

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 064-23

Classification: OFFICIAL

Title of report: Boreham Car Wash Upgrade

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

Report by: David Stovell – Finance Business Partner

Date of report: 5th May 2023

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1. Executive Summary

This decision report features a recommendation to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to invest £25,359 of capital funding to purchase an upgraded car wash at the Boreham site. This is to replace the existing car wash which is now beyond its useful life. There are no additional revenue budget costs associated with this purchase as the existing revenue budget will be sufficient to support the ongoing use of the new equipment.

The current car wash facility at Boreham is considered to be so inefficient as to fail to make any material improvement in the external cleanliness of vehicles that use it. This often results in a requirement to have vehicles washed multiple times to ensure that they maintain a professional appearance.

If approved, the £25,359 capital funding would be allocated from the small projects capital fund that has already been earmarked with the force capital programme.

This decision report summarises how Essex Police will utilise the funding and seeks agreement from the Commissioner to add the proposal to the capital programme so as to facilitate the purchase of the new car wash.

2. Recommendation

That the Commissioner approves the allocation of £25,359 capital funding from the small projects capital fund to purchase an upgraded car wash facility at the Boreham site.

3. Background to the proposal

The existing car wash facility at Boreham is estimated to have been in service for more than twenty years. In the intervening period the facility has had little or no investment in its upkeep. Revenue budget has been used to ensure that the facility is at least operational, but with other facilities across the force having been withdrawn, demand placed upon the Boreham car wash has increased considerably. It is no longer fit for purpose and is in urgent need of replacement.

The current system uses recycled water in the process of cleaning vehicles. Whilst this offers potential environmental benefits, the filtration system is no longer fit for purpose and considerable feedback has been received that in using water that is not clean to begin with, the system fails to properly clean the vehicles. This can create additional work in further cleaning or potentially generate a reputational risk to the force in operating poorly maintained vehicles. Furthermore, the level of negative feedback from users has increased exponentially, so the welfare of the operators and users will clearly benefit from being able to use an upgraded car wash that delivers properly cleaned and professional looking vehicles.

4. Proposal and associated benefits

The fundamental proposal is to purchase an upgraded car wash facility for the Boreham site. This requires a capital investment of £25,359, which will be met from the earmarked capital budget for small capital projects.

The key benefit from undertaking this proposal is that Essex Police will be able to maintain and improve professional standards and corporate road risk in more efficiently delivering clean operational policing vehicles. There is also potential, but unquantified, cost avoidance in not having to incur additional costs to maintain and keep the current facility functioning and in avoiding having vehicles that need washing more than once. A new car wash will also reduce the length of time that the vehicle is non-operational whilst at the car wash facility.

Purchase of the new facility is also likely to generate environmental benefits. Operating less than clean vehicles can impact in the longer-term on their life expectancy, whilst an improved cleaning system will also offer greater environmental advantages in terms of less wastage and reduced requirement for the application of cleaning products.

5. Options analysis

The preferred option is that the Commissioner endorses the recommendation contained within this decision report, allowing investment of £25,359 capital funding in the purchase of an upgraded car wash facility at Boreham. In utilising the £25,359 capital funding from the earmarked capital budget for small projects, this proposal will create no additional financial pressure on force budgets as that funding allocation is already incorporated within the MTFS.

The option of an extensive refurbishment of the existing facility has been considered, but it has already undergone multiple minor repairs in order to maintain some level of serviceability. Nevertheless, the existing car wash is now

deemed to be beyond the end of its useful life and any further resources expended upon it will deliver no discernible benefit.

The Commissioner could choose not to support the recommendation. However, if that decision is taken the outcome is likely to be a reduced professional appearance of force vehicles and lower morale amongst staff who operate the facility and those who use vehicles that are still not cleaned to expected standards. This may have a negative impact on the reputation of Essex Police.

6. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation has taken place across a number of forums, initially within Transport Services, but subsequently with the various users of the current facility. It has also been heavily discussed during the Chief Constable's 6,000 Conversations Tour, where direct feedback highlighted the business need.

7. Strategic Links

Whilst this proposal may not have direct links to priorities in the Force Plan 2022/2025, there are clear links to how we work, whether that is in reference to looking professional, using appropriate technology and being more efficient in protecting the environment.

It is arguable that, with regards the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2021-24, this proposal supports identified priorities to improve safety on our roads and to support our officers and staff.

8. Police operational implications

The Deputy Chief Constable supports the recommendations, as appropriate for his level of delegated authority.

The purchase of the upgraded car wash facility at Boreham will enhance the professional appearance of force vehicles and mitigate the reduction in useful operating life of vehicles associated with the current facility.

9. Financial implications

£25,359 of capital expenditure has been identified for the project within the small capital projects fund included in the subject to approval category of the Capital Programme in 2023/24. This is an element of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which was presented to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2023.

It is noted that, subsequent to the force approval of the original proposal (at a cost of £23,379), there was a review of the potential cost of the upgraded car wash facility. The revised cost upon which this decision is requested to be made is thus £25,359. This is an increase of £1,980 or 8.5% which, whilst not ideal, is within the accepted parameters for variances against capital budget approved schemes, as referenced by section G.5.1 of the Financial Regulations. Furthermore, this increase in capital cost is of a low materiality and can be fully accommodated within the overall budget allocation made for small capital projects.

There are no revenue budget implications associated with this proposal. Ongoing revenue costs associated with the operation of the upgraded car wash facility will be managed within existing revenue budget allocations.

10. Legal implications

There are no additional specific legal implications associated with the recommendation contained within this decision report.

11. Staffing implications

There are no direct staffing implications associated with the recommendation contained within this decision report.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

There will be no equality, diversity and inclusion implications associated with the request to endorse the recommendation contained within this decision report. There will be no disadvantages to people with protected characteristics.

13. Risks and Mitigations

The primary risk of not investing in a new car wash facility is reputational in that the force may be required to operate poorly maintained vehicles that do not portray a professional image. This can be mitigated by additional washing of the vehicles, but that is both time consuming and labour-intensive, neither of which is considered to be an acceptable outcome. The most appropriate mitigation is to utilise earmarked capital budget from the small capital projects fund to purchase a replacement car wash.

The review of the potential cost of the upgraded car wash facility referred to in section 9 above highlighted the financial risks associated with rising manufacturing prices. Although the currently quoted cost is higher than the amount initially endorsed through the internal Essex Police governance process, it has been mitigated as being an increase within acceptable limits according to Financial Regulations and one that can be managed as part of the wider earmarked capital budget allocated to small capital projects.

14. Governance Boards

In accordance with the Essex Police capital budget governance requirements, this proposal has been supported within the command structure of Transport Services department and endorsed by Chief Officer Group member DCC Prophet. It has also been endorsed by the Chief Finance Officer to the Chief Constable, with support to allocate capital budget from the earmarked capital budget allocated to small capital projects.

15. Links to Future Plans

This decision report and the recommendation contained therein has no direct link to ongoing plans for operational policing. However, the location and use of the upgraded car wash will be fully integrated within site plans for the Boreham

infrastructure project that is a major investment project within the current Estates Strategy.

There are no other identified plans associated with the purchase of the upgraded car wash facility that would generate any further operational or financial impact on the force.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

Business Justification Case (Stage A) – Car wash upgrade



Car Wash Upgrade
Stage A BJC v1.4.doc

Delegated Authority – Car wash upgrade



DA - car wash
upgrade v2.docx

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC’s Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 25 May 2023

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: 

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 06 June 2023

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If ‘NO’, please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State ‘None’ if applicable)

OFFICIAL

Subject to redaction as detailed below

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Of Appendix?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

Appendix 1 is marked Official-Sensitive so not suitable for publication.

Date redaction carried out:

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: 08/06/2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign: