



2021 Fleet Strategy Plan Refresh October 2021

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1. Executive Summary

The ambulance fleet is critical to the delivery of our services. The importance of the provision of a modern, efficient, and fit for purpose fleet of vehicles in an Ambulance Trust cannot be underestimated. The vehicles are where staff work and contain sophisticated medical equipment so that we can provide the best care to our patients.

This Strategy builds on the 2018 review and will provide a framework for the procurement and management of vehicles required by the Trust to deliver the best patient care 24 hours a day. The vehicle fleet is critical to the delivery of the front-line services of the Trust. To operate the fleet efficiently and effectively: legal compliance, quality, environmental impact and whole life costs all have to be considered.

The Trust has always been committed to reducing carbon emissions from its fleet and in light of the increasing emphasis on climate change and the further reduction in carbon emission and associated environmental impact, these considerations will be an important factor in future procurement choices.

This strategy sets out 8 priorities designed to deliver a more efficient and effective fleet operation for the Trust which can be summarised as follows:

- Reviewing the target operating model and integrate PTS fleet
- Improving managerial systems, IT and KPIs
- Designing more flexible ways of working to improve service levels
- Optimising our assets so that we can cost effectively provide our services, engaging with staff to improve vehicle designs and specifications
- Improving control over costs
- Making sure we attract and retain the best people in our fleet operation
- Identify commercial opportunities for the development of SCFS
- Reduce the impact on the environment of our fleet and delivering a reduction in CO2 emissions by 50% by 2030

2. Introduction

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) provides urgent care and emergency response services across the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire, an area of some 3,500 square miles with a resident population of circa 4 million. The Trust also provides non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) in this area, and additionally throughout East Sussex, Surrey and West Sussex, and a healthcare logistics service to NHS customers in Oxfordshire.

SCAS operates a mixed fleet numbering more than 900 vehicles. This includes emergency ambulances, rapid response vehicles, patient transport ambulances and cars, specialist incident response vehicles, pool cars, logistics vans, and others.

Effective management of the fleet is key to the delivery of patient care services, the achievement of commercial objectives and the management of costs, risks, and resilience.

Fleet services for SCAS are provided by several entities. The primary provider is South Central Fleet Services Ltd (SCFS) which was formed in 2015 to provide a dedicated fleet management and vehicle maintenance solution to the Trust, but there are other important facets to our fleet services which will be covered in this plan.

Building on our 2018 Strategy Plan, this document sets out an overview of the current status and the Trust's future approach to fleet management, vehicle specification, procurement and maintenance, the associated facilities and services, and the interface between its people, its customers, and its vehicles with the objective of ensuring that we continue to achieve the highest possible levels of patient care for the people of our region.

3. Fleet Services

The primary provider of fleet services is SCFS which operates through two workshops; Didcot, Oxfordshire provides fleet services to the northern section of our region (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire) and a site in Nursling, Southampton serves the southern section (Hampshire). SCAS also has 29 resource centres from which ambulances operate to provide coverage across the region and a further 23 stations utilised by NEPTS vehicles

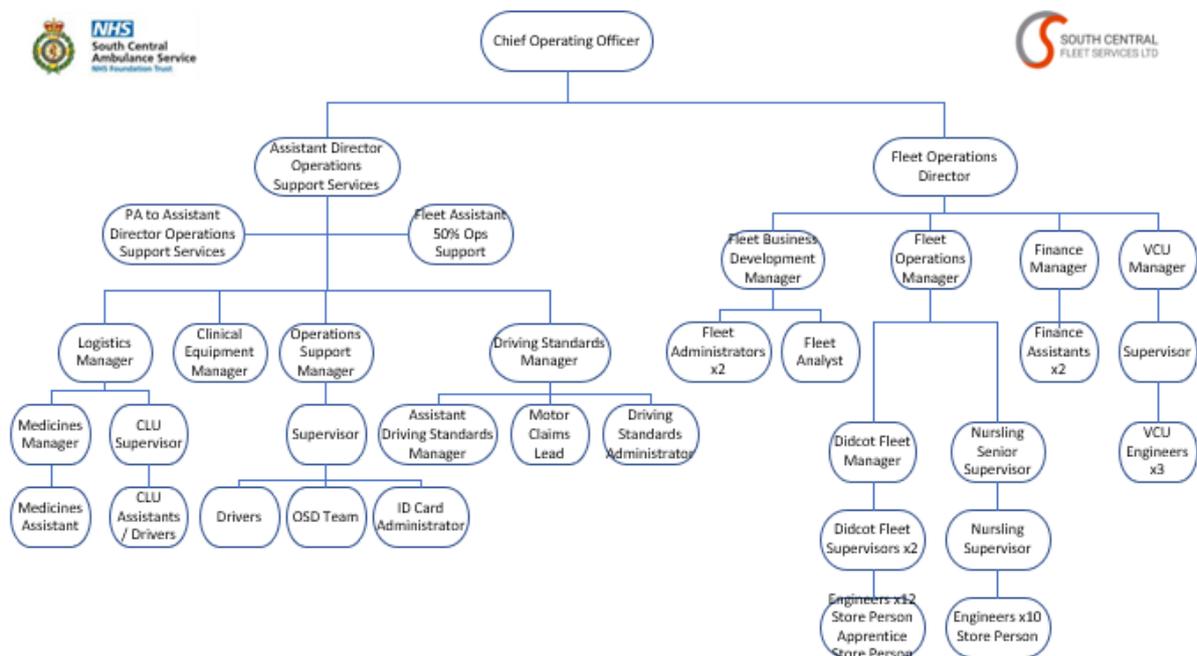
The primary services provided by SCFS are the purchasing of ambulances on behalf of the Trust; leasing ambulances to SCAS with a contract to provide servicing and preventive maintenance, performing MOTs, and mechanical repair work; the management of certain hire and lease vehicle contracts; assisting with new vehicle specification; commissioning, and decommissioning emergency vehicles; operating the fleet management system (Key 2) and providing data and reporting services to SCAS to allow it to better understand and manage its fleet.

Separately, maintenance for the NEPTS & Logistics vehicles is currently provided by the vehicle lessor under contract. The vehicles required for this service are procured and administered through SCAS Commercial Services.

Additional fleet related services are provided from within SCAS via Operational Support Services (OSS) and these include the provision of a support desk for emergency crews; the arrangement of vehicle movements to optimise availability where needed; the management of the make-ready contract (an ambulance cleaning and preparation service); the scheduling of vehicles to be taken off road for repair and/or servicing (VOR); the management of the clinical equipment in vehicles; the maintenance of driving standards; accident investigations; and vehicle design and specification in line with the relevant national guidance. Operational Support Services are currently not utilised by NEPTS & Logistics, with all functions managed from within the Commercial team.

The primary aim of these various providers is to facilitate and support SCAS in maximising the availability of emergency and non-emergency vehicles in the safest and most cost-effective way. The current structure for fleet has resulted in some ambiguity in lines of accountability and relies on high levels of co-operation and collaboration between various departments. It is difficult to identify who holds the responsibility for the safe,

efficient, and effective operation of fleet; some key performance metrics are co-owned by various teams and can result in unnecessary effort identifying the route causes of under-performance within the fleet operation. The current structure for the management of the Trust's main fleet operation is detailed below (PTS fleet is currently managed within the PTS management structure).



Fleet services summary by provider

SCFS

- Fleet workshops
- Ambulance procurement and lease back
- Vehicle maintenance
- Fleet engineers / technicians
- Fleet administration
- Fleet insurance

OSS

- Support Desk
- VOR reporting / vehicle movements
- Make ready delivery
- Medical equipment and maintenance
- Vehicle accident investigations
- Vehicle design / specifications

Commercial

All elements provided by SCFS and OS|S are internally delivered or the service outsourced and managed by the SCAS Commercial team

Limited overlap in place.

4. Nature of our fleet

The size and precise mix of vehicles within our fleet changes over time as we respond to need and refresh the fleet with the provision of new vehicles while decommissioning older vehicles.

4.1 Current vehicle profile

Our fleet is summarised below by vehicle type.

Vehicle Type	Number
Frontline double-crewed ambulances (FLAs)	264
Solo response vehicles (rapid response vehicles; specialist paramedics; team leader) (4x4)	94
HART vehicles	29
Staff and fire responder cars	57
Non-emergency patient transport vehicles (Ambulances, Wheelchair, minibuses, cars)	337
Healthcare logistics vehicles	20
Operational support vehicles – trainers, workshop support, cars, etc.	25
Driver training and Education	23
Leased cars	86
Total	935

To augment these numbers, we have recently agreed to invest a further £6.5m to procure an additional 53 front line ambulances (FLA) to ensure that our fleet remains at the forefront of ambulance Trusts in providing a modern, cost effective and reliable service. These vehicles are dual crew van conversions as recommended by the Carter Report and will build on the 114 such new vehicles bought since 2019.

This investment in frontline ambulances will also be in line with the NHS Ambulance Response Programme delivery model which specifies a ratio of 85% ambulances and 15% solo response vehicles, an increase from the previous model of 70%. Details are explained below.

4.2 Vehicle investment

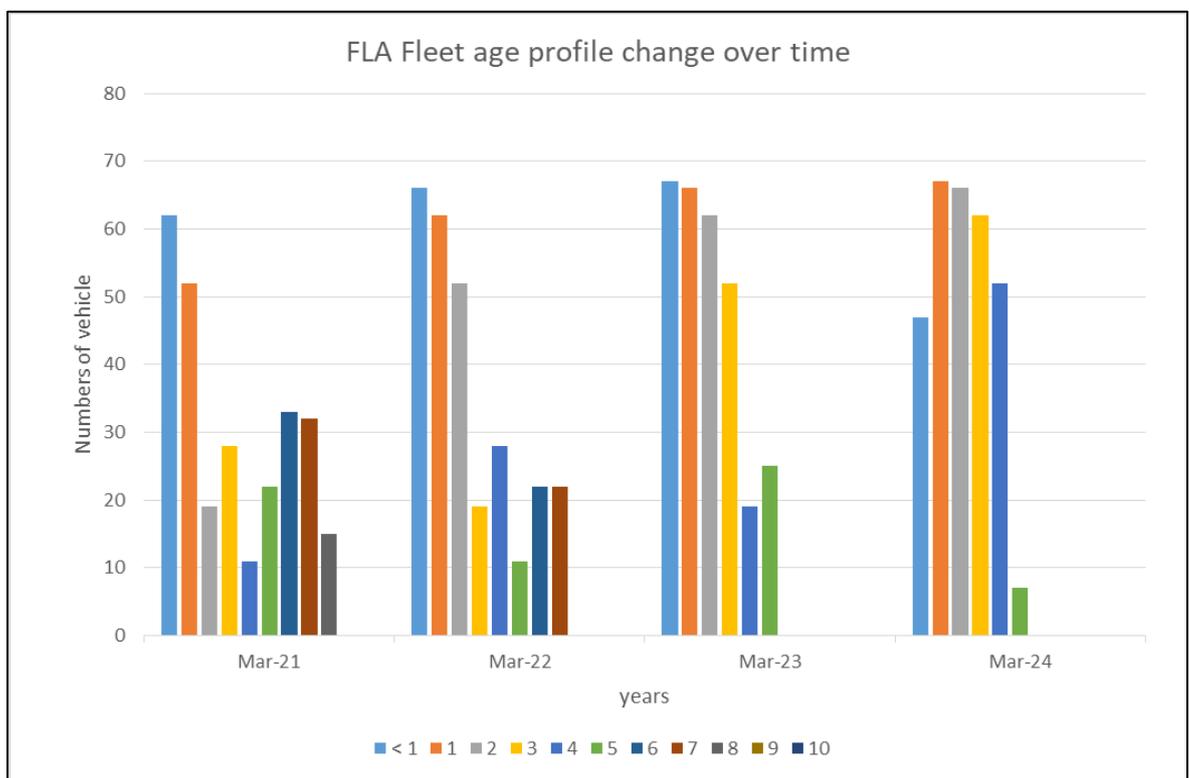
This investment was agreed following a detailed review of the FLA fleet to establish its required size, nature and its ability to meet the projected demands of 999 operational services on a 24/7 basis. This review considered the existing baseline FLA replacement plan and concluded that, at certain peak times, there would be a need to increase the number of available vehicles if SCAS were to retain its excellent service levels as demand in the region grows.

We have therefore developed a new investment plan which will provide the right number of modern vehicles to meet emerging demand levels and new rosters, speed up fleet renewal, and reduce the maximum age of vehicles from a current target of seven years to five years, over a three-year period. This is shown in the chart that follows “FLA Fleet age profile change over time”.

The migration from modular FLAs to less costly van conversions, in accordance with national policy, will allow for funds to be used to speed-up the investment programme and refresh the fleet earlier. One of the major benefits of a younger fleet will be the reduction in time spent off the road by frontline vehicles, which will allow us to cost effectively continue to provide the required response times for patients, reduce maintenance costs, and improve reliability (with lower age and mileage vehicles).

Our FLA investment programme will increase our baseline numbers of frontline ambulances in 2021 to 283 and the replacement plan will see this increase to 318 in 2026. This will allow us to provide an excellent level of cover and service to our region as its demographics change over that period. These numbers will of course be reviewed yearly by the Trust, which will consider the forecasted annual growth in service demand, accident replacements and improved workshop productivity across the Trust to ensure the size of the fleet is correct.

NEPTS has also agreed a fleet replacement programme, within an initial tranche of 226 vehicles, representing 60% of the overall Vehicles currently leased. As per the exercise conducted for Frontline a review of likely demand profiles and the move to increased patient acuity has influenced the mix of vehicles between Bariatric, Stretcher, Wheelchair, Seated and Car.



4.3 Vehicle specification

In addition to increasing the number of FLAs within our fleet we are also working to ensure that the specification of individual classes of vehicle is updated to ensure that we provide an optimised clinical working environment that facilitates patient and staff welfare. This means designing the fleet around the transport and clinical requirements of our patients. This will take into consideration vehicles and how they are used across all Services.

Common standards will always be applied as far as possible to manage costs, and to simplify maintenance and preparation and improve operational familiarity for staff to enable greater sharing of resources., We will also employ a wider range of vehicle types where this is needed. We are currently trialling new technologies and designs to establish the degree to which they might improve patient and staff comfort and safety. We will engage and consult with staff about changes to vehicle specifications, making sure that we adopt vehicle designs and specifications where ever possible to address the concerns of staff.

Wherever possible and appropriate, we will base our vehicle designs and specifications on the recommendations of the National Ambulance Fleet Strategic Group and NHS Improvement. In doing so, our core focus will be on innovations, including:

- reductions in gross vehicle weight
- reduced emissions and the use of alternative fuels
- improved ergonomics and usability of designs
- a review of equipment carried
- increased digital capability.

In the context of the diverse fleet operated by the Trust, these issues will be considered in relation to all vehicle types.

4.4 Vehicle sourcing and financing

We acquire our vehicles in accordance with public sector procurement policies and procedures, and we take advantage of NHS purchasing agreements where applicable and appropriate.

Our general strategy for future fleet procurement is as follows:

- FLAs will be purchased outright by SCFS and leased to SCAS. This will be kept under review in the light of any changes to the prevailing financial regulations and circumstances and will be subject to case-by-case evaluation.
- NEPTS and healthcare logistics vehicles will be leased. Historically vehicles have been, leased over the same time frame as the associated commercial contract. Leased vehicles have then been tightly managed, with mileages set realistically, vehicle condition kept under control, and lease termination dates complied with, to avoid costly extensions and penalties. With the pandemic and freezing of contracts, leases have had to be extended at cost, negatively impacting on maintenance contracts and reliability. For future procurement there will be a move to rolling replacements not linked to contract and a review of leasing terms to ensure best practice is adhered to.
- Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) vehicles will be secured through the processes determined by national procurement and financing arrangements for this category of vehicle.
- Other vehicles, including solo response vehicles and miscellaneous vans and cars, will be leased and subject to the same level of control set out above.

5. Key challenges

Building from this strong base of investment and fleet renewal we have undertaken a detailed and externally supported review of fleet to ensure that our strategy for the next period remains correctly focussed.

We have concluded that the most relevant challenges to our fleet operations are:

- Dealing with annual increases in demand for services due to demographic changes.
- which (in addition to our fleet renewal plans) means continuing to reduce VOR time and ensuring optimum fleet availability.
- remaining cost effective whilst doing so.
- Ensuring we continue to adapt our own structures, accountabilities, responsibilities, and skill sets to match the demands of our patients and staff.
- To make better use of data and systems to manage people, costs, performance, and assets as effectively as possible.
- Taking advantage of collaborations with similar public sector bodies to improve our ability to meet our objectives and manage costs.
- Optimising the balance between in-house and outsourced fleet activity. This includes the operating model for NEPTS contracts where provision in some contracts is private provider led.
- Pro-actively seeking and adapting to innovation and amendments to vehicle design and procurement processes following the Carter report and other guidance, including but not limited to electric vehicles and hybrids.
- To meet our obligations on the environment and carbon usage.

The purpose of this strategy plan is to set out how SCAS will meet these challenges.

6. Priorities

In light of these challenges, we have identified eight primary areas of focus for the next three years.

Priorities for fleet

Structures (TOM)

Managerial Systems

Quality and Service

Assets

Costs

People and Skills

Commercial

Environment

The following section describes the various challenges and opportunities we have identified under each category and the action we have committed to take as a result.

As noted below the majority of the comments included within this section are based on the outcomes of the Operations Directorate strategy work. There is a large overlap with the work that has recently been completed by Commercial in support of their fleet renewal business case and as an output of the Internal BDO Audit Report published in July 21.

6.1 Structures and target operating model

The current fleet structure was established following the review of the operations directorate management structure in 2015 which created South Central Fleet Services Ltd. The aim was to improve value for money and increase transparency over fleet costs and performance.

Under the current model, the responsibilities for managing the broad range of fleet services are shared across several entities, some within SCFS and some within SCAS as described earlier, and this creates the potential for a lack of clarity over certain accountabilities and decision-making.

As effective fleet management is key to the delivery of patient care we will therefore review the target operating model used to run our fleet services to make sure it is still fit for purpose.

This means ensuring that the key components of fleet operations, namely its

- people/skills
- processes
- organisational structure
- roles and responsibilities and
- key performance indicators (KPIs)

are all aligned with achieving the strategy and are supported by the appropriate equipment, real estate, and technology.

This work will draw on several of the other work streams covered in this strategy plan such as the action to review the estate and the services that we offer commercially.

Following on from the review in frontline and as part of the implementation the Trust would look to migrate towards best practice, where appropriate share resources and identify synergies to facilitate the fleet management of both frontline and NEPTS

vehicles. Dependant on the outcome of the review and the success of early implementation this could lead to a full or partial merger of activities.

This review will be carried out and completed in the first quarter of 2022 and any necessary changes to the model will be implemented during 2022.

6.2 Managerial systems

Ensuring that the data we use and analyse remains relevant, accurate and focussed on the correct KPIs is a priority. Our systems must be designed to allow us to make the right decisions at the right time to optimise safety, vehicle availability, the performance of maintenance and other fleet activity, and to provide patients with the level of service needed.

This area will be reviewed under four workstreams:

- **KPIs - Frontline:** A recent review of the reporting and KPIs used by our workshops has identified some areas we would like to upgrade to provide increased transparency over performance, and especially productivity, and our effectiveness. We will therefore increase the utilisation of our state-of-the-art fleet management system (Key 2) to facilitate this objective. The purpose of this will be to provide management with a better understanding of how they can continue to drive improvements in how the workshops operate.
- **KPIs – NEPTS:** The recently published draft audit from BDO has identified that NEPTS do not currently have in place the appropriate arrangements to ensure that they have the correct number of vehicles to meet demand. NEPTS will explore synergies with SCFS and OSS in terms of fleet management data and systems and develop an appropriate suite of KPI's based on best practice.
- **Internal analytics:** The upgraded reporting will allow us to improve our root cause analysis of the reasons why a vehicle may be unavailable, known as vehicle off road (VOR), with a view to helping us continue in our efforts to drive these VOR days down, to the benefit of the Trust and our patients.
- **Telematics:** We will develop our use of telematics which will have multiple benefits.
 - Firstly, it will assist in our constant efforts to reduce accidents by monitoring driver behaviour and skills.
 - Secondly, the data provided and its careful feedback to our crews, will provide us with tools to adjust driver behaviour and reduce the wear and tear on our fleet resulting in lower maintenance and parts costs
 - Finally, as driving standards are improved, we should see greater fuel economy as well as a reduction in our emissions per mile and our carbon footprint
 - Specific data that we will gather will include:
 - speed reports, specifically when a vehicle is not attending an emergency

- excessive braking and acceleration forces above a set criteria
 - sudden and sharp braking which may indicate the driver not recognising a potential hazard quickly enough
 - inappropriate use of emergency warning devices (blue lights activated)
 - time vehicle is stationery
- Communications: Building on the better availability of data and system information we will also ensure that we have the right review mechanisms, meetings and day to day contact taking place at the right level and frequency across our organisation to provide the correct governance and allow us to make the best use of information to drive our activity and performance. This drumbeat of communication must mesh with our new target operating model and support the accountabilities which that will create.
- A new weekly scorecard will be developed to provide a focal point for a formal weekly review meeting between SCFS and SCAS with key metrics such as:
 - Vehicles available for North & South and by node
 - VOR % against agreed targets
 - VOR data for each node with top 5 causes for being off road
 - Hours lost for vehicles VOR during shift
 - Lost Unit Hours (LUH) due to crews having no vehicle for North and South and node
- A similar exercise will need to be undertaken for NEPTS

6.3 Quality and service levels

We aim to be a quality-focussed organisation and we will continue to build on this in five ways:

- Quality control: We recognise that the quality of our vehicle maintenance work is paramount to vehicle, patient, and staff safety and this is an aspect of fleet operations about which we can never be complacent. We will therefore commit to critically evaluate, and if necessary, redesign our internal quality control methods to ensure that we retain and re-emphasise our quality focussed culture at all levels.
- Flexible provision of service:
 - We have already launched a mobile repair service and analysis has shown that this can help reduce the amount of VOR and unnecessary mileage or transport costs by repairing minor faults on site rather than in our main workshops. We will re-assess this service and determine if we should increase or adjust how it is provided.

- The provision of remote advice and triage telephone service to on-duty mechanics already takes place. This service will also be assessed to determine if it can be made more effective.
- We will provide on-going training to operational staff to help them with basic problem resolution and to determine if faults should be directed to the mobile service or the triage service rather than simply to VOR.
- We use third parties to deliver simple repairs closer to the centre of ambulance operation than the SCFS workshops and we will continue to do this where it can be shown to be cost effective. This will allow us to affect repairs more quickly, reduce the time and cost of transporting vehicles and therefore the VOR time.
- Explore the use of SCFS as part of the maintenance solution for NEPTS and resource the former to support this in terms of additional garage and mechanic capacity. In addition, promote best practice across all elements of service.
- Timing and planning of service:
 - This flexibility in service will also be reflected in our ongoing efforts to provide services at times which best suit the requirements of the Trust and its patients. This may mean carrying out more of our planned vehicle work (MOTs and services) at times when the patient demand for vehicles is at its lowest (during the early morning and at night and releasing the vehicle quickly back into service for peak demand). We have already increased the shift coverage of our workshops into the late evenings and it may be possible to extend this further to allow more of this work to be carried out during periods of low demand, thereby improving the fleet vehicle availability and utilisation.
 - Make readies. We will review the arrangements to ensure that both routine make readies and deep-cleaning takes place at a time that is least disruptive to the service (outside of peak hours) and deep cleans where possible, should coincide with the completion of a scheduled VOR such as a routine service, to reduce the VOR time.
- Challenging targets:
 - A key factor in how we measure the service levels fleet operations are providing to the Trust and the public, is the number of VOR days incurred by the fleet. We have been successful over the last 12 months, within frontline, at reducing these days but we are ambitious to do more. Considering our efforts to better understand the root causes of VOR, as well as the investment in new vehicles, we will expect to see this metric improve further.
 - We will therefore initially reduce the number of mechanical VOR days in our targets from 20% to 18% (14% unplanned mechanical and 4% planned mechanical maintenance), so that we continue to make this the focus of our efforts. There is an additional target of not exceeding 5% VOR for any other reason including accidents, deep cleans and equipment issues. We will

review these figures annually to ensure they remain challenging and reflect the level of our investment.

VOR - Unplanned Maintenance	14%
VOR - Planned Maintenance	4%
VOR – Other	5%
VOR – Total	23%

- Within NEPTS the need to extend lease arrangements as commissioners have extended contracts will considerably increase the age of the fleet which has already increased the level of VOR to circa 18 – 20%. This average hides large differentials between the contract areas with some as high as 25 – 30% on some days. As part of the analytical work, benchmarking and move to new updated fleet, lower targets will be identified, and improvements achieved, mitigating risk to service performance.
- SLA:
 - In light of the huge investment in new fleet and the various expected improvements discussed in this document, it will be appropriate to carry out another review of the service level agreement (SLA) that we use to set expectations and regulate the relationship between the Trust and SCFS. We must ensure it remains fit for purpose, reflective of the new operating reality and the expectations of the Trust. This may mean adding new metrics or adjusting the existing targets to help clarity and accountability on both sides.

6.4 Assets

Our physical assets include our vehicles, premises, the clinical equipment we carry and the tools we need to maintain our fleet. Optimising our assets so that we can cost effectively provide our services will remain a top priority.

Each of these asset types need to be kept under constant review to ensure we have:

- the right number of vehicles of the right type
- to meet patient demand at the required time
- operating from sites which are safe and efficient and have the necessary space and charging capacity to meet the needs of an increasingly ultra-low / zero emissions Fleet
- with the most up to date and relevant clinical equipment on board
- and the tooling our technical staff need to maintain those vehicles to the highest standards.

Vehicles

- Benefits tracking: With the funding now in place for the purchase of new vehicles, and our plan to reduce the average age of our frontline and NEPTS ambulances from seven years to five and four years respectively, we must be vigilant in ensuring that the Trust obtains full value for money from this significant investment. This means putting in place rigorous measures to demonstrate the tangible benefits being achieved by the investment such as:
 - Reduced maintenance costs per vehicle
 - Reduced VOR days
 - Reduced emissions
 - Better fuel efficiency
- Fleet rationalisation - Frontline: A review of the solo response vehicles (SRV) and rapid response vehicles (RRV) has identified that we can rationalise this fleet by circa 20 vehicles from a fleet of 80. Exiting these leases will yield savings of circa £100k per annum. We will continue to review these figures considering the ever-changing requirements.
- Fleet standardisation – NEPTS: As part of the recent fleet renewal business case, vehicles capable of moving higher acuity patients are expected to become more common. Where appropriate, specifying vehicles that can be used for multiple mobility types will be commissioned – for example equipping all stretcher vehicles to be bariatric - will result in improved operational utilisation and flexibility.
- Shift patterns: A review of shift over-runs (late finishes by ambulance crews) has shown that about a third of shifts will over-run by a margin greater than 30 minutes, which not only adds cost in overtime payments but also leads to staff fatigue and the under-utilisation of the oncoming crew as they wait for the vehicle to return to base. This is clearly sub optimal. Analysis has shown that strategically placed additional vehicles across our network can reduce over-runs from circa 30% to circa 20%. We will also review the shift patterns of crews to ensure that our peak periods (late afternoon and early evening) are comfortably within the shift-window of the majority of our crews, which will provide a better fit of resources to demand and reduce the likelihood of late finishes being necessary.
- Electric and hybrid vehicles: As part of the Electric Vehicle (ambulance) National Project Group we are committed to reducing our emissions and changing our fleet where it is possible and practical, to electric power. The technology and required infrastructure to allow ambulances to convert to electric power is being discussed and decided at a national level and there are some practical impediments to be overcome. However, our strategy will enable us to move both SRV, RRV and PTS vehicles to electric before then. We are also encouraging staff who are entitled to a standard car (grey fleet) to seriously look at the benefits of electric or hybrid models and have adjusted the allowances and CO2 emissions to support this.
 - Frontline operations are already trialling and operationally utilising 3 full electric RRV's, whilst NEPTS will have 6 electric wheelchair/seated vehicles

operational across multiple contractual areas by QTR 3 2021/22. The latter is estimated to give a reduction in CO2 emissions of 204 tonnes over a 4-year period

- NEPTS will additionally have 45 full hybrid wheelchair vehicles operational by QTR 4 2021/22. This is estimated to give a reduction in CO2 emissions of 376 tonnes over a 4-year period
- Trials for fully electric NEPTS Ambulances are progressing and if successful would enable up to 50% (~ 200 vehicles) of the entire fleet to be replaced with zero emission vehicles from QTR 3 2022/23, with no further purchase of fossil fuel vehicles after this point. This aligns closely to the SCAS Sustainable Development Management Plan – 2020 – 2025 (SDMP), which has as a target that 50% of NEPTS be electric by 2023/4, contributing 17 out of 50% of the overall SCAS reduction target. By 2027 all diesel and petrol vehicles will be replaced with electric vehicles.

Design and innovation

- Innovation: We will evaluate the benefits of eco-driving aids and as a key player on the National Ambulance Strategic Fleet Group we will continue to give feedback and generate ideas on new vehicle specifications for consideration. The Trust is actively involved in numerous project groups to improve the design and specification of ambulances and we are committed to bringing prototype vehicles into the Trust for evaluation.
- Maintenance tooling and equipment: Up to date tooling, properly maintained, stored and easily accessible for our technicians is an important part of supporting our aim to improve productivity, as discussed in 5.5. Following the work we have recently carried out in the Didcot workshop we will review the number and types of tooling and equipment available at both sites and how they are stored. We will introduce shadow boards to improve the safe storage and access of tooling.

Sites

- Nursling: As part of our ongoing commitment to review our estate and ensure that we identify the investment needed to maintain and develop our physical assets, we will review the Nursling workshop. The site may no longer be optimal for fleet operations given its size and layout and a business case will be provided to allow us to assess the options for a larger site. A detailed business case will be written for three options:
 - A replacement site for the Nursling workshop to better accommodate the medium-term projections for workload in our Southern region including adequate parking.
 - Secondly, we will take the opportunity to explore whether a new Nursling site could also be used to accommodate our vehicle commissioning unit (VCU). This is a specialist service which we believe can grow and provide additional revenue for the Trust, as discussed under 5.7, however their existing site is too small to consider this.

- Thirdly, in line with other discussion points in 5.7 a new Nursling site also has the potential to become the hub for other areas of growth which the existing estate footprint makes difficult, such as bringing in maintenance work that is currently carried out by commercial third parties, namely maintenance of the passenger transport service (NEPTS) vehicles.
- We will also review whether the current model of having two workshops, Didcot and Nursling are optimal, or if a different approach such as an additional workshop in the NE or NN node may be more efficient.
- Movement to electric vehicles, with a potential NEPTS fleet of circa 400 by 2027, will have a significant impact on our infrastructure and will require consideration within the broader estates strategy. This relates to both the ability to charge vehicles but also the space required to house these vehicles in an environment that supports their use.
 - As part of the move to electric, alternative options to facilitate the safe delivery of service will be pursued. These include exploring partnerships with acute hospital trusts, local Councils, alternative emergency and public sector providers as well as working collaboratively within the various NHSE Green workstreams
- A full review of the NEPTS/Logistics estate is soon to be undertaken. This will include sites outside of the frontline footprint, within Surrey and Sussex.
- The above actions will require close liaison with Estates and we will make sure that these are incorporated within our Estates strategy.

6.5 Costs

Improved control over costs will remain one of our core targets. We will focus on the following six areas

- Fuel: This is one of our biggest costs representing circa 25% of the overall fleet spend. We will continue to identify and target ways of reducing this through both reducing unnecessary mileage and optimising the unit costs of purchased fuel:
 - Bunkered fuel approach: Bunkers are installed at 11 of our operational sites which offer a reduction in unit cost as well as a convenience factor if crews fill up before a shift and our make ready teams fill up at the end of a shift. Analysis has shown that there is a saving of up to £250k per annum available if all our retail purchased fuel were substituted with bunkered fuel. Our strategy is to increase the percentage of fuel sourced through bunkering by changing crew behaviours and ensuring that the physical assets are available and usable. To support this, we will carry out a review of all of our bunkers to ensure that they are correctly maintained, equipped with adequate fuel monitoring systems and provide a business case for any capital expenditure needed to make these facilities accessible. We will also liaise with the Crown Commercial Services to examine the possibility of establishing 'virtual' bunkering contracts which allow fuel to be drawn from specified retailers as if it were being drawn from our own on-site bunkers.

- Fuel cards: If bunkered fuel cannot be used by a crew, then non-premium fuel from supermarket garages is the cheapest commercial option and we must continue to ensure that crews are aware of this and comply with this guidance when vehicles are refuelled off site. To increase compliance and reduce costs we will introduce new reporting on fuel usage by crew, fuel type and retailer.
- Staff behaviour and incentives: To incentivise the correct behaviours on fuel usage we will develop and implement a scorecard for each ambulance centre, based on fuel costs per mile travelled and set a target reduction in those costs from the current baseline. If centres beat that target, then we will share some of the additional savings with the ambulance centre to be spent on staff welfare.
- Mileage control: The reduction of 'empty' miles when vehicles are travelling but not attending a call will also drive down fuel costs. This links to our previous points regarding mobile technicians and the provision of locally based mechanical services. For NEPTS in particular, lack of access to approved repair workshops can result in staff driving significant distances. Opportunities to reduce this will provide benefits in terms of fuel and emissions savings as well as improving operational availability and reduce cost associated with the need to provide additional external resourcing.
- Finally, as discussed elsewhere, we will develop our use of telematics and other approved systems to increase our drivers' awareness of their driving style, to help reduce unnecessary fuel consumption.
- Accident management/reduction: Although serious accidents are fortunately rare, bumps, dents and grazes to fleet vehicles are more common than we would like. Analysis shows there is approximately £550k worth of damage to our frontline fleet each year which is our fault and is therefore not recoverable from the insurer. Besides the financial implications there is also the Lost Unit Hours (LUH) incurred while the vehicle is being repaired, which has a direct impact on fleet availability. We currently use a points system to help manage accident rates with additional staff training being triggered by the accumulation of a certain number, however we need to do more. In line with the commitment to reduce fuel costs we will implement a similar incentive scheme where we will share a percentage of the reduced costs of accident damage, below a threshold from the current baseline, to be spent on staff welfare. This will be supported by a robust system/process of capturing vehicle damage when crews return a vehicle using our Make Ready teams and a system call MoDos, which we are currently introducing and developing.
- Maintenance productivity: We believe that there is additional capacity to be generated in our workshops through a combination of the benefits of our fleet investment plus a focus on productivity which we have described elsewhere and which will lead to a reduced cost per vehicle. The upgrades to our reporting systems covered under 5.2, will give us greater clarity over this metric and together with various initiatives, supported by training, (as per 5.6), we will target and achieve productivity gains in our two workshops and VCU. The option to deliver the NEPTS and Logistics fleet maintenance in house will also be explored.

For this to be a viable option additional workshops, at locations to be evaluated, would need to be considered to give greater capacity.

- Procurement: The NHS Carter Report 2015 provided a renewed impetus for increased centralised procurement. There are several procurement collaborations we are exploring to reduce unit costs by combining our buying power with others. This includes the Northern Ambulance Alliance as well as NHS Improvement, which offers support on procurement, price benchmarking and service consolidation. This is of particular interest to us for base vehicles and conversions as well as the charging infrastructure needed to support a future move to hybrid and electric vehicles. Other areas of interest include vehicle parts and tyres. We commit to joining or creating an alliance, where it can be shown to offer us a commercial advantage, and to support our drive to better manage costs.
- Lease and contract management: Ensuring that we tightly manage our lease contracts is an important part of fleet services for SCAS.
 - Lease contracts: A review has shown that many of our NEPTS vehicles have had their leases extended, often multiple times, and this is not necessarily the most cost-effective option. This has occurred due to previously linking vehicles to specific contracts, with the aim of mitigating the risk of contract loss on the rest of SCAS. In addition to being cost ineffective, it results in having a significant number of aged vehicles and the associated impact on vehicle off road and high emissions. After the current round of vehicle replacement, NEPTS will move towards rolling contracts, replacing a cohort of vehicles each year.
 - Replacing a cohort of vehicles annually will additionally enable the Trust to take full advantage of improvements in vehicle technology at an earlier date. Based on telemetric studies swapping out diesel vehicles that are several years old with new diesels increases fuel efficiency saving around £1400 in fuel and 3Tonnes of CO2 emissions per vehicle over a 4-year period.
 - Penalties: Penalties at the end of a lease due to excess mileage or excessive wear and tear can add a significant sum to the contract termination. We will establish a baseline for these costs and use that to set a reduction target for fleet, to create increased focus on these costs.
 - Ambulance make ready service (AMRS): This is a process whereby an ambulance is cleaned and restocked each day and a periodic deep-clean is carried out on a schedule. This is an outsourced service with teams based at our ambulance operational centres. The timing of the deep-clean has already been covered under s5.3 (quality and service levels), as this directly impacts the VOR time for ambulances, however there is also the need to ensure that the AMRS contract is well managed in a broader sense. Changes to the approach will include:
 - Live vehicle availability and performance dashboard
 - New KPIs for the AMRS teams
 - Monthly review meetings

6.6 People and skills

We recognise that our people are our strength and will continue to look for ways to attract, retain and develop talent in the various fields needed to create excellence in fleet management.

We will focus on five areas:

- Training:
 - We will develop a skills matrix in our two workshops showing the relevant levels of knowledge and competence of our technicians, to enable us to better support them and their capabilities. This will be much more than a record of attendance on mandatory courses and will include vehicle specific expertise, and knowledge of our various systems, tooling, equipment, and health and safety requirements.
 - We have recently put the SCFS management team through a skills training course to develop their commercial awareness and managerial abilities. Above and beyond the mandatory training courses required for our technical staff we will budget for, identify, and carry out such value-adding training for the benefit our staff, management, and customers.
 - The driving standards, practices and behaviours of our ambulance crews are of course vital, not just from a safety point of view, but also in terms of wear and tear on vehicles, fuel efficiency, cost of fuel, accident damage and time off the road. As discussed elsewhere, using the data from telematics we will therefore commit to increase the level and detail of feedback given to crews. As discussed in 5.5 under accident management we will continue to try new methods of driving down accidents and improving standards.
- Staff engagement and morale: We carry out an annual survey with our staff which provides valuable feedback which we seek to act upon. Additionally, we have carried out a facilitated communication session in 2021 in one of our workshops to ensure that the channels of communication up and down the structure are open and clear. We recognise that this is an ongoing commitment and we will incorporate new methods of increasing staff engagement and involvement such as 'experience exchanges' where highly skilled staff members will share their knowledge and experience with colleagues on certain vehicles, problems, best practice, and learning.
- Health and safety: While we have an excellent record in our workshops, we are not complacent. We commit to revisit and improve our health and safety approaches in the workshops to ensure that it is a team effort to maximise safety in the workshops, ensure compliance with PPE, tool and equipment usage, and other risks. We will report 'near misses' rather than simply accidents and encourage all staff to find and report potential hazards to be addressed.
- Recruitment: We will work with our partners in HR to monitor the successes and failures of recruitment such that we can continue to refine the template of what works in our organisation, in terms of previous background, employment histories, specific vehicle experience et cetera. This means identifying and targeting

appropriate labour pools from which we should be recruiting, based on a knowledge of the best combination of skills, experience, competence, and attitude.

6.7 Commercial

Commercial services provided to other organisations by our existing fleet management infrastructure are an important part of our operation and provides valuable income for the Trust. We will continue to identify commercial opportunities while ensuring that the costs and risks associated with these opportunities are carefully assessed and managed.

Specific areas of focus will be:

- **Vehicle Commissioning:** We estimate that only 30% of Trusts have their own vehicle commissioning unit (VCU) capability which provides an opportunity for us to develop our capacity and to offer this service to fellow Trusts on a commercial basis. We will have to be competitive to win this work and make a profit and the details will be dependent on the business case for expanding Nursling as described in 5.5.
- **NEPTS:** As stated elsewhere within this paper there are also opportunities to bring in-house maintenance activity which is currently carried out by third parties. We already provide NEPTS for other Trusts on a commercial basis and will continue to seek opportunities to expand this, however the vehicles we use are currently managed under a full maintenance contract. We will examine the cost effectiveness of leasing future vehicles without maintenance and carrying out this work in-house. As with the point above this needs to be built into our estates strategy to ensure that we have the space and footprint to do this work cost effectively

6.8 Environment

Much of the discussion on our commitment to reduce fuel usage (s5.5) will of course also mesh with our environmental aims as our main impacts to the environment are from greenhouse gas emissions from the use of fossil fuels for our vehicles and fossil fuel-based energy. One of our key objectives is to reduce CO2 emissions by 50% by 2030. Due to the nature of activity, our initial opportunity to make a significant impact is with our NEPTS and Logistics Fleet. The table below gives an outline of movement towards this goal via the current round of vehicle replacement. This assumes that many of the items previously documented in this paper have been progressed particularly around the ability to ensure good vehicle charging. The figures are based on the assumptions used within the recent business case and will need to be monitored to account for real operational performance. The current fleet figures included within the chart also considers existing use of hired vehicles to supplement SCAS leased vehicles and cover shortages due to vehicles off road.

	Number				Est Annual Fuel CO2 emissions			
	Current	by Jun 22	by Dec 22	by Dec 23	Current	by Jun 22	by Dec 22	by Dec 23
Current Peugeot	286	190	100	0	2720	1807	951	0
New Renault	0	90	90	90	0	793	793	793
Diesel WAV	90	45	45	0	455	228	228	0
Ford Hybrid WAV	0	45	45	90	0	134	134	267
Electric	0	6	96	196	0	6	97	198
Total	376	376	376	376	3175	2967	2202	1258
Reduction						208	973	1709
					% Reduction from current	7%	31%	54%

The challenge to frontline to migrate to electric is greater due to the extra load needed to support blue light operations. However, the technology to move the 60 RRV / SRV's outlined in s5.4 exists and based on current fuel consumption could result in a reduction in emissions of 300 tonnes per year.

Also, as we described under our approach to vehicle specification (s5.4), we will continue to demonstrate to our wider stakeholder groups and the public that SCAS is a forerunner in the design and specification of vehicles including hybrids and zero emission vehicles, which we commit to do as soon as possible. There are still discussions taking place at a national level on how to achieve this aim and challenges exist around the necessary charging infrastructure to support a fully electric fleet. Our aim is to be at the forefront of these changes and by 2030 half of the 999 fleet will be electric.

Our commitment is to continually reduce the environmental impacts of our business operation. Specific recent initiatives include:

- Assessing the impacts on the environment of fuel on the current fleet and its future replacement
- Setting efficiency targets, increasing each year for new trust lease cars
- Introduction of an environmental assessment in the supplier vetting process
- Targeting a reduction in conveyance of patients to hospitals to improve the care for the patient and to reduce the environmental impact
- Provision of new Trust premises that meet current required environmental standards
- Move towards the achievement of Zero waste to landfill
- Introduce paper recycling at all SCAS sites
- Continuation of a grey fleet policy
- Continuation of a lease car policy with allowable CO2 emissions set at no more than 110 CO2g on a WLTP basis and incentives for low CO2g vehicles
- Introduction of telemetry technology in new vehicles

- Introduction of solar panel technology on vehicle roofs
- Introduction of video conferencing facility to reduce business travel
- Introduction of e-pay, e-time-sheets and e-expenses
- Development and refresh of a board approved environmental 'Sustainable Development Management Plan'
- Engaging with the NHS SDU and its Good Cooperate Citizen programme
- Production of periodic green newsletters available to all staff containing examples of good practice This statement represents our general position on environmental issues and the policies and practices we will apply in conducting our business

Building on our recent environmental policy (April 2021) our strategy is to:

- Assess the environmental impact of current and likely future operations
- Strive to continuously improve our environmental performance and integrate recognised applicable best practice into our business operations
- Give consideration to rapidly changing fleet technology and the environmental benefits this can bring
- Seek to contract with suppliers who meet or exceed the environmental standards set by the Trust.
- Give due consideration to environmental issues in the acquisition, design and location of buildings.
- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation as well as other environmental requirements to which the Trust subscribes.
- Minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are as efficient as possible.

To secure these objectives we will:

- Annually communicate our environmental policy, internally and externally, encouraging feedback from staff and other stakeholders
- Work together with our service partners and suppliers to encourage commitment towards improved environmental performance
- Implement an on-going training programme for staff to raise awareness of environmental issues and enlist their support in improving our performance
- Actively promote recycling both internally and externally with stakeholders
- Incorporate sustainability requirements into new contracts
- Monitor figures for energy, water, and waste annually as a minimum, to identify target areas for improvement

- Monitor and measure staff business miles to ensure that the Trust is not undertaking business miles unnecessarily
- Continue to encourage the use of audio and video conference call facilities for meetings
- Continue to maintain and foster an active team of volunteer green champions
- The NEPTS fleet replacement programmed currently being implemented actively supports many of the above items. Additionally, the commitment has been made that no new fossil fuel vehicles (including Hybrid) would be leased after 2026 i.e. on the road by 2027 – with all NEPTS & Logistics fossil fuel vehicles to be phased out by 2030.

7. Summary of key issues and next steps

We will build detailed action plans to manage the implementation of the commitments outlined in this document and to address the following key issues:

- Getting the structures right to ensure clear lines of accountability
- Deliver improved performance reporting, scorecards and KPIs
- Better use of telematics and Key 2
- Improve service levels with a more responsive and flexible service
- Review location of VCU and workshops to determine optimum number and locations of workshops
- Focus on improving efficiency and reducing costs
- Improved fuel management, increasing use of bunkered fuel
- Reduce numbers of diesel vehicles, introduce hybrid and electric vehicles.

