

UPDATE ON BUDGET INVESTMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Council Budget Meeting in February 2023, funding was allocated for new vehicles to support service delivery across Roads and Infrastructure Services. This report provides an update on progress.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee consider and note the updates provided in this report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 At the Council Budget Meeting in February 2023, funding was allocated for new vehicles to support the operations of Roads and Infrastructure Services. This investment included:

- £700,000 for 4 refuse collection vehicles to be added to the fleet to provide additional resilience (2 replacements and 2 additional spares)
- £250,000 for a new jetpatcher vehicle
- £230,000 for a road marking unit for road maintenance

Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs)

- 3.2 The Council operates a fleet of RCVs which collect refuse from over 48,000 domestic properties and some 2700 commercial properties across the Council area. In 2016, the Council introduced 3 weekly general waste collections and 2 weekly recycling collections and the service operated with 2 spare vehicles which generally provided sufficient resilience to cover for planned inspections, servicing, MOTs, running repairs etc. Over the past few years there have been a number of challenges in the supply chain for spare vehicle parts which has affected many sectors, not just the Council. Often, this has resulted in vehicles being off the road for prolonged periods of time pending delivery of parts. Whilst

some spares are stocked by our fleet team it is not practical nor cost effective to hold all parts.

- 3.3 The additional funding has provided 4 new vehicles with 2 vehicles being used as 'spares' increasing the number of spare RCVs from 2 to 4 which will significantly improve resilience. The other 2 vehicles purchased are being used to accelerate the replacement programme replacing some of the older vehicles. Where possible ex demonstrator vehicles are purchased at a discounted price to help provide value for money. The additional 2 vehicles in the fleet have assisted significantly in providing service continuity and have also reduced the need to rely on hired in vehicles. The photos at appendix 1 of this report detail 2 of the new RCVs.
- 3.4 The council allocated £700k funding for the RCVs and spend to date is £737k.

Jetpatcher

- 3.5 The Council uses jetpatchers as one of the tools to repair carriageway defects including pot holes and surface cracking. The jetpatcher units can apply compressed air, bitumen, stone chips and a combination of bitumen and stone to: clear out loose material from road surface defects, prime with bitumen and build up either a thin covering of chips or deeper repairs as required. Clean dry chips are added to the finished repair to contain the bitumen. The jetpatcher unit can also roll the repairs to compact the material using both road wheels and (where fitted) separate solid smooth wheeled rollers attached to the vehicle.
- 3.6 The additional funding allocated for the jetpatcher has secured an ex demonstrator unit which is due to be delivered in September. This additional vehicle in the fleet will help the team to take a more proactive approach to carrying out repairs and contribute towards maintaining the Council's 2300km of road network in a fit for purpose and proportionate condition.
- 3.7 The council allocated £250k funding for a new jetpatcher and the spend to date is £299k.

Road Marking Unit

- 3.8 Securing road marking contractors can be problematic for many road authorities. The geography of Argyll and Bute compounds this meaning that delays are often experienced in road markings being completed. All available markets have been checked and unfortunately, there are no completed vehicles available for purchase. The specialist nature of these vehicles and the relatively low numbers (compared to RCVs, more conventional trucks etc.) means that a specialist build has to be specified and procured. Following market research our teams are in the process of finalising a specification before going to the market for delivery. Due to the limited number of suppliers and specialist nature of the vehicle, we are expecting a lead time of approx. 12 months, although we

will provide an update once the specification has been concluded and order placed.

- 3.9 The council allocated £230k for a road marking vehicle, no order has been placed, working through specification.
- 3.10 Total spend to date is £1,036,000 with £144k remaining for the road marking vehicle. Once the cost of the road marking vehicle is known, should the cost exceed the remaining budget and additional cost be required, a further report will be brought back to Members for consideration.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the budget investment for new vehicles to support the operations of Road and Infrastructure Services. It confirms that 4 new RCVs have been purchased, a jetpatcher unit is soon to be delivered and a road marking vehicle specification is being finalised.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – no known policy implications however this investment will help to deliver services to policy specification.
- 5.2 Financial – Additional funding allocated via the budget process.
- 5.3 Legal – none known.
- 5.4 HR – none known.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: none known.
 - 5.5.1 Equalities – none known.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known.
 - 5.5.3 Islands – none known.
- 5.6 Climate Change – due regard will be given to climate change with a view to minimising any climate change impact and these will be considered as and when they arise. Replacement small vehicles (cars and light vehicles) are being replaced with hybrid and electric vehicles. Currently there are no cost effective options for HGVs which can cover the operating range with Argyll and Bute. Advanced electric technology and other solutions including hydrogen are expected to bridge this gap and the market continues to be explored.
- 5.7 Risk – none known.

5.8 Customer Service – more resilience in the fleet will provide the public with more reliable services and less disruption.

Executive Director with responsibility for Road and Infrastructure Services,
Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Roads and Transport, Councillor Andrew Kain

August 2023

For further information contact:


Jim Smith, Head of Road and Infrastructure Services
Jim.Smith@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Photos of new Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs)

APPENDIX 1 – PHOTOS OF NEW REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES (RCVS)



 This image cannot currently be displayed.

