



**Corporate Policy &
Resources Committee**

**Thursday, 11 December
2025**

Subject: Review of Civic Transport Arrangements

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To present an appraisal of the options available in relation to transport arrangements for the Civic Head, including the retention or sale of the civic car, following deferral of the paper presented to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee in February 2025.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members approve the civic car be sold and proceeds from the sale be held in an earmarked reserve, and Officers undertake to arrange civic transport for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council on an 'as required' basis. Use of the earmarked reserve to be reviewed in line with current Financial Procedure Rules.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: There are no legal implications arising from this report or decisions to be made.

Financial: FIN/116/26/CPR/SL

The civic car has a market value of between £15-20k.

The 'Civic Reserve' has a balance of £30k in 2025/26, with a further £5k being contributed each financial year from 2026/27 through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Option a) – to sell the vehicle:

The proceeds from the sale would be transferred to capital receipts (estimated sale value of between £15-£20k).

The balance of £30k on the Civic Car Reserve will be reviewed through the annual Review of Reserves report which is presented to Committee later in the year.

The annual contribution of £5k pa to the Civic Car Reserve would be removed from 2026/27.

There is existing revenue budget of £6.2k pa for the employment of a chauffeur, which will be transferred as a base revenue budget for civic transport for ad hoc transport arrangements (e.g. private hire vehicles).

It is anticipated based on the current event schedule, that transport arrangements would be required on circa 12 occasions per year (once a month). Whilst the cost of ad hoc arrangements would of course vary depending on the event and transport requirements, it is considered that £0.2k would be a reasonable estimated average. Annual costs are therefore anticipated to be circa £2.5k.

The revenue budget is anticipated to be in greater than the estimated costs of ad hoc transport arrangements, however activity against this budget would be monitored during 2026/27 and the amount required reviewed for the 2027/28 MTFP.

The 'Civic Car Replacement' scheme would be removed from the capital programme.

Option b) – to retain the vehicle and employ a chauffeur: covered by existing revenue budget of £6.2k pa.

Annual maintenance costs include the MOT and servicing, with car insurance being included within the council's fleet insurance policy.

All options are covered by existing budgets.

Staffing: Currently, the Democratic Services Team carries a vacancy for a Civic Chauffeur. Subject to the decision made by the Committee, this post will either be deleted or recruited to. Given the time elapsed since the last recruitment to this post, it is anticipated there would be a review of the contract and terms and conditions of employment. In the event of this being required, Officers would liaise with the HR Team to ensure adherence with employment law / best practice.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: Consideration must be given to the diversity of individuals who may be Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council, and any enacted decision must ensure equity of possibility for all. To this end, it would remain the responsibility of the Democratic Services and Civic Team to undertake transport arrangements to ensure the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council remained able to fulfil their civic duties regardless of individual needs or requirements.

Data Protection Implications: There are no data protection implications arising from this report or decisions to be made.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: Presently, usage of the civic car remains at its lowest level since before 2020. Therefore, there have already been opportunities for lowering the carbon footprint of the Civic Office simply by reduced journeys and therefore lower emissions. Of the two options presented, no one option would deliver greater or lesser climate related risks or opportunities as the number of journeys would remain the same whether undertaken in the civic car or by alternative arrangements. The use of public transport is unlikely to be a feasible option given the rurality of the district and security concerns with the civic regalia.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report or decisions to be made.

Health Implications: There are no health implications arising from this report or decisions to be made.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

[Update report on Civic Car replacement CP&R Feb 2024](#)

[Minutes of meeting CP&R 8 Feb 2024](#)

[Update report on Civic Car Replacement CP&R Feb 2025](#)

[Minutes of meeting CP&R 13 Feb 2025](#)

Risk Assessment:

N/A

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

☐

No

X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

☐

No

X

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the future of the council-owned civic car and transport arrangements for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council whilst undertaking their Civic duties.

In the preparation of this report Officers have considered:

- Current usage of the civic car and associated costs
- Geographical area of civic functions, location of car, logistics of use
- Market value of the civic car
- Alternative arrangements such as:
 - Public transport
 - Shared usage with another council
 - The use of private hire vehicles on an ad hoc basis
 - The possibility of an hours or miles-based contract with one private hire vehicle provider *[NB: this option would be subject to standard procurement processes]*

The report presents two options which are considered to be the most viable, those being:

1. That Members approve the civic car be sold and Officers undertake to arrange civic transport for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council on an 'as required' basis.

OR

2. That Members approve to retain the current civic car for use by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council whilst on civic duties, and to recruit to the vacant post of Civic Chauffeur.

Having regard to the limited use of the vehicle, the operational requirements associated with employment of a chauffeur, and management and maintenance of the civic car, this report recommends option 1.

1 Background

- 1.1 For decades, West Lindsey District Council has owned and operated a vehicle for the sole purpose of transporting the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Council to and from civic events, herein known as the civic car.
- 1.2 Alongside the civic car, the council has continuously employed a Civic Chauffeur whose role was to not only drive the civic car, but to accompany the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and assist with, for example, chaining ceremonies, flag bearing, and to be a trusted companion.
- 1.3 In March 2020, in response to the covid-19 pandemic, the government announced a nationwide lockdown. This led to all previously booked events being cancelled. Covid-19 restrictions continued well into 2021 and directly impacted the number and nature of civic events being organised. Since that time, civic offices across the country have not returned to the pre-2020 levels of civic function, meaning invitations to the Chairman have reduced significantly, thereby reducing the requirement for the civic car and chauffeur.
- 1.4 As a result of this reduction in need, and in consideration of the previous arrangements to replace the car every four years, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee received a report in February 2024 regarding the potential replacement of the civic car, and to consider alternative options.
- 1.5 At that meeting it was: “resolved that the existing civic car be maintained for 2024-25 with no further contribution made to the reserve for its replacement in 2024-25. A further decision for later replacement be brought back to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee no later than 28 February 2025.” *[Minutes of meeting 8 February 2024]*
- 1.6 Subsequently, in February 2025, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee received a second report to revisit the options to replace the civic car or otherwise. There was significant discussion amongst Members regarding the benefits or otherwise of retaining the civic car, replacing it, or disposing of it and exploring alternative transport arrangements. With no clear decision forthcoming, at that meeting it was: “resolved that the paper be deferred until a later date for further details to be provided.” *[Minutes of meeting 13 February 2025]*
- 1.7 During the course of the debate at the meeting, guidance was provided to Officers to explore option for extending the use of the civic car beyond exclusive use for the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, noting there were security considerations regarding transportation of the Chairman and the Civic Regalia.
- 1.8 This report therefore presents options for the future of the civic car and possible transport arrangements, for the consideration of the Committee.

2 Current Use of the Civic Car and Associated Costs

- 2.1 The civic car is a Skoda Superb, first registered in March 2020 and has under 10,000 miles on the clock. Prior to 2020, the car was kept with the chauffeur who was responsible for the general upkeep, maintenance, and cleanliness of the car between the various functions which regularly took place. With the now limited use, and the chauffeur role being vacant, the car is stored by the council and checked over on an ad hoc basis. There have been notable difficulties with the vehicle when it has not been used, for example the battery being flat on more than one occasion.
- 2.2 The value of the car is estimated between £15,000 and £20,000 depending on mode of sale and further specifics being confirmed ahead of a potential sale. Annual maintenance costs include the MOT and servicing, with car insurance being included within the council's fleet insurance policy. In March 2025, the extended warranty was renewed for a period of 12 months, at a cost of £243. With the current rate of use, it is not anticipated that this would be renewed again in March 2026.
- 2.3 In the current civic year, use of the car has been sporadic. Due to the resignation of the civic chauffeur, and with the stand-by drivers having left the employment of the council, the last use of the car was in May 2025 for attendance at the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. Events since then have either seen the Chairman or Vice-Chairman driving themselves, or transport has been arranged by way of private hire vehicles appropriate for the occasion.
- 2.4 Attendance by the Chairman at the Lincolnshire Show was facilitated by a private hire company, at a cost of £400 for two days travel, return journeys. There has been one other instance of transport being arranged for the Vice Chairman to attend the Lincoln University Graduation Ceremony. This was also facilitated by a private hire company, at a cost of £70 for the return journey. However, as the autumn and winter period tends to be busier for civic engagements, it is anticipated that whilst there will be a requirement to make similar arrangements in due course, this will reduce through January to March 2026.
- 2.5 For those journeys where the Chairman or Vice-Chairman transport themselves, claims are submitted in the usual process and paid from the civic budget.
- 2.6 As there is currently no civic chauffeur, there are no associated staffing costs with the civic car, however, retention of the car would necessitate the recruitment of a chauffeur. The budget for this remains within the civic office, although it is likely there would be a review of the contract and terms and conditions of employment which may impact on longer terms costs, for example, if the rate of pay were to increase or if a monthly 'retainer' was to be factored in.
- 2.7 Civic engagements for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are not restricted to the boundaries of the district. Current arrangements with the

civic car see the driver travelling from their home to the storage location, from the storage location to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman's home address, before travelling to the location of the event. This currently impacts on not only the fuel costs, but also the time taken for journeys and return arrangements. It is anticipated that this arrangement would be reviewed should the car be retained and a chauffeur employed.

- 2.8 It should be noted that use of the civic car in recent months would have been more than it has been, had there been a civic chauffeur available to drive. However, it has not been considered feasible to justify recruitment of a new chauffeur when there has been uncertainty as to whether the car would be retained and use of it has not been sufficient to provide employment to a dedicated driver.
- 2.9 A review of the civic calendar from May 2024 indicates that the number of civic engagements requiring the use of the civic car averages one per month, acknowledging there are busier and quieter periods in the year. On this basis, it is not considered prudent to retain a vehicle, and employ a chauffeur, for such limited use.
- 2.10 It is recognised that the Chauffeur's role was not only to drive the civic car, but to accompany the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and assist with, for example, chaining ceremonies, flag bearing, and to be a trusted companion.

3 Alternative Use of the Civic Car

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2025, Officers were asked to consider extending the use of the civic car. This encompassed anything from enabling use by members of Management Team, to converting the civic car into something of a pool car which could be booked out as needed.
- 3.2 Whilst increased use of the car may be seen as a positive as there are risks of maintenance issues or degradation of parts if it is left standing over long periods of time, currently, members of Management Team use their own vehicles to travel on council business, or have public transport arranged, for example when on business in London. It should be noted that there have been no concerns raised regarding existing arrangements leading to the requirement of use of a council-owned vehicle.
- 3.3 Considerations for extending the use beyond the Chairman or Vice-Chairman included priority of use, logistics of shared use, budget management, the employment or otherwise of a civic chauffeur, and overall responsibility for the car and associated upkeep. On thorough review, there are no viable options for extending the use of the car.

4 Alternative Transport Arrangements

- 4.1 Members had previously enquired as to options for sharing a civic vehicle with a neighbouring local authority, and Officers undertook to explore the possibility. In the report presented to Members in February 2025, it was explained that there was no appetite for such an arrangement, particularly as it would likely be impractical with Chairmen often attending the same events, and as such, Officers at this time have not revisited those conversations.
- 4.2 Public transport, whilst used for functions such as attendance at conferences by senior Councillors or Officers, has rarely been used to transport the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to their engagements and would not be considered to be appropriate having regard to the role and status of the Chairman, and the role they are undertaking in representing the district. Furthermore, the logistics of public transport journeys have been excessive in comparison to using the civic car or a private hire vehicle. Additionally, the cost of using public transport (such as train travel) has not provided the value for money it might have done in the past. Finally, the value of the civic regalia is such that there are security considerations if using public transport. It is recognised that local authorities in urban areas may be able to rely more heavily on public transport, however as a predominantly rural district, it is not considered feasible across West Lindsey and Lincolnshire.
- 4.3 Based on the current usage levels of the civic car, it would be feasible for required journeys to be facilitated by the use of a private hire vehicle (taxi). These can be pre-booked as functions and engagements are confirmed, and there are options for the taxi firm to invoice the council or for the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to pay, receive a receipt, and use the standard claim form to recoup expenses. There are limitations on this arrangement, in that there must be agreed 'pick-up' times with limited flexibility once details are confirmed, and there is no guarantee on availability or reliability. The cost of this arrangement is not possible to anticipate as it would depend entirely on the specifics of each taxi use.
- 4.4 Based on the arrangements for the Lincolnshire Show in June 2025, Officers have initiated enquiries as to whether it would be possible to have an annualised hours or mileage-based contract with a private hire vehicle company. The premise of this would be ensure consistency of availability, flexibility of arrangements, and ultimately value for money as a civic car alternative. Any contractual arrangement would be subject to procurement processes.
- 4.5 It is recognised that not all civic engagements will require the use of transportation, therefore alternative options would be enacted only on the request of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

5 Summary and Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee is presented with two main options:

- To sell the civic car and return the proceeds of the sale to an earmarked reserve.
- To retain the civic car and employ a chauffeur to continue a council-owned transport provision for use on civic occasions.

5.2 Having regard to the limited use of the vehicle, the operational requirements associated with employment of a chauffeur, and management and maintenance of the civic car, this report recommends option 1. That being:

5.2.1 That Members approve the civic car be sold and proceeds from the sale be held in an earmarked reserve, and Officers undertake to arrange civic transport for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council on an 'as required' basis. Use of the earmarked reserve to be reviewed in line with current Financial Procedure Rules.