

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2019

ANGUS COUNCIL “FOWLER” STEAM POWERED ROAD ROLLER

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

This report identifies options for the vintage “Fowler” steam powered road roller into the future and seeks the Committee’s decision in that regard.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the Council’s ownership of a “Fowler” steam powered road roller and current maintenance and garaging of the vehicle;
- (ii) notes the options for the future of the road roller as set out in this report; and
- (iii) determines the course of action for the road roller.

2 ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 The proposal contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy.

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The road roller was an early item of road construction plant (built in 1928) owned and operated by the former Angus County Council prior to such steam powered vehicles becoming obsolescent as an operational item of plant. A photographic image of the roller is shown in **Appendix 1**. The history of the road roller is detailed further in Report No. 864/10.

3.2 Recently, the roller has been exhibited by Mr Joss & Partners on behalf of the Council at the Angus Show, the Kirriemuir Show and the former Arbroath Seafront Spectacular (reference Report No. 683/11). The annual budget to cover minor repairs, expenses, coal and transport is £1,400. There is no income from the roller.

4 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Every ten years the roller requires a major inspection and boiler strip down and refit with repairs and refurbishment. Historically the costs for the inspection, repairs and refurbishment is in the £’000s. The Council has undoubtedly benefited from the low maintenance costs to date by keen enthusiasts with specialist parts being handmade in some cases.

4.2 Without an identified budget to undertake the boiler strip down and refit with repairs and refurbishment ahead of the 2019 round of shows in Angus, the roller cannot be shown as it needs to be operational to access the show grounds.

- 4.3 The value of such a rare and specialised vehicle is difficult to ascertain, but its current insured value is £80,000 based on a valuation report undertaken in June 2008. The market value is understood to be around £35,000. However, the value to the Council and wider public through caring for this vintage roller and exhibiting this twice yearly is even more difficult to ascertain.

5 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 As a result of budgetary pressures faced by the Council, it is proposed that the future of the roller is reconsidered. Three Options are presented below, to which the Committee is invited to determine the next course of action.

Option 1 - Retain ownership and current arrangements (Mr Joss & Partners)

The current ownership would be retained by the Council as would the arrangements whereby the roller is garaged and maintained on behalf of the Council by Mr Joss and exhibited at the two shows currently visited.

While it would be possible to add “outings” to this the financial costs to the Council would need to be considered along with the time costs to Mr Joss & Partners. Clearly such an arrangement can only endure for such time as Mr Joss & Partners are able. With this option, there is also the unknown cost of the boiler strip down which would result in an increased cost to be borne by the Council likely to be in the order of several £’000s, which would need to be taken from other Roads & Transportation budgets.

Option 2 – Lease the roller and transfer maintenance arrangements and costs

Expressions of interest from “Transport Museum” operators across the country including Dundee Museum of Transport would be sought for leasing the vehicle from the Council for the purposes of exhibiting it. Advice would also be sought from Angus Alive as operators of museums in Angus. Indeed Angus Alive may be interested in leasing the roller themselves.

In addition, applications will be invited from community groups. Whilst formal Community Asset Transfer (CAT) through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 applied to land and buildings, such applications would be assessed for deliverable community benefits using an abbreviated version of the assessment model for CAT approved in Report No. 105/18.

Agreements on the terms of the lease/transfer would need to be established, which might include a condition that the vehicle is returned to Angus in working condition on a prescribed number of occasions each year for display at Angus events. The Council would retain ownership but the costs for inspection and boiler strip down and refit with repairs and refurbishment would be the responsibility of the leaseholder.

Option 3 - Sell the vehicle

As per Financial Regulation 17.4, “Surplus Other Assets for which there is a reasonable expectation that there is a disposal value shall be disposed of competitively, by public auction or by public advertisement inviting sealed offers”.

The disposal of the roller would realise a capital receipt and avoid future liabilities for inspection and boiler strip down and refit with repairs and refurbishment. If this option was chosen then the disposal will be in line with the Scottish Public Finance manual.

As stated earlier the market value for such a rare vehicle is difficult to ascertain. Advice would be sought from an expert/auctioneer on the reserve value of the roller for which a professional fee would be anticipated.

Whilst provision may be desired to ensure that the vehicle is made available to a prescribed number of occasions each year for display at Angus events, this is not considered to be a reasonable condition of sale. The roller may therefore be lost to Angus with this option.

- 5.2 Based on the determination of the Committee, if either Option 2 or 3 is to be progressed then a report to a future meeting of the Committee on progress of the disposal would be provided.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The costs for the existing arrangements to continue, as per Option 1, are approximately £2,000 per annum, inclusive of annual insurance cost of currently circa £600 which is met from the corporate insurance budget. The additional cost of undertaking the major inspection and boiler strip down and refit, and allowance repairs and refurbishment is likely to be in the order of several £'000s. Once known, this cost would require to be contained within existing Roads & Transportation budgets for 2019/20, resulting in reduced budget provision available for other services. Provision in future years budgets would require to be considered as part of the appropriate budget setting processes.
- 6.2 Options 2 and 3 will lessen and reduce the future ownership costs and impact on the provision of Roads & Transportation services. Each option would require officer time and seeking professional legal and financial advice which could be offset by future savings or capital receipt if these Options were to be applied. A report would be submitted to the Committee on the financial and commercial terms of any proposed agreement were these Options to be considered further, and the use of the income from a sale were Option 3 to be applied.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Report No. 864/10 - Angus Council "Fowler" Steam Powered Road Roller, Infrastructure Services Committee of 23 November 2010

Report No. 683/11 - Angus Council "Fowler" Steam Powered Road Roller, Infrastructure Services Committee of 11 October 2011

Report No. 105/18 – Community Asset Transfer – Policy Development and Applications Update, Angus Council of 22 March 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: Walter Scott, Service Leader – Roads & Transportation

EMAIL DETAILS: Communities@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices: Appendix 1 – Photo of Roller

