

ABANDONED VEHICLE UPDATE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the progress being made in dealing with the removal of abandoned vehicles and the arrangements for receiving funding from Essex County Council.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The problem of abandoned vehicles has been growing during the last three to four years on a nation-wide scale. In 2001/02 331 vehicles were removed for disposal in the Rochford District at a cost to the Council of £30 per vehicle.
- 2.2 As with other types of “refuse” it is this Council’s responsibility to collect or remove the vehicle. The disposal of the abandoned vehicle is the responsibility of the County Council.
- 2.3 However in 1978 a Legal Agreement was made whereby the County Council delegated its responsibility for disposal to the District Councils on their behalf as the number of vehicles involved were minimal.
- 2.4 Discussions have been taking place between Officers of the District Councils and Essex County Council regarding the refunding of the disposal costs to the Districts by Essex County Council.

3 DISPOSAL COSTS

- 3.1 In order to retrieve the disposal element of the per vehicle cost, the District Council is required to obtain tenders from suitable companies for the collection and disposal service for abandoned vehicles in order to demonstrate market value.
- 3.2 Within their tenders’, companies have to breakdown their per vehicle cost into removal and disposal (and storage where applicable). We have now gone through this process and have supplied details of the tenders to Essex County Council, along with which Contractor would be our preferred Contractor. The cost per vehicle within this particular tender is £35 made up of £25 for collection and £10 for disposal, which compares favourably with tenders received in other Districts.
- 3.3 A new Legal Agreement is now being drawn up, whereby Essex County Council will pay to the District Council £10 for every vehicle disposed of as of 1 April 2002. The County Council will also pay to

Rochford District Council a further £20 per vehicle towards administration costs for processing the removal of these vehicles.

- 3.4 It has also been agreed that Essex County Council will back date their payment of the disposal cost and their administration contribution to 1 April 2001. As we were only paying £30 per vehicle last year, the proportionate disposal element equals £8.57 per vehicle. We will therefore be receiving a back claim payment for approximately £9,400 in respect of vehicles removed in 2001/02.
- 3.5 The signing of the new Legal Agreement with the County will result in a considerable reduction in the costs incurred by this Authority in dealing with the abandoned vehicles.

4 DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

- 4.1 The process involved in getting an abandoned vehicle removed can sometimes be lengthy, as appropriate warning notices must be served on the registered keeper and posted on the vehicle itself.
- 4.2 However the part of the process that often takes the longest is obtaining the registered keeper details from the D.V.L.A – a problem which can slow the whole process.
- 4.3 In an attempt to speed up this process we have recently entered into a Data Sharing Agreement with the Essex Police at Rayleigh. The basis of this agreement is that designated Council Officers will be able to contact Data Liaison Officers at Rayleigh Police Station, who in turn will provide the Council directly with details of the registered keeper of the vehicles in question.
- 4.4 This new Agreement will mean that we will be able to obtain the registered keepers' details in approximately 24 hours rather than the 2 – 3 weeks period that it can take to obtain the same information from writing to the D.V.L.A and therefore significantly speed up the whole process.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The effective and efficient removal of abandoned vehicles can help to reduce the unpleasant sight that such vehicles create around the District.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost incurred in removing / disposing of abandoned vehicles can be met from existing designated budgets and in fact will be significantly

reduced by the contribution towards administration and funding of disposal by Essex County Council. The Council will also receive approximately £9,400 in respect of vehicles removed in 2001 / 02.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council will be required to enter into a new Legal Agreement with Essex County Council for the removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles.

8 RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the content of this report in relation to the processing and financing involved with the process of dealing with abandoned vehicles in the District.

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Background Papers:

None

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