

9th July 2002

Scrutiny Report to the City Council

Review of the City Council's Fleet Management

Further copies of this report can be obtained from:

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CORNWELL affiliates FINDINGS

1. Preface

By Councillor Sandra Jenkinson
Chair of The Task and Finish Scrutiny Committee
APRIL 2002



The aim of this Scrutiny Committee was to look at how the Council currently uses one of its most expensive, and highly visible assets – its vehicle fleet - with the intention of finding out how it could be better managed and maintained.

A range of people and organisations, both from within and external to the Council, gave a great deal of their time, thought and expertise, which helped the Committee considerably with this task. I would like to express my gratitude to these people.

As the review progressed, it became clear that whilst there is room to improve fleet management and maintenance services, good practice existed here, within the Council. We have drawn and learnt from this good practice. The Committee believes that the recommendations made in this report will make the Council's fleet more effective, economic and efficient, and go some way to improving, overall, services delivered to the public.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Task & Finish Committee was established in December 2001 with a brief from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee to identify where and how the Council could improve current practice with regards to fleet management and maintenance.
- 2.2 The Committee undertook an analysis of the Council's existing fleet arrangements and reviewed operational practices at the Council's existing garages. The key issues which were considered included
 - Directorates' service requirements for transport
 - Procurement & leasing
 - Operating requirements
 - Maintenance
 - Environmental impact
- 2.3 The Committee sought to identify best practice from within the Council and from external organisations. Consultants with expertise in fleet management and maintenance were commissioned to complement the Committee's considerations by examining specific aspects of the Council's current fleet management and maintenance arrangements; comparing

3. Introduction

- 3.1 On 18th December 2001 the Co-ordinating O&S Committee proposed that a Task & Finish O&S Committee be established for the Review of Fleet Management. This Committee would replace the Member Working Group set up by the Co-ordinating O&S Committee to look at Social Services Vehicle Management.
- 3.2 A brief from the Co-ordinating O&S Committee recommended that the Task & Finish Committee should look at the Council's two garages at Montague Street and Park Road, and the five major fleets which operate within the Council, with the aims of identifying: an optimum replacement policy; achieve best practice for fleet management systems; make recommendations for maximising the capital value on the garages; to assess the availability of local suppliers for maintenance; and to provide opportunities for cost savings.
- 3.3 Membership of the Fleet Management Task & Finish Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprised of seven members (4:2:1): Councillors Sandra Jenkinson (Chair), George Bamford, Les Byron, John Hood, Peter Howard, Mike Leddy and Gurdev Manku.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Committee established the following Terms or Reference:
- To identify best value for the Council in managing and maintaining its fleet requirement.
 - To identify best practice.
 - To identify the optimum replacement policy.
 - To achieve best practice in fleet management systems.
 - To make recommendations in respect of both garages which maximise the capital value available for the Council and ensure that the options chosen are best value for the Council.
 - To assess the availability of local suppliers for maintenance.
 - To provide opportunities for cost savings.
- 4.2 During the course of early discussions of the Committee additional areas for scrutiny to the original brief were identified including:
- The operation of the Council's 'O' licence.

- Vehicle hire.
- Vehicle taxation.
- The operation of the Council's sustainability policy in respect of vehicle specification and fuel.
- The employment of drivers.
- Training to build capacity.

4.3 The Committee decided to concentrate, as Phase I of its work, on the management and maintenance of the fleet, leaving the second phase of work looking at 'social transport' until after April 2002.

5. Method of Investigation

- 5.1 To assist in collating the detail that underpins this review, CORNWELL affiliates were appointed. They undertook a series of interviews with key personnel with the Council; visited commercial fleet operations/providers; sought feedback from customers; analysed workshop practice and process; and reviewed budget and associated performance information. The Committee received three presentations from CORNWELL affiliates as part of the review. Detailed analysis is available in CORNWELL affiliates' full report which can be made available but a summary of their findings is attached at the appendix. A further report from CORNWELL affiliates is still outstanding at the time of drafting of this final report on commercial benchmarking.
- 5.2 In addition to the presentations received by CORNWELL affiliates, the Committee has received evidence from a wide range of sources. The Committee:
- visited the two garages at Park Road and Montague Street
 - met with and heard presentations from the managers: Leisure and Culture, Education and Social Services
 - met with representatives of the workforce representatives from Environmental and Consumer Services and Transportation
 - received a report on future options from the two managers of the garages in Environmental and Consumer Services and Transportation
 - discussed the nature of Fleet Financing
- 5.3 It was originally intended that the Task and Finish Overview and Scrutiny review would replace the programmed Best Value Review in year 4 (2003/4) of Transport. A Senior Policy Officer from Best Value and Performance Review Division attended the Committee Meetings in order

to advise the Chair. It has been concluded that as a consequence of the changing nature of the Council's core business, and the relatively healthy status of the two maintenance operations as reported by CORNWELL affiliates and the short time scale for a report set for the Committee, not all of the detailed aspects of a Best Value review could be completed. A future Best Value review in 2-3 years time will be able to assess the progress of the recommendations and their impact.

- 5.4 It should be noted that Environmental and Consumer Services have included vehicle maintenance of its Departmental fleet within their Best Value Review of Waste Management Services, which is currently being undertaken.

6. Findings

Current Nature Of The Fleet

- 6.1 It is misleading to say that the Council's transport is managed as a "fleet." The Transportation Department provide a repairs and maintenance service to Housing, Social Services, Leisure and Culture, Education (on behalf of schools), Economic Development, Planning and Architecture and its own vehicles via a depot at Park Road, Aston. This equates to some 1,280 vehicles which is augmented by the use of spot hire by individual departments.
- 6.2 The Waste Management Division of Environmental and Consumer Services operate a service from a central workshop at Montague Street, Digbeth, carrying out major repairs plus servicing for vehicles based in the locality for some 374 vehicles, items of plant and equipment which are used in the Refuse Collection, Street Cleansing, Laboratory, Urban Renewal, Waste Management, Trade Team, Recycling, Stores, Pest Control, Markets, Enforcement, Consumer Services, Cemeteries and Crematoriums and Miscellaneous Services.
- 6.3 The MOT testing of private hire vehicles (3000+) and of black cabs (1200) is an integral part of the workload of Park Road and Montague Street.
- 6.4 Different management arrangements are in place in the other major departments; Leisure and Culture, Social Services and Education. The Committee heard that Social Services and Education transport teams had recently co-located in order to work more closely together in using transport for children with special needs and for clients' transport to day centres. Leisure and Culture do not have a central transport management function as it has been devolved across services.

Sustainability Policy and Fleet Management

- 6.5 The city's policy to introduce or replace existing vehicles with clean fuelled alternatives has not been rigorously pursued, partly due to a lack of understanding about the policy. A co-ordinated and controlled approach to

procurement will rectify this and ensure that any 'power shift' or tax savings are secured.

Age Profile and Training Opportunities

- 6.6 Work conducted by CORNWELL affiliates identified that a national shortage of skilled vehicle fitters, combined with uncertainty around the future had restricted recruitment, which resulted in the age profile of both workshops being skewed towards more older fitters.

Driver Responsibilities

- 6.7 Although the 'O' Licence holder for the Council's fleet, has overall responsibility for large goods vehicles in use, the drivers of vehicles also have a responsibility to ensure that the vehicle they drive is road worthy. There is evidence to suggest that individual drivers and casual users of the City's vehicle fleet should be held more accountable for the roadworthiness, condition and care of the vehicle they use.

Income Generation

- 6.8 Park Road currently services the ex-Housing repairs vehicle fleet now operated by Serviceteam and Accord. However, there is no formal contract or long term commitment in place.
- 6.9 Through their benchmarking exercise, CORNWELL affiliates identified that Glasgow City Council earned revenue of £400,000 through advertising on the Council's fleet vehicles.

7. Conclusion

Park Road & Montague Street

- 7.1 There are always opportunities for improving working practices and operational arrangements but the committee is very pleased to note the positive analysis by CORNWELL affiliates of the way in which these two depots work.
- 7.2 It is clear that the City Council has a good base from which to develop a more strategic, corporate fleet maintenance and management function and the efforts of those managers and all employees involved in the day to day running of the depots should be acknowledged.

The Future of the City Council's Fleet Management and Maintenance Operations

- 7.3 Consideration of the future has to be done in the light of the way in which the size and nature of the City Council may change over the coming months and years.

- 7.4 Although the Housing Maintenance Fleet has been externalised and the long-term prospects are that the fleet will diminish further, sufficient critical mass is retained at present for the fleet to be considered large. It is likely that for the immediate future the two sites would be retained which reduces an imminent opportunity to secure a considerable capital receipt.
- 7.5 There are many changes that the council is considering which could equally impact on the size of the fleet. A Private Finance Initiative for highway maintenance and possibly some aspects of street cleansing has been bid for. If this went ahead it would have an impact on the current arrangements for refuse collection which would need to be considered. The City Council is considering how best to deliver the services currently provided through Leisure Point and the best option for elderly people's homes.
- 7.6 However, decisions on all of these issues do not seem imminent and their impact would not be immediate. The task therefore is to deliver the highest quality of fleet management and maintenance services appropriate to the fleet and to put the function in the best possible position to be able to respond in a timely and effective way to changes in the environment it serves.
- 7.7 The Committee recommend that the two separate, but related functions of
- a) fleet management and procurement
 - b) fleet maintenance

for the City Council's whole fleet should be put under the responsibility of one Assistant Director. Only when the whole function is the responsibility of one person will it be possible to realise a single corporate vision for the Council's requirement for transport.

- 7.8 The Committee recommend that a single management structure for Park Road and Montague Street should be developed, which is able to deliver a wider corporate role. Existing differing methods of working and the volume and nature of work required make it impossible at this time to reduce to one garage site. However this should be possible within two-three years. By putting the managerial responsibility in one place in the organisation, the Committee would expect to see:
- corporate processes for procurement across all departments for vehicles and associated goods and services.

- the highest quality and best value standards of management and maintenance that were focused on services and internal and external services.
- a marketing plan that would demonstrate to schools the value of the service and explored the opportunities for trading with other potential customers.
- a training strategy that facilitated the development of servicing and fleet management skills, allowing the potential for career development to management level and bringing in the Further Education Colleges.

7.9 The Committee sees significant advantages to the Council of this approach:

the services that depend on the use of vehicles will benefit from a better managed service

- 8.2 The Directors then to put forward a detailed business plan for the function by SEPTEMBER 2002 which includes actions to achieve the incremental savings available over the next 5-7 years.
- 8.3 The Directors to embark on a consultative process with the workforces at Park Road and Montague Street.
- 8.4 It is recommended that all fleet matters should now go to the Directors of Environmental and Consumer Services and Transportation to ensure that any immediate decisions required are taken in the context of these recommendations.

Recommendation 2: Corporate Management and Maintenance of the City Council's Fleet

- 8.5 It is recommended that the Chief Officers of the Leisure and Culture, Social Services, Education and Housing (which had formerly been excluded from this review but should now be included in the proposals) to work with the Directors of Transportation and Environmental and Consumer Services in consultation with the respective Cabinet Members to support the development of a corporate function which is able to procure, manage and maintain vehicles on their behalf.
- 8.6 This will include a review of their own resource structures and arrangements and may require some transfer of resources. It will also require a recognition that roles, responsibilities and relationships will need to change to support the corporate function providing best value and to enable service managers access to the vehicles they need for their services. by SEPTEMBER 2002.

Recommendation 3: Proposals for Management and Maintenance

- 8.7 There are a number of anomalies in both maintenance and management practices which can be rationalised immediately. It is recommended that:
 - a) All light vans trucks and saloon cars should be serviced and inspected as per manufacturers recommendations. Similarly, inspection and servicing of mini-buses should be reduced taking into consideration their use and workload.
 - b) An assessment of current and anticipated future workload should now be made and appropriate resources put in place to accommodate this

- c) The future acquisition of vehicles across the city should be co-ordinated with Montague Street and Park Road agreeing specifications and selection of like vehicles as part of a joint procurement process.
- d) Leasing conditions should be standardised with returned vehicles in reasonable condition carrying 6 months valid MOT but not 6 months road fund licence.
- e) Montague Street workshop's good practice of holding a number of vehicles unallocated to specific functions, should be explored for the rest of the Council's fleet. This practice in Montague Street of keeping vehicles which are available for hire at a competitive price has proved to achieve a saving compared with spot hire rates.

Recommendation 4: Opportunities for Training

- 8.8 Changes to the composition and size of the fleet and corresponding workload will require flexibility and possible new skills or a change in emphasis of existing skills. It is recommended that appropriate training to satisfy these demands is essential and needs to be addressed immediately.
- 8.9 It is also recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken to cost and identify the requirement to introduce an apprenticeship and management training programmes to sustain an adequate supply of appropriately trained and experienced staff. This would be in the context of an overall training strategy that sought to train and develop employees in the full scope of fleet management and maintenance as appropriate to the individuals and the business need.

Recommendation 5: Council's Sustainability Policy

- 8.10 It is recommended that the new fleet management and maintenance unit should be tasked to review and develop the fleet sustainability policy and an implementation framework within 6 months of it being established. The unit should ensure that any 'power shift' or tax savings are secured.

Recommendation 6: User/Driver Responsibilities

- 8.11 It is recommended that daily log book records should be maintained confirming daily inspections and detailing any defects identified – to promote better driver accountability. A consistent procedure for reporting and investigating accidents along with appropriate training and disciplinary action needs to be established and monitored as part of the overall fleet management responsibility.

Recommendation 7: Savings and Interim Targets

- 8.12 Potential annual savings of £338,250 have been identified by adopting the following recommendations:
- Corporate specification and procurement of vehicles.
 - Co-ordinate road fund licence and lease period.
 - Internal hire fleet instead of spot hire.
 - Reduce inspection/service intervals to manufacturers specification.
 - Adjust employment levels to reflect workload and reduce overtime.
- 8.13 All of these initiatives are in place within the Montague Street workshops and are therefore savings to Park Road and its customers.
- 8.14 As part of the business plan (see D16) a detailed implementation plan should be produced to achieve the savings.
- 8.15 Further unquantified savings should be made by improved driver training and accountability.

Recommendation 8: Potential for Income Generation

- 8.16 It is recommended that a formal contract or long term commitment with Serviceteam and Accord should be put in place. This should be regarded as a priority aim.
- 8.17 A significant amount of repair work to the Park Road fleet is currently undertaken by outside sources. Consideration should be given to completing this work in-house.
- 8.18 A number of outside agencies may be interested in a service and repair arrangement with the city, eg, TWD, Fire Service, Ambulance Service. A full review and appraisal of the city's future requirements should be established before a commitment to undertake external work is considered.
- 8.19 Options for income generation through advertising on the council's fleet should be explored by the Directors of Environmental & Consumer Services and Transportation.

Recommendation 9: Financing the Purchase of Vehicles

- 8.20 Finance Department and fleet managers have started to work more closely together in relation to operating lease finance, and this needs to be developed. In particular, it is recommended that:

lease conditions need to be communicated especially in relation to return and the risk of penalties
the scope for suppliers to offer operating lease finance should be reviewed and the select list of suppliers readvertised if appropriate.

Recommendation 10: Procurement

- 8.21 It is recommended that all the council's existing contracts for the purchase and supply of vehicle, plant and associated supplies should be re-examined with a view to making a strategic decision about how best to procure the council's full requirements.
- 8.22 There is a requirement for spot hiring which also must be considered alongside the possibility of the council meeting some of its own need via purchase (see recommendation 3) or using existing vehicles more flexibly. It is recommended that the opportunity to meet service needs by better co-ordination of the vehicles available across all of the council's fleet should be explored and pursued.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

CORNWELL affiliates FINDINGS

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Q: Is the current policy of leasing the vehicles the best value for money for the Council?	<p>A: Yes it was, and the leases were competitive. However, while the leases were best financial value, there were internal problems communicating the lease terms & conditions to all departments, which has had a cost;</p> <p>A: The capital regulatory framework may change from April 2004, and operational leases will not be “necessary” to keep assets off the balance sheet. Detailed analysis of the financial market is needed to see if leases or direct purchase by the Council would be best in future. We recommend this is done before 1 April 2003.</p>
Q: What fleet management systems are in operation?	<p>A: Both the Park Road and the Montague Street workshops use a system called “Fleetpower” to support the running of the fleets. Both have found this system useful, and the Transport Manager at Montague Street is now examining the market with a view to selecting a suitable, more modern replacement.</p> <p>A: Social Services, Leisure & Culture and Education departments do not use vehicle fleet management software.</p>
Q: What would a recommended fleet management system cost/encompass?	<p>A: There is a limited number of vehicle fleet management systems available in the market, all of which have broadly similar specifications. Environmental Services are currently examining the available systems, notably “Kerridge” and “Truckman”, as possible replacements for “Fleetpower”. The cost of replacing the system for Environmental Services is initially estimated at £30 – 40,000 subject to further refinement.</p>

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Q: In respect of both garages:

A1: Running Costs:

Park Road: Vehicle DSO £2.5 Million, fleet management function for Transportation Department £0.5 Million

Montague Street: transport (largely vehicle leasing) £3.33 Million, Vehicle Maintenance: £2.01 Million

Identify running costs;

A2: Efficiency levels/working practices:

Assess the efficiency levels/working practices;

Park Road: Generally practices appear up to date, but more modern diagnostic equipment would improve the service. The use of mobile mechanics to maximise vehicle availability is an example of good practice;

Identify opportunities for rationalisation;

Montague Street: The budget has only increased by 4% since 1996/97 – a significant reduction in real terms, the ratio of fitters to vehicles has moved from about 1:14 to 1:15, and customer satisfaction levels are very high. Working practices appear flexible and up to date.

Evaluate the capital values tied up in the two garages and the opportunities for either or both to be released.

A3: Identify opportunities for rationalisation:

Park Road: A lot of overtime is being worked because of the current uncertainty over future workloads. There are some decisions to be taken over optimum inspection periods for vehicles which could produce savings. The service is largely appointment based for users, but there are issues concerning the discipline with which these appointments are kept;

Montague Street: Information and systems rely very heavily on the Transport Manager, there should be consideration of making the systems less dependent on one person.

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	<p><u>Montague Street</u> – current value £2.6 Million based on current use. BUT, the site may be in the Eastside Regeneration Initiative, as a “village centre” residential development by the river. This is at least 5 years away, and there is possible contamination. It was formerly a cattle market and then a Waste Disposal Site, including an incinerator and rendering plant. Current use includes refuse vehicles. This means a detailed site investigation would be required. If the issues of potential contamination are resolved, and if the Eastside project goes ahead, then the site may have a potential value of £4 Million as a residential site.</p> <p>A4.2: <u>Evaluate the opportunities for releasing the capital</u> The main issue is the size of the Council’s fleet. It is <u>extremely</u> unlikely that a commercial company could absorb the Council’s maintenance using their existing garages; Any commercial company would almost certainly need to use the Council’s garages, or buy/rent similar sized and equipped properties, in or near the centre of the City, for which the Council would have to pay as part of any contract; This means the Council would not gain the benefit of the full value of any capital receipt, and the balance of benefit would have to be assessed, on a case by case basis, if alternative locations are put forward, either internally or by potential commercial contractors.</p>
<p>Q: What are the opportunities for full maintenance leases</p>	<p>A: There are several large companies that could provide vehicles for the Council full maintenance leases. The issues include: The large number of vehicles and the need for facilities in which a contractor could maintain them; The level of savings the Council would require; The range of vehicles may require multiple contracts; The need for an “intelligent” client function; The exact specification of the service and quality levels against which companies would tender.</p>

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Q: What are the opportunities for cost savings?

- A1: Corporate specification / purchasing of vehicles
15% of Leisure and Social Services expenditure, achievable incrementally in 5 – 7 years, around £225,150. Additionally, there may be further savings through synergy with Transportation buying vehicles & increased buying power;
- A2: Co-ordinate road tax & lease arrangements,
around £6,400 p.a. based on current fleet / replacement cycles;
- A3: Improved accident claims and monitoring.
Unquantifiable but “significant” (Social Services Transport Manager);
- A4: Set up an internal hire fleet for departments use;
Environmental Services saved around 15% through this measure. If this holds true for Leisure and Social Services (total hire spend £178,000p.a.), proportionate savings of £26,700 p.a. may be possible;
- A5: Managing compliance with lease terms;
Unknown cost as not separately identified. Widely believed to be “considerable”.
- A6: Monitoring and managing driver behaviour;
Unknown cost as not separately identified. Widely believed to be “considerable”.
- A7: Consider reducing inspection interval for minibuses;
The current inspection period for minibuses is 6 weeks. If Members chose to increase this to 12 weeks then there are potential savings of £20,000 pa;
- A8: Reduce level of overtime working at Park Road;
Because of the uncertainty over future work loads there has been a policy of overtime working rather than employing additional staff. Although there will be a need for some overtime we estimate that annual savings of £60,000 are achievable by reducing overtime working.

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A9: Summary;
Depending on decisions over the future of the City's Services there are potential annual savings of £338,250 and additional, unquantified amounts.

