



SOUTH EAST DEVON  
HABITAT REGULATIONS  
PARTNERSHIP

# South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee

*Warden vehicle*

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East Devon District Council  
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Exeter  
City Council



Legal comment/advice:

The legal issues are covered in the report.

Finance comment/advice:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

<b>Public Document:</b>	Yes
<b>Exemption:</b>	None
<b>Review date for release</b>	None

## Recommendations

It is proposed that the Executive Committee:

1. Approves funding for the temporary hire of a work van (Citroen Berlingo or similar) for a period of up to 26 weeks or until a replacement vehicle is available to purchase.
2. Approves funding for outright purchase of a replacement work van (Electric Vehicle, Citroen eBerlingo or similar), with associated livery, vehicle tracker and dashcam.
3. Approves funding for replacement of equipment (telescope, gazebo, body cameras, etc.) held in the storage compartment of the damaged vehicle – if required.
4. Receives an update at a future meeting relating to the insurance settlement and actual costs of replacing the vehicle and/or equipment.

Equalities impact: Low

Risk: Medium.

If funding for the hire of a temporary vehicle and/or a replacement vehicle is not approved, the Wildlife Wardens will not be able to transport the gazebo and associated equipment. This will mean the loss of our capacity to carry out on site information point “pit stops” as a critical element of public outreach/engagement. Additionally, Wildlife Wardens would be required to use their own vehicles to travel to site for day to day operations which will result in increased business mileage claims and increased carbon emissions.

### 1. Summary

1.1 As approved in the 2016-17 (first) annual business plan, the Wildlife Wardens have access to a work vehicle to enable their patrols and wider engagement across the region. In changing the strategy approach from lease to outright purchase (with capital replacement every 10 years) it was estimated that this saved approximately £380,000 over the duration of the strategy.

1.2 At their July 2020 meeting, the Executive Committee approved changing the work vehicle to a Citroen Berlingo in light of a better understanding of requirements. It was estimated that the change of vehicle realised significant carbon emissions savings of 83 g/km, or approximately 1000kg/year based on estimated annual mileage of 7500.

1.3 On Sat 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the purchased Citroen Berlingo was involved in a road traffic accident (RTA). This RTA occurred whilst a Wildlife Warden was driving the vehicle between EDDC Honiton (where the vehicle is parked overnight) and Exmouth, to attend Powerboat training. The vehicle was subsequently recovered by Highfield Garage & Recovery Ltd, Exeter. Thankfully, the Warden was able to walk away from the accident with only minor injuries.

1.4 A motor claim form has been provided to the Insurers who are arranging to view the vehicle and will inform us of their assessment. Delays at the insurance company mean that we do not yet know the outcome of their investigation. However, due to the reported damage to the vehicle we are anticipating that it will be written off and we will receive a settlement towards the costs of a replacement vehicle.

1.5 Equipment in the vehicle, such as the gazebo, display equipment, telescope and body cameras remains inside. The insurers need to assess the damage from the accident before entry to the vehicle is forced to gain access. As such, the extent of damage to the equipment from shock or subsequent ingress of water is unknown and the cost of replacement needs to be factored in, should this be required.

## **2. Short term requirements.**

2.1 The vehicle is an indispensable tool to enable the Wardens to move from site to site and carry out enhanced public engagement with the gazebo, display equipment and telescope. It has clear and attractive branding and demonstrates the presence of staff onsite. The requirement for this work remains and therefore a replacement vehicle is required.

2.2 Ongoing supply chain issues related to the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine is affecting the availability of new vehicles. The Citroen dealership in Exeter has advised a wait time of up to six months from point of order to purchase a replacement vehicle.

2.3 It will be necessary to hire a vehicle to cover the waiting period. The Citroen Berlingo work van provides sufficient space and performance for the type of duties required by the Wardens and therefore it is logical to look for the same or very similar model.

2.4 Table 1 below shows the comparative cost of (short term) lease of a Citroen Berlingo (diesel, ad-blue) and a similar electric vehicle (EV) (Toyota Proace) over 6 months.

**Table 1.**

Model	Citroen Berlingo (diesel)	Toyota Proace (EV)
<b>Cost/day (plus VAT)</b>	£18	£28
<b>Cost over 6 months</b>	£3276	£5096

2.5 Due to relatively low mileage over the course of six months and the reduction in emissions due to the use of the “ad-blue” fuel additive, it is not considered to result in sufficient emissions savings to justify selecting the Toyota EV (at an extra cost of £1820). Therefore the Citroen Berlingo diesel model is recommended.

2.6 The hire vehicle should remain unbranded as it is not economically viable to put livery on a hire vehicle for such a short period of time.

2.7 The extent of the damage to the contents of the vehicle remains unclear until such time as the insurance assessment is completed. Should it be necessary to replace all of the equipment, Table 2, below, outlines the estimated cost.

**Table 2.**

Item	Cost (estimated)
Gazebo (including frame, cover, table, display equipment, base, "A" frames)	£2300
Telescope	£750
Body Cameras	£1250
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,300</b>

**Proposed (potential) spend: £7576, consisting of:**

Vehicle hire for up to six months: £3276  
 Replacement of equipment: £4300

### **3.0 Long term requirements.**

3.1 The long term requirement for transport remains and as previously established, the Citroen Berlingo type work van has been proven to meet our specifications.

3.2 The three partner authorities have all declared a climate emergency. As such, all respective climate change/carbon action plans (as well as the Interim Devon Carbon Plan) are supportive of switching to low carbon council operated fleet, such as EV. There is the need for rapid decarbonisation, which should rule out waiting for new technologies and further prototyping. Additionally, Government has committed to phasing out the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and local authorities have a role to play in supporting this transition and setting an example.

3.3 This incident now presents the opportunity to transition to an EV for the Wildlife Wardens, although this has some financial implications. Whilst the capital purchase of an EV is higher than a diesel model, there are significant differences in terms of running costs such as road tax, servicing and fuel. A rough estimation is that these costs are halved for an EV compared to a diesel<sup>1</sup>, although this will increase with rising fuel prices.

3.4 Table 3 outlines how the Strategy vehicle budget is currently allocated. A 50% saving in EV servicing, tax and fuel costs over the remaining 73 years of delivery will result in savings of approximately £73,000 (at current prices).

**Table 3. Current vehicle budget (Strategy lifetime)**

Item	Cost	Frequency over 80yrs	Total
Vehicle purchase	£22500	8	£180,000
Servicing, tax, fuel	£2000	80	£160,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£24500</b>	-	<b>£340,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> "Are electric vehicles really cheaper than their fuel counterparts?" LV insurance:  
[www.lv.com/car-insurance/electric-car-insurance/cost-of-owning-an-ev](http://www.lv.com/car-insurance/electric-car-insurance/cost-of-owning-an-ev)

3.5 The most recent budget estimate for a warden vehicle is based on outright purchase of a vehicle every 10 years, which is still considered to be better value than an ongoing lease. Table 4 shows a comparison of outright purchase against (long term) rental for both EV and diesel (forecast at current prices). A period of 10 years for this comparison has been selected because of Government plans to halt the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2030.

**Table 4. Comparison of outright purchase/lease, diesel and EV.**

Item	Purchase/Lease	Capital	Revenue/10yrs	Total/10yrs
eBerlingo (EV)	Purchase	£24363 <sup>2</sup>	£10000 <sup>3</sup>	£34,363
Berlingo (diesel)	Purchase	£16437 <sup>4</sup>	£20000 <sup>5</sup>	£36,437
eBerlingo (EV)	Lease	£4526/year	£5000	£50,260
Berlingo (diesel)	Lease	£3527/year	£10000	£45,270

3.6 Although the Berlingo EV is costlier to purchase, it can be seen that in the longer term, the reduced running costs mean that it is more cost effective than the diesel model (and has significantly reduced carbon emissions).

3.7 Leasing of a vehicle over the long term is shown to be less cost effective. Servicing, tax and repairs would be covered by the leasing company<sup>6</sup> but this is reflected in the charges and of course there would be no resale potential. Fuel (whether electric or diesel) will be the same whether purchased outright or leased.

3.8 Branding of the new vehicle is important to demonstrate the presence of the Wardens on site and therefore signage/livery of the new vehicle will be required. Additionally, a dashcam and vehicle tracker is recommended in order to promote operational safety.

**Proposed (potential) spend: £26,413, consisting of:**

eBerlingo purchase	£24,363
Vehicle livery	£ 1,700
Dashcam	£ 200
Vehicle tracker	£ 150

<sup>2</sup> Crown Commercial Services framework quoted price.

<sup>3</sup> Estimated running costs over 10 years including electric, servicing, repairs, etc.

<sup>4</sup> See (1) above.

<sup>5</sup> Estimated running costs over 10 years including diesel, tax, servicing, repairs, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Prices obtained from [www.vanarama.com](http://www.vanarama.com)

## **4. Conclusion**

4.1 The Wildlife Wardens require a replacement work van to continue their outreach and engagement work across the protected sites.

4.2 There are issues of reduced supply affecting the sale of new vehicles for reasons outlined earlier in the report. Funding of £3276 to enable a temporary vehicle lease for a period of up to six months is recommended.

4.3 The condition of the equipment held in the damaged vehicle at the time of the accident is not yet known. We will be able to access the contents of the vehicle after it has been assessed by our insurers. Until more is known, it is prudent to recommend approval of £4300 to cover the potential cost of replacement.

4.3 Switching to EV are clear recommendations in respective climate change/carbon action plans for council operated fleet vehicles. To play our part in achieving rapid decarbonisation whilst also achieving longer term financial savings, outright purchase of a Citroen eBerlingo van (and associated livery/equipment) is recommended. Capital funding of £26,413 is required.<sup>7</sup>

4.4 Assessment of the vehicle by the insurers is not yet complete but it is anticipated that a financial settlement will cover a proportion of the costs of purchasing a new vehicle. As this amount is not yet known, approval is sought for the full funding requirement. A further update will be provided to the Committee when this is fully accounted for.

4.5 Local authority partners are collecting developer contributions to cover the total costs of the 80 year Strategy. As such, funds are accumulating as intended to cover these lifetime costs. There is sufficient headroom in existing finance with which to cover the finance outlined in this report without affecting either the annual business plan or 5 year delivery plan.

4.6 Furthermore, a saving of £73K<sup>8</sup> in vehicle running costs over the lifetime of the Strategy are anticipated by switching to EV. This saving enables the replacement of the vehicle (and associated equipment) to be absorbed without impacting the total Strategy vehicle budget. Savings remaining after funding the measures outlined in this report should be held in the event of other unforeseen events in the future. Table 5 provides an overview of this position.

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<sup>7</sup> Ongoing revenue for fuel, repairs, servicing, etc. is already accounted for as part of the original approval from Committee for a warden vehicle in June 2016 and as amended in July 2020.

<sup>8</sup> At current prices.

**Table 5. Anticipated revenue savings by switching to EV.**

Current vehicle revenue budget/73years	£146000
Anticipated EV running cost savings/73 years	£73000
Vehicle lease, purchase and replacement of equipment	-£33989
Remaining EV running cost savings/73 yrs.	£39011

**Growth, Development and Prosperity  
East Devon District Council,**

**April 2022**

Natural England comment: