

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12TH APRIL 2012

COUNCIL – 16TH APRIL 2012

SUBJECT:	PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT – PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR LESLEY RENNIE, CULTURE TOURISM AND LEISURE
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed plant and equipment capital investment programme to modernise the Parks & Countryside Service.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Parks & Countryside Service Modernisation Project is a complex multi-disciplinary project with the purpose of establishing a modern, cost effective and efficient service comparable to that offered by the private sector by Spring 2013.

2.2 An Outline Delivery Plan was endorsed by Cabinet at their meeting on 24 November 2011 (Minute 205 refers) and has been set out under four key workstreams all reporting to a Project Board:

- Policy, Processes and Performance
- Human Resources
- Assets
- Communication and Engagement

A progress report on the modernisation of the service and achievement of the Delivery Plan will also be considered at this Cabinet meeting.

2.3 At Cabinet on 12th January 2012 approval was given to use £500,000 of the existing Capital Programme allocation for Cultural Services assets to purchase plant and equipment necessary to deliver the Highways Grounds Maintenance aspect of the Parks & Countryside Service from 1st February 2012 (Minute 261 refers).

2.4 This report now seeks approval for a comprehensive programme of investment in plant and equipment to enable the modernisation and continuous improvement of the Parks & Countryside Service.

3.0 PROPOSED PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

3.1 Justification

New equipment is urgently needed to ensure that we can run the Parks and Countryside Service safely and productively to the highest standards and at the minimum cost both in the short and the long term.

The Parks and Countryside Service has about 650 machines in order to deliver the service and maintain the parks and countryside across the Wirral. This equipment varies in size from hand held machines such as brush cutters and hedge cutters to large four wheel drive tractors of 100 horsepower. This equipment has been maintained throughout its life to a high standard by the Parks and Gardens Workshop.

Unfortunately the fleet is now at considerable age which causes great problems in both maintenance costs and operator safety. Many of the pedestrian machines such as the Ransomes Certes greens mower are in excess of 25-30 years old. The manufacturers are no longer producing some of the spare parts required to maintain these machines which means that adequate repairs cannot be made and the service cannot be delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

The machines the Council currently own and use on a daily basis are based on old designs and therefore are relatively inefficient with regards to emissions, noise and vibration. These old designs also waste fuel and are not environmentally friendly compared to modern equipment.

Operator safety is a major concern as the risks of hand arm vibration and whole of body vibration along with noise levels have been highlighted by several reports by the health and safety executive. Operators now have a legal obligation to reduce risks wherever possible. Wirral council is actively undertaking to reduce these risks to health by the monitoring of staff and testing the equipment used. Due to the age of Council equipment this is becoming increasingly difficult and the staff are only being able to use many machines for a very limited amount of time due to the vibration levels of the old machines.

With investment in new machinery we will be able to reduce risk levels to a minimum and ensure staff are exposed to the minimum risk along with the benefit of greater productivity. This increased productivity will enable the reduction in the number of machines we need to purchase. We have at present 49 Hayter Condor mid sized Pedestrian mowers. We propose to replace these machines with 30 new type "ride on" machines which will cover the same amount of work. This will not only save a considerable amount of money in the purchase of the equipment, as they are approximately the same replacement cost as the old machines, but will greatly reduce operator exposure to vibration and noise emissions. The new types of equipment are also friendlier to the environment by being more fuel efficient which has the benefit of reducing running costs.

3.2 Proposed Investment

Up to £2.4 Million is required in financial year 2012/13 to replace plant and equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against authority arising from HAVS. The total amount of plant and

equipment that this will provide is 405 units though actual prices will obviously not be known until the proposed procurement has taken place.

3.3 Further Investment

It is anticipated that there will be further capital investment needed for Parks and Countryside vehicles, depots and the next phase of the end of life plant and equipment. The latter is anticipated to be in 2013/14 and an estimate at the present time is £600K a further 213 units of plant and equipment making a total of 618 across the service.

Further reports will be brought to Cabinet detailing these requirements at a later date and it is anticipated that by this time service efficiencies will be able to directly fund this from its own budget.

3.4 Proposed Procurement Route

The procurement process for the provision of this equipment and vehicles will be fully compliant with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules, UK Procurement Legislation and EC Procurement Directives.

The tender procedure to be followed will be a two part Restricted Procedure which will be advertised on both the Council's ePortal, the Chest, and the Official Journal of the European Union.

Once approval is granted it is anticipated that the majority of equipment will be available from summer 2012.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 Failure to invest in new plant, equipment and vehicles to modernise the service will preclude the achievement of service objectives and could result in increased health and safety risks to the workforce.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 A rigorous exercise has been undertaken to identify the necessary plant, equipment and vehicles required to meet the needs of the service, and a programme of investment has been developed based on a formal assessment of the condition of existing plant, equipment and vehicle assets.
- 5.2 There may be the opportunity to reduce the capital cost of some of the larger items of plant and equipment through the purchase of low mileage ex-demonstrator models and this will be investigated further as the procurement process progresses.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 A Consultation and Engagement Plan has been agreed for the Parks and Countryside Modernisation Project ensuring staff and users are fully involved in the project.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 A key part of the Modernisation Project is to increase opportunities for voluntary and community groups in assisting with the maintenance and management of the Parks and Countryside area.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The proposed Investment Programme is summarised as follows:

Service	Requirement	Funding	Comments
FUNDING REQUIRED			
Parks – Modernisation of Existing Service.	Plant and equipment: 405 units	Capital Purchase - £2.4 M	Required to replace equipment which is not fit for purpose, unreliable and excessively costly to maintain and keep serviceable. This includes new equipment required to reduce risk to operatives and potential claims against authority arising from HAVS (Hand, Arm Vibration Syndrome)

8.2 The overall cost to the Council of the borrowing for this Investment Programme will be met from the efficiency investment fund. A review of the Parks and Countryside Service commencing in 2012-2013 is anticipated to identify efficiencies which will contribute towards the cost of this investment.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Parks Modernisation Project as referred to in the progress report also being considered at this Cabinet meeting.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The new plant and equipment purchased will assist in reducing carbon emissions. Additional tree planting on highways and in parks contributes to offsetting carbon emissions.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Approve the proposed Plant & Equipment Capital Investment Programme outlined in this report;
- (2) Approve the corresponding amendment of the Council's Capital Programme; and
- (3) Refer to Council for ratification.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 A comprehensive programme of capital investment in plant and equipment is essential to effectively modernise the Parks & Countryside Service and enable the achievement of service objectives.

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APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Detailed Schedules of plant and equipment requirements.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award	22 September 2011
Sustainable Communities O&S Committee – PACSPE Contract Award Call in	20 October 2011
Cabinet – PACSPE Contract Award (following Call in)	3 November 2011
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Integration of Highway Services and Outline Delivery Plan	24 November 2011
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Update	12 January 2012
Cabinet – Parks & Countryside Services Modernisation Project – Purchase of Second-hand Vehicles and Equipment	15 March 2012