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Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Monday, 13 February 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

County Councillors D Bebb, A Cartwright, B Davies, I Harrison, E A Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, C Walsh and S L Williams

Portfolio Holders

County Councillors D Thomas, J Charlton, M Dorrance

Officers

Matthew Perry (Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling)

Jane Thomas (Head of Finance)

Nigel Brinn Executive Director Economy & Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Adrian Jones

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. AMENDMENT TO THE BUDGET PROPOSED 2023-2024

Documents Considered:

Draft 2023-24 Budget Proposed Amendment presented by County Councillor David Thomas Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Transformation.

Questions:

Question	Response
On average what was the current number of service periods in a year for vehicles in the fleet for vehicles below 7.5 tons, and what will this number increase to, so we ensure longevity of the fleet.	Officer Comment: under 3.5 tonnes were serviced every 26 weeks and over 3.5 tonnes on a more frequent basis.
On average what was the current number of service periods in a year for vehicles in the fleet for vehicle 7.5 tons and over, and	Officer Comment: Vehicles over 7.5 tonnes were carried out on a 6-weekly basis. External providers were available if

what with is number increase to, so we ensure longevity of the fleet.	needed.
With this proposal of increasing the number of maintenance/service periods is the officer and portfolio holder confident that there is enough spare capacity in the fleet in each weight category so that we will not see disruption to services PCC provides when vehicles are in the workshop/garage for their maintenance/services.	Officer Comment: Some back up vehicles were available and contingency plans in place for spares to be used if needed.
What was the maximum time the fleet is kept before changes.	Officer Comment: On average 7 years but could be extended due to ongoing maintenance and servicing.
Would the Council look to keep new electric vehicles for 7 years	Officer Comment: Electrification of the fleet had begun with one refuse vehicle being operated in Brecon which was providing a test to attain more. All options were being reviewed including hydrogen. Infrastructure within depots would need to be updated which was being costed.
Would the infrastructure for the new electric fleet be completed in twelve months and allocations considered for 2023-24.	Officer Comment: Funding has been obtained from the Welsh Government Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund (£300k) to invest in infrastructure across Brecon and Abermule.
What had been the number of down days/times for the electric vehicle in Brecon.	Officer Comment: After initial downtime, the Head of Service was unaware of extended periods of down time and noted that electric vehicles are cheaper than diesel to run.
Would the Council have in-house technicians for the electric fleet	Officer Comment: At the moment Dennis Eagle Company provides technicians for the Brecon vehicles but the intension to upskill staff.

The Committee welcomed:

- The HTR service are considering other types of fuels including hydrogen.

- Confirmation of Welsh Government funding (£300k) for the infrastructure at Brecon and Abermule.
- In-house technicians will be upskilled to maintain electric vehicles and future proof the service.

The Committee noted that:

- In response to questions regarding servicing frequency that under 3.5 tonnes were serviced every 26 weeks and over 3.5 tonnes on a more frequent basis. Vehicles over 7.5 tonnes were carried out on a 6-weekly basis.
- Vehicles currently retained for 7 years; this could be extended with regular maintenance.
- The service will be reviewing infrastructure requirements as well as vehicle reserve dependent on future requirements.

The Committee received assurance that:

- The 6 weekly maintenance schedules would give enough time to identify issues to ensure resilience in the workshops and could use external providers when necessary.
- Back up vehicles and contingency plans were in place to avoid disruption; however, disruption was usually down to staff sickness rather than vehicle availability.
- Whilst there was some risk in reducing the depreciation fund it was not a high risk.
- There was sufficient funding within reserves to replace vehicles in the current year.

There were no Recommendations to Cabinet.

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

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