

## 11.1 Notice of Motion - Purchase and Maintenance of Purpose Built and Equipped Emergency Response and Incident Management Vehicle - Cr Toni Burbidge

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<b>File Code</b>	PO.RBV
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<b>Disclosure of Any Interest</b>	Nil
<b>Attachments</b>	Nil

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### SUMMARY

Councillor Toni Burbidge has advised her intention to move the following notice of motion:

#### MOTION

“That Council authorises the purchase and maintenance of a purpose built and equipped emergency response and incident management vehicle (4WD utility) as soon as possible and preferably prior to the 2021/2022 Bushfire season for the use of Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officers during their on call duties.”

Cr Burbidge has provided the following preamble relating to her notice of motion:

#### PREAMBLE (reason for the motion)

*“I have been approached by a volunteer Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officer (DCBFCO) to consider a designated response vehicle that is purpose built in its fit out to respond to critical incidents in our community.*

- *As chair of the Shire’s Bushfire Advisory Committee I support this request;*
- *Given the Wooroloo Fire Incident in which ALL of our brigades attended and the requirements of Incident Control Management at that event by our DCBFCOs a purpose built and equipped vehicle is required;*
- *Using a Light Tanker for Incident Control is not conducive to critical incident management and the community expects that firefighting appliances will be deployed in actual firefighting roles, rather than held back at locations such as forward control points as part of incident management which includes, personnel management, communications, mapping, reporting, reviewing and monitoring incidents to other critical management personnel and often other organisations.*
- *Other Local governments have such a vehicle fitted out for incident control;*
- *A properly equipped incident management vehicle for the use by the DCBFCO is a demonstration of adoption of best practice in this field; and*
- *Even though the Shire may present this business case at a future Integrated Planning Reform Framework meeting and workshop, it should be noted a fire season occurs before these workshops would be undertaken.”*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Shire of Mundaring's Bush Fire Service engages five Deputy Chief Bushfire Control Officers (DCBFCOs) who undertake their roles as an important part of the combined capability of the Shire's nine Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (VBFBs). While two of the DBFCOs are employed by the Shire in bushfire related roles, all five DBFCOs undertake the DBFCO role as a part of their volunteer service. In that regard they are expected to turn out to forward control points without delay to undertake and establish incident control. This usually requires the DCBFCO to utilise a Light Tanker firefighting vehicle or, in some instances, their personal vehicle, which also must carry the resources required.

A Shire provided, fit for purpose vehicle would better facilitate the DBFCO role and provide for more effective and timely incident control, particularly at the very critical early stages of a bushfire, and will not require a DBFCO to use their personal vehicle. This would also enable greater safety for DBFCOs in that the vehicle could be equipped with basic bushfire crew protection and communication equipment.

Recognising that the requirement for a DBFCO vehicle is primarily during the bushfire season, such a vehicle could be utilised by Shire's Bushfire Safety and Bushfire Risk Management staff at other times in the year.

A preliminary business case was prepared in late 2020 however was not presented to Council during deliberations for the 2021/22 Corporate Business Plan as more information, including canvassing of alternative options, was required. It was also considered that the prevailing arrangements for DCBFCOs' vehicles would be acceptable for another season while the business case was being revised.

Shire staff are now developing a business case which will include all available options for the operation of a 4WD cab chassis utility vehicle, pod unit and communications equipment. This business case will be ready to present to Council in the 2022 Integrated Planning Framework (IPR) process.

## **STATUTORY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Section 6.8 (1) (c) of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires Council to approve in advance, by absolute majority, any expenditure for an additional purpose which has not been included in the annual budget.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

An estimate of the purchase cost of a suitable vehicle, associated equipment and operating costs is detailed as follows:

- 4WD cab (single cab) chassis vehicle = \$60,000
- Pod unit = \$25,000
- Fit out, communications equipment etc. = \$10,000

The annual running cost of such a vehicle is estimated to be \$8000.

Should Council resolve to adopt the motion as presented, the Shire's Plant Replacement Reserve could be utilised to fund the purchase of the vehicle. The purchase of such a vehicle has not been included in the 2021/22 budget and utilising the Plant Replacement

Reserve to fund the purchase will ensure there is no impact on forecast closing budget surplus. The increase in plant operating costs of \$8000 will reduce the closing budget surplus by \$8000.

Alternatively, Council can resolve to await the finalisation of the business case and its' consideration with all other requests for expenditure (as part of 22/23 IPR deliberations). If the business case is supported at that time, provision for the purchase and ongoing costs for the vehicle would be included in the relevant budget documents.

## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Mundaring Strategic Community Plan 2020 - 2030

Priority 1 - Community

Objective 1.1 – Healthy, safe, sustainable and resilient community

Strategy 1.1.8 – Ensure safety and amenity standards are upheld

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

## RISK IMPLICATIONS

<b>Risk:</b> Reputation: within the Shire Bush Fire Service and broader community the Shire could be viewed as failing to properly resource its VBFBs if the DCBFCO vehicle is not provided as soon as possible.		
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Possible	Minor	Moderate
<b>Action / Strategy</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support motion and authorise procurement of vehicle for the DCBFCO use; or alternatively</li> <li>2. Articulate reasons why a vehicle cannot be provided immediately, being due to requirement for consideration of a business case in 2022.</li> </ol>		

## EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

This matter has been the subject of discussion with the Shire/DFES Community Emergency Services Manager/Chief Bushfire Control Officer and with current DCBFCOs during regular liaison meetings between Shire Staff, the Community Emergency Services Manager and DCBFCOs.

In addition this matter has been the subject of discussion during meetings of BFAC, noting however it has not been the subject of a formal report to BFAC.

The provision of a dedicated vehicle for use by DBFCOs across a number of other local governments with similar bush fire risk profiles to the Shire is detailed in the following table:

Local Government	No. of Brigades/members	No. of DCBFCOs	DCBFCO vehicle

Shire of Kalamunda	1/90	1	1
City of Swan	6/270	4	1
Shire of Northam	9/400	2	1
City of Wanneroo	4/165	2	1
City of Armadale	2/160	1	0
Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale	7/300	3	0

In relation to the above table Shire staff have also been advised by staff within the local governments that currently do not provide a DCBFCO vehicle (City of Armadale and Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale) that they are pursuing purchase/provision of such a vehicle.

In recent years the early prevention of spread and overall suppression of bushfires has proven to be enhanced by the very prompt application of numerous resources (appliances, firefighters etc.) and the effective management of those resources (incident management). The DCBFCOs and their high level incident management capability are crucial to such prompt and efficient deployment of resources. The role and effectiveness of the DCBFCOs is also a key component in providing for the effective and efficient escalation of the incident management structure should the bushfire behaviour necessitate that.

The ability of a DCBFCO to conduct their role is somewhat hampered by having to operate from an unsuitable vehicle, be it their private vehicle or a dedicated firefighting vehicle such as a light tanker. The DCBFCO must have at their disposal a range of specialised communications and mapping equipment that is instantly accessible and able to be activated.

The Shire's four fire officers all have access to various vehicles including two light tankers and two dual cab tray backs to undertake their tasks. A review of the use of these vehicles may identify the ability for one of these to be upgraded and to be available to meet the intent of having use of such a vehicle when required.

As such the provision of a fit for purpose vehicle is supported in principle. However, it is open to Council to form the view as to whether to authorise the purchase of a suitable vehicle in 2021/22 (which may or may not arrive in time for the upcoming bushfire season due to supply constraints) or to consider a business case which could provide options to a new additional vehicle such as an upgrade to an existing vehicle and the implications of such as part of Council's deliberations during a review of the next Corporate Business Plan and budget, which is the usual process when determining new expenditure as it allows Council to consider all proposed new expenditure, and the ongoing implications of such expenditure, at the same time.

If Council forms the view to support the motion as presented, it is recommended that the following additional point be included:

"That Council, by absolute majority, amends the 2021/22 budget and allocates

1. \$95,000 for the purchase of the vehicle, which will be fully funded via transfer from the Plant Replacement Reserve.
2. An additional allowance of \$8,000 for plant operating costs"

## **VOTING REQUIREMENT**

Absolute Majority – *Local Government Act 1995* section 6.8

<b>MOTION</b>
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