for larger vehicles Hydrogen may offer a better option to achieve zero emissions.

Background:

In late 2020, Councils in Wales were invited to apply for support from the WGES to help with the transition of their fleets to ULEV's. This work involved providing information on the profile of their Fleet Vehicles, this included information on vehicle type, fuel used, usage and mileages for the various vehicle types. The support provided by WGES was fully funded and covers all aspects of road transport operated by the Council including (but not restricted to):

- Heavy Commercial Vehicles including Refuse Collection Vehicles, Refuse Recycling Vehicles, Gritters and Tippers over 3.5 tonnes.
- Welfare Minibuses (wheelchair accessible vehicles - typically four to six tonnes).
- Minibuses - used by schools and community centres.
- Light Commercial Vehicles - vans - from less than 2 tonnes up to 3.5 tonnes.
- All fleet cars including lease cars, salary sacrifice cars, day hire cars and pool cars.
- Plant including street sweepers, mowers, and other specialist road-going equipment.
- The grey fleet – staff owned vehicles reimbursed by a mileage payment scheme.

From the information provided a draft report was drawn up and presented to each Local Authority. The report gives guidance of what WGES think the Council need in the way of infrastructure, what the future fleet profile will look like, potential savings on fuel, reductions in Carbon emissions and the extra costs incurred with the introduction of EV's.

WGES have focused on E.V's as the preferred zero emission solution for Council's fleets. However, going forward Hydrogen could be a viable alternative option for the larger Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) to achieve the zero emission goal. Although it should be noted that currently there are no refuse or recycling Hydrogen vehicles available. It is also noted that currently there are only eleven commercial Hydrogen fuel stations in the U.K. five of which are near the M25.

The Fleet Transition Plan outlines how and when the Council are going to move their fleet of vehicles from carbon based fuels to clean zero emission alternatives, in line with the Fleet renewal programme.

The Fleet Transition Plan also highlights the increased purchase cost of zero emission vehicles over the cost of a comparative internal combustion engine vehicle (ICE). However, some of extra cost will be offset by reduced running costs, the extended life expectancy and reduced maintenance cost associated with EV's over conventional ICE.

The Plan also identifies the need for staff training, this includes the need for journey planning, driving, charging and what procedures are in place in the event of a breakdown.

In preparation for the transition to an E.V fleet, ten of the Councils Fleet Technicians were placed on training programs and have attained City & Guilds level three in E.V maintenance and repair. Going forward to build further capacity and resilience it is proposed that all technicians will receive training in E.V maintenance and repairs to C&G level five. This approach will ensure that the Council will upskill the workforce, protect jobs and will not be reliant on external support needed to maintain and service the fleet.

It should be noted that schools in NPT currently operate 34 mini buses owned by the schools and are serviced by the Fleet garage. Schools will also need to consider a transition plan as their vehicles require replacing. Schools may wish to consider sharing or hiring vehicles going forward. Consideration will also have to be given to the charging infrastructure required to support these vehicles. This will also offer the opportunity for other vehicles to be charged at school premises on a rechargeable basis.

The NPT plan does not include the South Wales Trunk Road Agency fleet of vehicles. SWTRA will need to consider developing their own transition plan in conjunction with Welsh Government.

Financial Impacts:

It is recognised that the cost of zero emission vehicles is significantly more than a conventional ICE vehicle. However, some of the cost will be offset by the extended life of EV vehicles and the much reduced running costs, which can be transferred into vehicle replacement reserve on an annual basis to help fund some of the increased capital costs.

As larger vehicles become more widely available for purchase the specific funding requirements will be brought back to board for consideration.

The Council will also be looking to benefit from additional grant funding for these vehicles.

Integrated Impact Assessments:

A first stage Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at appendix B, has indicated that a full impact assessment is not required as the proposals have a positive impact on staff and service delivery

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The transition to zero emission vehicles will have a positive impact in our Valley Communities by improving air quality and reducing noise pollution.

Workforce Impacts:

The introduction of zero emission vehicles will require training for staff on how to charge and drive vehicles. With the limited EV's currently on NPT's fleet the biggest concerns staff have raised is that some have never driven an automatic. Another concern is range anxiety. However, newer model vehicles battery range is increasing. Most concerns can be addressed by journey planning.

Technicians have already received training to C&G level 3 on EV's and there will be the need for further training as EV's become the norm.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this proposal. Any new vehicles purchased will be in accordance with Council Contract Procedure Rules.

Risk Management Impacts:

The Fleet Transition Plan will help the Council manage an orderly progression from ICE vehicles to zero emission vehicles. The Transition Plan will also assist in identifying any budget implications that may arise owing to the extra initial capital costs associated with the purchase of zero emission vehicles.

There is a risk that staff are not fully aware or engaged with W.G low carbon emissions ambition for Wales. Awareness training will need to be developed and rolled out on NPT's DARE strategy, W.G's Low Carbon Wales and the U.K Government goal for being carbon neutral by 2050.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for consultation on this item.

Recommendation

Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that;

- Members approve the Fleet Transition Plan.
- Members approve the submission of the Fleet Transition Plan to the Welsh Government Energy Service by the due date (22nd October 2021) in line with the requirements set out in Welsh Governments Prosperity for All Document 2019, a Low Carbon Wales.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Fleet Transition Plan will provide a definitive timeline of when vehicles are to be renewed and what they are to be replaced with. The Transition Plan is a Management tool which will help the Council budget for the increased costs that will be incurred with E.V's. and identify any saving that may arise from the transition.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

- (A) Fleet Transition Plan
- (B) Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

WGES Draft ULEV Transition Fleet Review for NPT

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