



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE - 11 FEBRUARY 2026
Subject	STREET CLEANSING VEHICLE PROCUREMENT
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment Email: lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Director of Place Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Si Pocock-Cluley, Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead Email: si.pocock-cluley@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to procure vehicles for the Street Cleansing service
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the use of capital funding of £260,000 to procure one small (~3.5t) electric-powered vehicle-mounted road sweeper on a like-for-like basis.2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Services, the Executive Member for Finance, and the Director of Finance, to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Review the sweeping re-scheduling report and assess depot capacity following a further electric vehicle trial.b. Approve the use of capital funding of £235,000 - £435,000 to procure one large (~16t) vehicle-mounted road sweeper, based on the outcome of the review and trial.c. Approve the use of capital funding of £15,000 to procure any necessary charging infrastructure if an electric option is selected for the larger sweeper.

Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Lidia Arciszewska • WODC Finance officers • WODC Environmental Services and Waste Team • Ubico Fleet • Ubico Operations

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report seeks approval for the procurement of one 3.5t electric-powered vehicle-mounted sweeper on a like-for-like basis to replace the smaller electric sweeper. It further proposes that the decision to procure the larger (15t–18t) vehicle-mounted sweeper is delegated to the Director of Place, to enable completion of sweeping schedule reviews, depot capacity assessment, and any further electric vehicle trials before a final purchase decision is made.
- 1.2** The proposed investment partially aligns with the Council's corporate priorities and its commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. The procurement of electric sweepers offers significant environmental benefits, including zero tailpipe emissions and improved air quality, while reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Although the initial capital cost is higher than combustion-fuelled alternatives, lifecycle savings from lower fuel costs, reduced maintenance, and potential resale value will help partially offset these costs.
- 1.3** Although electric-powered sweepers are the preferred option for all vehicle sizes, a recent trial of the larger vehicle demonstrated that the technology was not yet at the level for the sweeper to be able to complete the current scheduled sweeping activity throughout the district on a single charge. Accordingly, this report proposes that the decision on the larger sweeper is delegated to the Director of Place, to be taken following completion of a rescheduling exercise, depot capacity identification, and a further trial of an electric vehicle.
- 1.4** The procurement will be managed by Ubico through a competitive tender process compliant with Public Contracts Regulations. Infrastructure upgrades at Station Lane depot will be confirmed and, if required, scheduled following the depot capacity assessment associated with the delegated decision for the larger sweeper. Risks such as supply chain delays and infrastructure installation challenges have been identified, with mitigation measures in place.
- 1.5** Overall, this approach ensures service continuity, environmental leadership, and financial prudence, positioning the Council for future regulatory compliance and operational resilience. Funding for the procurement and any infrastructure works will be met from the approved 2025/26 Capital Programme budget.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** This report relates to the procurement of Vehicle Mounted Sweeping Vehicles for use by Ubico to deliver the council's Street Cleansing services.
- 2.2** The Council's street cleansing service is a highly visible function that directly impacts resident satisfaction and the local environment. Vehicle-mounted sweepers are essential for delivering this service effectively.
- 2.3** A recent fleet review exercise undertaken by Council Waste & Finance officers and Ubico identified two sweepers are nearing the end of their life with increasing maintenance needs, increasing costs, and creating an urgent need for replacement to avoid service instability.

- 2.4** These vehicles have a typical lifespan of five years due to the complexity of their mechanical systems, although longevity can vary based on usage and maintenance.
- 2.5** As sweepers age, repair costs and downtime increase significantly, leading to inefficiencies and potential service failures. A modern replacement programme must balance three critical factors:
- **Operational Performance:** Vehicles must be robust, reliable, and capable of meeting demanding service schedules with minimal breakdowns.
 - **Environmental Impact:** Reducing carbon emissions is vital to achieving the Council's net-zero target by 2030.
 - **Financial Sustainability:** Procurement decisions must consider both upfront costs and lifecycle savings from reduced maintenance and fuel consumption.

3. Electric Vehicle Trials

- 3.1** The smaller vehicle due to be replaced is an electric-powered vehicle; this report proposes to replace the vehicle with a similar electric-powered unit on a like-for-like basis.
- 3.2** The larger sweeper due to be replaced is currently powered by a combustion engine. The initial intention was to replace this with a machine powered by electric. However, when trialled, the electric sweeper did not have the charge capacity to complete the current daily scheduled work (in some cases less than 50% of the task was able to be completed). The trial demonstrated that the current sweeping schedules cannot be completed on a single charge using the electric sweeper. Further work is therefore required to review schedules and identify depot capacity to determine feasibility, before delegating the procurement decision for the larger sweeper to the Director of Place, supported by a further trial of an electric option.

4. Procurement

- 4.1** The procurement process will be managed by Ubico Ltd on behalf of the Council, following a transparent and competitive tendering procedure compliant with Public Contracts Regulations and internal governance requirements. The recommended approach is:
- **One 3.5-tonne electric compact sweeper:** Approved for immediate procurement on a like-for-like basis, maintaining flexibility for cleansing in restricted areas and urban environments.
 - **One large (15t–18t) vehicle-mounted sweeper:** Procurement decision delegated to the Director of Place, to be taken following the completion of scheduling reviews, depot capacity identification, and a further trial of an electric vehicle.
- 4.2** Ubico will ensure that all suppliers are evaluated fairly against agreed criteria for quality, cost, and sustainability and that the change in vehicles does not breach their Fleet Operators' Licence.

5. CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1** Both of the new sweepers will be based at the Council-owned Station Lane depot in Witney.
- 5.2** The smaller sweeper will replace an older electric machine on a like-for-like basis, so the infrastructure is already available.
- 5.3** Charging infrastructure for the larger sweeper will be required only if an electric vehicle is the preferred option following the delegated decision. An assessment of the depot capability for additional chargers will be carried out concurrently with the scheduling review and capacity identification exercise. If required, the installation of a charging point will be approximately £15,000.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1** Several alternative approaches to address the need for street cleansing vehicle replacements have been considered:
- 6.2** Retain Existing Vehicles
 - Advantages: Avoids immediate capital expenditure.
 - Disadvantages: This option significantly increases the risk of service failure due to mechanical breakdowns. Maintenance costs for aging sweepers are increasing, and downtime impacts operational efficiency and resident satisfaction.
- 6.3** Procure two Fossil Fuel-Powered Sweepers
 - Advantages: Fossil fuel-powered vehicles are widely available and have lower upfront costs compared to electric alternatives.
 - Disadvantages: This option does not support the Council's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Continuing with this technology would lock in higher emissions for the lifespan of the vehicles.
- 6.4** Explore Hydrogen or Other Emerging Technologies
 - Advantages: Hydrogen-powered vehicles offer zero tailpipe emissions and could align with long-term sustainability goals.
 - Disadvantages: Hydrogen sweepers are not readily available in the current market, and infrastructure requirements would be significantly more complex and costly than electric charging solutions. This option is therefore not viable at present.
- 6.5** After evaluating these alternatives, the proposed approach, replace the smaller electric sweeper on a like-for-like basis now and delegate the decision on the larger sweeper pending schedule reviews and depot capacity identification, represents the most practical and strategic choice. This approach continues the delivery of environmental benefits, aligns with the Council's climate commitments, and maintains operational reliability while ensuring the larger procurement decision is evidence-based.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Following a comprehensive review of operational requirements, environmental objectives, and financial considerations, the recommended approach is to procure one small (3.5t) electric vehicle-mounted sweeper immediately on a like-for-like basis and delegate the decision on the larger sweeper to the Director of Place following the completion of scheduling reviews, depot capacity identification, and a further trial of an electric vehicle. This ensures:
- **Service Resilience:** Replacing the aging smaller sweeper controls the risk of mechanical failures leading to service disruption, maintaining the Council's ability to deliver high standards of street cleanliness.
 - **Environmental Leadership:** Maintaining as many electric sweepers as possible directly supports the Council's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and improving air quality.
- 7.2 The proposed approach aligns with the Council's corporate priorities, delivers measurable environmental benefits, and maintains operational resilience. These recommendations are affordable within the approved capital programme, and essential for sustaining a resilient street cleansing service into the future.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The costs associated with the recommended approach will be met from the existing budget allocation for the Street Cleansing fleet within the Council's 2025/26 Capital Programme. Current commitment is for the 3.5t electric sweeper; costs for the larger sweeper remain subject to the delegated decision. An indicative breakdown is shown below:

Cost Category	3.5t Electric Sweeper	Large Electric Sweeper	Large Sweeper (Diesel)
Capital Expenses			
Purchase price	£260,000	£435,000	£235,000
Residual value*	£15,000	£20,000	£15,000
Total Capital Expenses	£245,000	£415,000	£220,000
Revenue Costs – 5 Year Life Span			
Indicative Borrowing Costs	£65,000	£110,000	£60,000
Fuel	£15,000	£50,000	£57,000
Annual Maintenance	£50,000	£93,750	£117,500
Total Revenue Expenses	£130,000	£253,750	£234,500
Total Cost of ownership			
TCO	£375,000	£668,750	£454,500

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Street cleansing is a statutory duty imposed on the Council by the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

- 9.2** Procurement of the new sweepers must be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 9.3** No significant legal risks have been identified beyond those typically associated with public procurement, provided that the correct process is followed.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 A detailed review of risks associated with the proposed procurement and alternative options has been undertaken. The key risks are outlined below:

10.2 Risks if Procurement Proceeds:

- **Supply Chain Delays:** Electric sweepers may have longer lead times due to high demand and limited manufacturer capacity. Mitigation: Early engagement with suppliers and inclusion of delivery timelines in contract terms.
- **Technology Reliability (Larger Electric Sweeper):** The trial indicates current larger electric technology may not meet full current schedule requirements on a single charge. Mitigation: Delegate decision, complete schedule review, assess depot capacity, and undertake further trials before commitment.

10.3 Risks if Procurement Does Not Proceed

- **Service Disruption:** Aging sweepers are increasingly prone to breakdowns, leading to missed cleansing schedules and reputational damage.
- **Increasing Maintenance Costs:** Continued reliance on older vehicles will result in higher repair costs and reduced operational efficiency.
- **Environmental Non-Compliance:** Failure to transition to low-emission vehicles undermines the Council's net-zero target and exposes it to future regulatory and reputational risks.

10.4 Residual Risks

- **Financial Exposure:** Higher upfront costs for electric vehicles could strain budgets if lifecycle savings are not fully realised. Mitigation: Monitor performance and savings through regular reporting.
- **Technology Development:** While current electric sweeper technology is proven and reliable for the 3.5t vehicle size, scaling up to larger electric vehicles remains at the bleeding edge of innovation. Mitigation: Maintain flexibility in fleet strategy, monitor advancements in larger-vehicle electric technology, undertake trials, and review options periodically to ensure readiness without compromising service reliability.
- **Short-Term Capacity Risk (Due to Delegation/Deferral):** If the larger sweeper replacement is deferred, there is a risk of reduced resilience. Mitigation: Optimise schedules, consider short-term hire cover, and prioritise preventative maintenance on the existing large sweeper.

10.5 Overall, the risks of not proceeding with procurement of the smaller sweeper significantly outweigh those associated with moving forward. The recommended approach includes robust mitigation measures to manage identified risks effectively, while ensuring the larger sweeper decision is based on validated operational and infrastructural readiness.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

12. Please see below

13. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Project Brief

To procure one 16t Vehicle Mounted Sweeper (fuel to be confirmed), and one 3.5t electric Sweeper.

Criteria	Score	Justification
Energy Use	2	Depending on the outcome of the schedule review, there may be no net change in the number of electrically powered vehicles but it is anticipated that technology has advanced and the newer vehicles will be more efficient.
GHGs	2	Depending on the outcome of the schedule review, there may be no net change in the number of electrically powered vehicles but it is anticipated that technology has advanced and the newer vehicles will be more efficient.
Air quality	2	Depending on the outcome of the schedule review, there may be no net change in the number of electrically powered vehicles but it is anticipated that technology has advanced and the newer vehicles will be more efficient.
Land use change	0	N/A
Soil and waterway health	2	The vehicles will maintain a sweeping schedule of roads, preventing detritus build up blocking drains
Waste	0	NA
Sustainable Transport	0	The vehicles will not be used for transport and the chargers will only be used for these vehicles
Biodiversity	0	N/A
Climate Change Adaptation	0	N/A
Sustainable Materials	0	NA
Food	0	NA

Health	2	Even if there is no increase in the number of electric vehicles, it is assumed that newer vehicles will be less polluting
Housing	0	NA
Education	0	NA
Built Community	0	NA
Cultural Community	0	NA
Accessibility	0	NA
Local Economy and Jobs	0	NA
Safety	0	NA
Democratic Voice	0	NA
Equity	0	No impacts on groups with protected characteristics.



14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None

14.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)