

Report

Subject : Abandoned Vehicles – Update

Report to : Cabinet

Date : October 2006

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Cabinet Member: for Environment & Transport Councillor Dennis Brown

1. Purpose:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

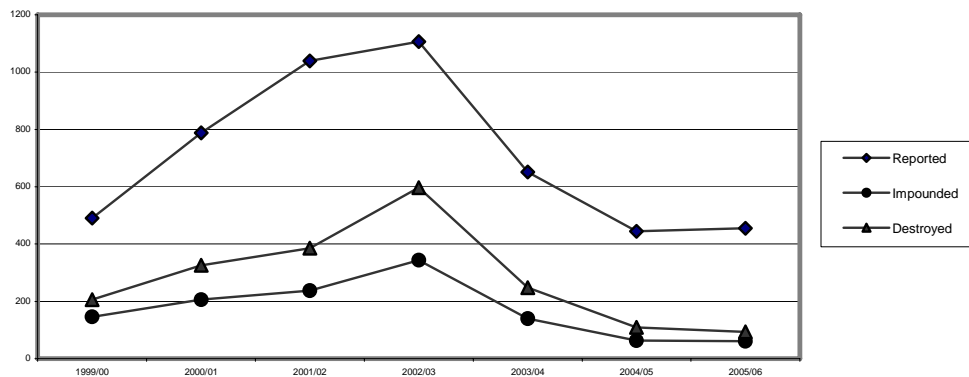
1.1.1 Apprise Members of the current situation.

1.1.2 Propose amendments to the existing contract for collection and disposal in preparation for re-tendering in the new-year.

2. Current Situation:

2.1 Service Demand.

Since the rise in demand for scrap steel early in 2005, and the resultant rise in price, private scrap metal dealers and vehicle dismantlers have been active in collecting and buying vehicles that probably would have otherwise been abandoned by their keepers.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



The number of reports of abandoned vehicles received during 2005/06 was 455 of which 93 were collected and destroyed. This compares with 2004/05 when 445 were reported as being abandoned and 109 vehicles being collected and destroyed. This is similar to the fairly steady situation that prevailed up until 1999/00. From that date, with a fall in the price of scrap steel, reports of abandoned vehicles increased dramatically to nearly 1200 per year in 2001/02 and 2002/03.

2.2 Finance.

	2004/05	2005/06
Budget	£78,290	£85,740
Actual	£81,200	£89,210

Primarily the difference in cost is due to changes in the charges for disposal and recovery of these costs from Wiltshire County Council and to a lesser extent the increase in the number of vehicles being removed by "unauthorised third parties" leading to abortive visits by our contractor.

The budget for 2006/07 is £84,980 and currently expenditure is on target.

2.3 Performance.

- 2.3.1 BVPI 218a requires the council to report the percentage of inspections carried out within 24 hours of the initial report being received. During 2005/06, 92% of all reports of abandoned vehicles received were inspected within 24 hours. With the exception of vehicles reported as dangerous, only those reports received whilst the ES Enforcement Officer was on leave or otherwise away from work were unable to be investigated within 24 hours. Comparisons with other authorities through the ODPM website are not yet available.

It has been the practice for a number of years that details of vehicles inspected and found to be on the council's housing land are forwarded to the council's Housing Management Unit for further investigation. This enables Housing Officers to investigate and remedy breaches in tenancy agreements (E.g. untaxed vehicles on housing car-parking areas) before the abandoned vehicle process commences. This does mean however vehicles that have been abandoned remain on site longer than is necessary. In 2005/06, 150 (33% of all vehicles reported as being abandoned) were on housing land.

- 2.3.2 BVPI 218b requires the council to report the percentage of vehicles that are removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle. During 2005/06 40% of vehicles were removed within 24 hours. Comparisons with other authorities through the ODPM website are not yet available.

Unless otherwise requested the existing contract requires the contractor to remove vehicles within 3 days of receipt of instruction. During 2005/06, 69% were removed within the required period.

2.4 Contact for the Removal and Destruction of Abandoned Vehicles.

The current contract, awarded in May 2003 for 2 years to Wiltshire Waste Recycling (formerly Devizes Reclamation) was, in accordance with the contract, extended for a further 2 years. This contract is due to expire on the 30 April 2007.

Overall Wiltshire Waste Recycling has performed well and a good working relationship has developed. Two areas of concern that have been brought to their attention but not fully addressed are a) the failure to improve the number of vehicles removed within 3 working days (currently 69%), as specified in the contract, and b) the notification of a vehicles removal at the end of the working day on which it was collected. However they have proved extremely helpful and responsive on a significant number of occasions when immediate action has been necessary or in co-ordinating with our own resources to handle difficult and/or "multi" removals.

2.5 End of Life Vehicle Regulations.

The ELV Draft Regulations are still to be implemented. The End of Life Vehicles (Storage & Treatment) (England & Wales) Regulations regarding authorised facilities for the treatment and recycling of vehicles are fairly well known and many vehicle dismantlers, including our current contractor, are already compliant.

The situation regarding producers (vehicle manufacturers or importers) meeting all or a significant part of the cost of take back for complete ELV's is still not clear. The EU (ELV) Directive (2000/53/EC) requires that with effect from 01 January 2007 owners must be able to have their ELVs accepted at an authorised facility free of charge but the Regulations for England and Wales have yet to be enacted.

Until these Regulations are implemented it is not clear how the situation with regard to abandoned vehicles will be affected or how local authorities will be able to recover the collection costs from the producers.

3. Service Issues.

3.1 Service Demand.

3.2 It is difficult to forecast the number of abandoned vehicles that will need to be dealt with over the next few years. The private sector will continue to be active whilst the price of scrap steel remains at its current level but recent reports indicate that market prices are falling. This may therefore lead to an increase in the number of vehicles that the council will need to deal with.

3.3 BVPI 218b.

Improving the percentage of vehicles that are removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove them (BVPI 218b) is an issue but with the low number of vehicles that currently need to be removed it is not significant. Undoubtedly removal costs will increase as contractors lose the flexibility of being able to plan their workload over a longer period. Impounding the vehicles at an early stage in the process, before responses from registered keepers are received, will also lead to unnecessary vehicle removals and "returns".

3.4 Vehicles on Housing Land.

3.4.1 The additional time required for Housing Officers to complete their checks means vehicles that have been abandoned remain on site longer than is necessary.

3.4.2 Currently Environmental Services do not recharge Housing for the removal of abandoned vehicles from housing land. Costs and charges however are recovered from all other landowners, including Housing Associations, for the investigation and removal of abandoned vehicles from their land. Environmental Services could recharge Housing Services as we do for the removal of bulky household waste from their land. If the council's housing stock transfers to a Housing Association, Environmental Services will need to negotiate with the new Housing Association.

4. Budget Situation 2007/08.

4.1 It is considered that the combination of the (anticipated) increase in the number of vehicles for removal, improving the collection response time and the renewal of the current contract in May 2007 will increase the cost of the service beyond the current budget provision. In addition to inflation it is estimated that service costs could rise by a further £5,500pa (6%) to a projected £93,030 per annum.

4.2 If Environmental Services do commence recharging Housing Services for the cost of removal and disposal of vehicles from housing land. This could be potentially worth between £2,200 and £4,500 in 2007/08.

4.3 Both 4.1 and 4.2 are service management matters to be dealt with as part of the normal budget preparation procedure.

5. Contract 2007.

5.1 The current contract for the Removal and Destruction of Abandoned Vehicles expires on 30 April 2007. The process will commence in November 2006 with advertisements in the appropriate journal and local newspapers. Following the selection process the award of contract will be made by the end of January 2007.

5.2 The contract is anticipated to be worth between £11,000 and £15,000 per year.

5.3 Three amendments to the existing specification are proposed to improve performance or remedy deficiencies:

5.3.1 Replacing the current requirement to "remove vehicles within 3 working days of notification from Salisbury District Council" with the requirement to "remove vehicles within 24 hours of notification from Salisbury District Council" unless otherwise specified.

5.3.2 Requiring the contractor to notify the Supervising Officer, or person nominated by him, at the end of the working day of those vehicles removed during that working day.

5.3.3 Restrict the entitlement to "abortive" visit payments to the period within the timescale as requested for removal by the Supervising Officer or person nominated by him.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That Members:

6.1.1 Note the report.

6.1.2 Approve the proposed amendments to the contract for the "Removal, Storage and Destruction of Abandoned Vehicles":

6.1.2.1 As per s 5.3.1

6.1.2.2 As per s 5.3.2

6.1.2.3 As per s 5.3.3

7. Background Papers:

None

8. Implications:

8.1 Financial
As set out in report

8.2 Councils Core Values
Providing excellent service, Being Environmentally Conscientious

8.3 Wards Affected
All