

Report of:	Head of Environment & Healthy Lifestyles
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Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 28/04/22 Council: 25/05/22

Cabinet
28 April 2022
Replacement of Parks and Open Spaces Vehicles and Equipment

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to purchase replacement specialist parks and open spaces vehicles and plant.
- 1.2 To seek approval to move resources into the Capital programme from the Grounds Maintenance Trading Reserve to fund the replacement vehicles and plant.

2 Recommendation(s)

That:

- 2.1 Council, at its meeting to be held on 25 May 2022, be recommended to approve:
- (i) the inclusion in the Capital Programme of the purchase of replacement grounds maintenance machinery, vehicles, and infrastructure (fencing); and
 - (ii) the moving of £113,000 into the capital programme from the Grounds Maintenance Trading Reserve to supplement the £89,000 already included to fund the purchases (totalling £202,000).
- 2.2 Permission to spend the £202,000 on the equipment and fencing set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 It is necessary to procure replacement machinery and vehicles to deliver the Council's Parks and Open Spaces services which includes Grounds Maintenance / Countryside / Parks / Cemeteries and Arboricultural Services.
- 3.2 The existing machinery and vehicles asset list has been assessed and five items have been identified as reaching the end of their economic life and in the case of grass cutting machinery need to be replaced immediately.
- 3.3 It is proposed to purchase the items either through a Framework Agreement (ESPO) or Crown Commercial Services where possible, though it may be necessary to purchase some equipment, such as the grass cutting equipment, via a competitive quotations process with approved suppliers only.
- 3.4 Fencing in various locations across Hednesford Hills and other Countryside sites needs to be replaced as it has reached the end of its life span and it is essential to ensuring cattle are contained on grazing sites.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.5 The purchase of this specialist machinery and vehicles will ensure an uninterrupted service; reduce maintenance time, as well as helping to lower the impact of the fleet on the environment by either using either electric vehicles/plant or replacing the current stock with Euro 6 engines that comply with the lowest emissions.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
 - (i) **Supporting Health and Wellbeing** – the ability to adequately manage, maintain and protect the natural environment supports the Council's Health and Wellbeing agenda.
 - (ii) **Supporting a Financially Resilient Council** - the provision of new vehicles and plant at the end of their working lives is key to the Council avoiding increasing maintenance costs, regular breakdowns, and productivity losses. New vehicles and plant tend to employ technological improvements in areas such as fuel management, health and safety, and operation, which makes for overall improved efficiency.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Council's vehicles, plant and equipment are essential to continue to provide the Grounds Maintenance and Countryside Services in an efficient manner.
- 5.2 Following an assessment of the service's current machinery and vehicle asset list, five items were identified as nearing the end of their useful life and in some cases

are too old to justify continued maintenance expenditure. Some of the vehicles and machinery have been subject to breakdowns and are becoming unsustainable due to their age and availability of spares. Some of the Grounds Maintenance equipment dates from 2013 or earlier with some of the Countryside Services equipment dating back to 2004. Where the equipment has never been purchased before, a need for the equipment has been identified by reviewing the specification and existing methods of maintenance e.g., the requirement for a tractor mounted hedge cutter.

- 5.3 The Council has been fortunate in securing Countryside Higher Level Stewardship for the last 20 years with funding made available by the Countryside Agency. The initial fencing was funded by capital provided by DEFRA and the Council still receives revenue funding circa £23,000 p.a. year to ensure that its Countryside land is managed sustainably. This involves a number of environmentally sustainable management processes such as the well-recognised technique of Conservation Grazing using a herd of cattle (Dexter cows) in fenced off areas. These areas were created 15-20 years ago, and the fencing needs to be replaced to ensure the conservation grazing can be maintained and the Council achieves its management targets allowing continued payment of the stewardship revenue.
- 5.4 The Countryside Service is proposing to mechanise the hedge cutting operation by purchasing specialist equipment. This will speed up the process of cutting the many field hedges that the Council maintains for which there is a limited window given the nesting season and is a very labour-intensive operation.
- 5.5 The estimated purchase cost of £202,000 can be funded through the current Capital Programme approved vehicles budget of £89,000 with the balance being met from Parks and Open Spaces reserve balances.
- 5.6 In order to utilise the Parks & Open Spaces reserve balances for the replacement equipment and fencing, it will be necessary for Council to approve the inclusion of the scheme and funding in the Capital Programme.
- 5.7 Subject to Council approval of the scheme and funding set out in 5.7, Cabinet is asked to approve permission to spend in relation to the purchase of the replacement machinery / vehicles / assets.
- 5.8 Details of the Capital Expenditure for specialist replacement machinery / vehicles / infrastructure costs which are to be procured are set out in Appendix 1.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

This report is seeking permission to spend the current Capital Approved Vehicle budget balances 'Replacement Vehicles - Countryside' £38,000 and 'Replacement vehicles - Cemeteries' £51,000, totalling £89,000. This £89,000 Approved Capital budget is to be financed from existing capital receipts. The estimated remainder of the capital items £62,000 and the infrastructure costs associated with the fencing at local Nature Reserves £51,000, totalling £113,000, is to be financed through the Grounds Maintenance Trading Reserve MG41.

The report therefore recommends that Council move £113,000 into the Capital programme from the Grounds Maintenance Trading Reserve MG41, and that Cabinet give permission to spend both the £89,000 and £113,000 (as per item 2.1), on the items contained within Appendix 1.

6.2 Legal

None.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

There are no strategic risks associated with the proposals, but the purchase of new equipment and the replacement of fencing will help to reduce a number of operational risks for the services.

6.5 Equality & Diversity

None.

6.6 Climate Change.

The Council's target of Zero Carbon by 2030 can only be achieved by replacing old vehicles which are not EU compliant for Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) compliant vehicles or Electric Vehicles (EV). The EV van proposed will be the first EV to be introduced to the Grounds Maintenance portfolio.

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: List of equipment / infrastructure costs.

Previous Consideration

- Replacement of Specialist Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance Equipment and Vehicles - Cabinet - 7 February 2018.
- Replacement of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Service Vehicles - Cabinet - 21 November 2013.
- Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Service - Cabinet - 18 April 2013

Background Papers

None.

List of Equipment / Infrastructure Costs

Section	Existing Vehicle Age/Installation	Status	Cost of Replacement (£)	Comment
POS	2014	Ride on Kubota-Golf	30,000	
POS	2014	Crew Cab Tipper	35,000	
POS	2008	2 No Vulnerable Tenants Vans	50,000	1 EV
POS	N/A	Tractor Mounted Hedge cutter	11,000	
POS	2004	L200 Pick up-Countryside	25,000	
		Total Capital Vehicles	151,000	
POS	1985 onwards	New Fencing - Hednesford Hills	51,000	
		Total estimated spend	202,000	