

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL

OFFICER'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICE & ASSETS

Meeting Date: 17 June 2025

Subject: Mercedes Sprinter Minibuses – Asset Register and Disposal Arrangements

1. Purpose of Report

To recommend removing the stolen Mercedes Sprinter minibus from the Council's asset register and to seek approval for officers to negotiate disposal terms for the second vehicle. Final removal of the second bus would depend on sale terms and approval at the next Full Council meeting.

2. Background

In 2018, Chigwell Parish Council used Section 106 funds to buy two Mercedes Sprinter minibuses for a local transport service. While £850K was allocated, only £150,000 was received. From Sept 2018 to March 2020, the Parish funded the service at around £5,500 per month, totalling over £100,000 in unrecovered costs.

Since 2020, both vehicles have been used by Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT) with no agreement or payments. One bus was recently stolen while under EFCT's control. The Council had already decided to remove both vehicles from the asset register but this wasn't done before the theft. As a result, both are still listed.

EFCT appears to be hiring out the remaining bus to a local group, generating income without any benefit to the Parish. There's no formal agreement in place. Essex County Council (ECC) has informally shown interest in buying the remaining bus, depending on funding. Officers advise against leasing due to VAT issues.

3. Proposal

- Remove the stolen bus from the asset register now
- Allow officers to negotiate terms with ECC or other buyers for the remaining bus
- Recommend final removal of the second bus from the register once a deal is confirmed and approved by Full Council

4. Supporting Documents

- Current asset register

5. Council Responsibilities and Considerations

a. Finance and Value for Money

Disposing of both vehicles avoids future costs. Insurance on the stolen bus helps reduce losses. Timely disposal prevents unused assets from sitting on the books.

b. Governance

Confirms actions already agreed by Full Council. Closes a long-standing gap in asset records. Ensures future disposal is transparent and properly approved.

c. Community Engagement

The transport service ended in 2020. Current informal use doesn't reflect current Parish needs or community feedback.

d. Equal Opportunities

No group will be disadvantaged. Any future service will be managed by ECC or a new provider.

e. Crime and Disorder

Removing the stolen bus lowers audit and liability risks. Stopping informal use prevents future losses.

f. Human Rights

The plan is fair and protects public assets. Disposal will follow proper procedures.

g. Health and Safety

Passing the bus to a new owner shifts safety responsibilities away from the Council.

h. Biodiversity

No direct impact. Disposal will follow environmental standards where relevant

6. Recommendation

That CASC recommends Chigwell Parish Council:

- Approves immediate removal of the stolen Mercedes Sprinter from the asset register
- Authorises officers to negotiate disposal terms for the second bus with ECC or other buyers
- Recommends removing the second bus from the register once a deal is agreed and brought to Full Council for final approval