

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2011

LOW CARBON VEHICLES – THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND POLICY REVIEW 2011/12: PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4
– Improving Partnership Working To Deliver ‘One City’**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report informs members of progress on the Scrutiny Committee’s Policy Review for 2011/12 into Low Carbon Vehicles – the Delivery of Public Services in Sunderland.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the initial scoping of the Policy Review on 25 July 2011, members have commenced evidence gathering in relation to Low Carbon Vehicles – the Delivery of Public Services in Sunderland.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 The aim and terms of reference for the Policy Review can be found at **Appendix 1**.

Project Plan

- 3.2 At the Committee meeting of 12 September 2011 members agreed the approach to be taken in regard to gathering the evidence for the Policy Review. Attached for members information is an updated illustration (**Appendix 2**) which outlines the various activities and evidence gathering that will be undertaken throughout the review process. The plan seeks to finalise the evidence gathering arrangements in the coming months. Throughout the review process members will be provided with an up-to-date plan reflecting confirmed dates and additional information.

Evidence Gathering Following Committee Meeting of 12 September 2011

Visit to Smith Electric

Wednesday 12 October

In attendance: Cllrs Miller, Wright, Bonallie, Porthouse, I. Richardson.

- 3.3 This item of evidence principally contributes to Terms of Reference D, E, F and G. The main points from the visit are as follows:

- Smith Electric employs 350 staff, this has grown from 60 employees three years ago which demonstrates the growth of the company and in particular the acceleration of demand for electric vehicles.
- There are four vehicles in the Smith's range. The two most popular are:

Edison – Ford Transit

The vehicle has a range of 60-120 miles and a top speed of 50mph. Any derivative of the Ford Transit chassis can be used to meet the customer's needs. The vans are bought complete, and then modified to become an electric vehicle. The engines are sold back to the supplier.

Newton – LGV

The vehicle has a range of 40-130 miles and a top speed of 50mph. This vehicle arrives at Smith's ready to be fitted out with the battery, which accounts for 50% of the build material.

- Vehicles can be tailored to meet the requirements of the customer in terms of range, speed and payload. Vehicle range is dependant on the weight of the payload and how well the vehicle is driven. Training is provided to ensure optimum efficiency of the vehicle.
- Smith Electric carried out an audit of vehicle usage across the 12 north east local authorities. The results found that the average daily mileage of each vehicle type was 67 miles or less. This demonstrates that electric vehicles are appropriate for use within Councils as they tend to cover static routes over small geographical areas which are well within the range of the vehicle.
- Electric vehicles must be returned to a base to be recharged overnight. Access to charging points would not be an issue as they can be powered by a standard electric socket.
- Electric vehicles require half the power of an electric oven to charge and a simple socket can be fitted for approximately £100.
- Although the purchase of electric vehicles has an initial high capital cost, the longer term view demonstrates that, based on the fuel costs of today, the Newton model would become as cost effective as a diesel powered vehicle after 3 years, and the Edison model after 4-5 years. A vehicle used for a 10 year period could bring savings of £200 per month.
- Both leasing and finance options are available for customers wishing to introduce electric vehicles into their fleet.
- From a servicing and maintenance viewpoint, Smith's has 90 mobile service engineers, with some only 20 minutes away from Sunderland to provide a fast service.
- With regards to road safety, it was clarified that electric vehicles are quieter but that noise is emitted from the sound of the tyres so there wouldn't be a risk of increased

pedestrian related accidents in comparison to those operating an internal combustion engine, however noise emitters could be specially fitted to vehicles where necessary.

- Due to lack of information and knowledge currently available, Northumbria Police and Gateshead College have begun to investigate how to deal with and investigate the possible outcomes of a road accident involving electric vehicles.
- Smith Electric has an apprenticeship programme in conjunction with Gateshead College to train local young people in electric vehicle production. Smith Electric also works with University of Sunderland with regards to innovation in engineering.
- There is no industry standard in the carbon footprint for producing electric vehicles however Smith Electric continuously monitors it's carbon footprint. It has found that to be carbon neutral Washington plant must produce and have running 200 vehicles. The plant currently produces in excess of 200 vehicles per year, therefore is carbon neutral.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That members of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the information provided.
- 4.2 That members note the dates of the forthcoming task and finish activities and indicate whether they are able to attend.

5. Background Papers

- Minutes of the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee; 25 July 2011 and 12 September 2011.

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Appendix 1

LOW CARBON VEHICLES – THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the policy review are:-

- (a) To examine the role and responsibilities of the local authority with regard to climate change and energy;
- (b) To consider national and European policy in regard to the use of low carbon transport in the delivery of services;
- (c) To investigate the progress made to date and future plans in the council and across partners in regard to the introduction of low carbon vehicles to deliver public services;
- (d) To explore the financial and non-financial future implications of the increased use of low carbon vehicles in the delivery of council services;
- (e) To consider appropriate targets for the introduction of electric vehicles into the council's fleet.
- (f) To consider the extent of the council's role as a leader in the use of low carbon vehicles to deliver public services in the city; and
- (g) To consider to what extent future technologies will enable the council and partners to increase the use of low carbon vehicles.

Appendix 2: Project Plan

TASK	TERMS OF REFERENCE	CONTRIBUTORS	DATE/TIME	METHOD/LOCATION
JULY 2011				
Agree scope of the policy review and receive background information in support of the policy review	A, B, C	Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Officer Paul Lewin/Ian Bell, City Services	25 July 2011, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1
Gain the views of the city's MPs on the use of low carbon vehicles in the city	D, F	Bridget Phillipson MP Sharon Hodgson MP Julie Elliott MP	TBC 18 Nov 2011, 11am TBC	Written evidence Discussion Group Written evidence
SEPTEMBER 2011				
Agree the approach to the review, sources of evidence and timetable	NA	Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Officer	12 September 2011, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1
OCTOBER 2011				
Seek evidence from Smiths Electric Vehicles regarding the technology available now and in the future for low carbon vehicles	C, D, F, G	Representative from Smith's Electric Vehicles	12 October 2011, 1pm.	Site Visit to Smiths Electric Vehicles
Seek evidence from Nexus and the bus operators within the city regarding current and future plans for low carbon public transport	C	Bernard Garner, NEXUS Robin Knight, Stagecoach Kevin Carr, Go NorthEast	24 October 2011, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1
NOVEMBER 2011				
Seek evidence from the University of Sunderland regarding the work it is undertaking in regard to low carbon vehicles	C, D, F, G	Adrian Morris/Dave Bagley, University of Sunderland	8 November 2011, 9.30am	Site Visit to University of Sunderland
DECEMBER 2011				
Explore the market for low carbon vehicles, looking at current and future technologies	C, D, G	Les Clark, Head of Street Scene Representative from Nissan Representative from Smiths Electric Vehicles	12 December 2012, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1
JANUARY 2012				

Explore the procurement of low carbon vehicles regionally	D, E	Ian Taylor, North East Purchasing Organisation	16 January 2012, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1
Explore a cost benefit analysis of introducing low carbon vehicles into the council fleet	D, E	Les Clark, Head of Streetscene		
MARCH 2012				
Agree the draft final report for the policy review		Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Officer	TBC	Extraordinary Meeting
APRIL 2012				
Agree the final report for the policy review		Helen Lancaster, Scrutiny Officer	2 April 2012, 5.30PM	Committee Meeting, CR1