

# Media Release



## PSNI Fleet Management

Resourcing issues and capacity constraints are hampering the PSNI's attempts to reduce costs and deliver its ambitions for a modern, sustainable fleet. Since 2021-22 the PSNI has spent almost £26 million on purchasing new vehicles, however over a quarter of its fleet is more than 10 years old and an increasing number are off the road due to the need for repair. These are among the findings of a report published today (Tuesday 8 April 2025) by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Today's report examines how the PSNI has implemented its Fleet Strategy, including plans for modernisation and progress towards its sustainability targets for the fleet.

The PSNI has a commissioned fleet of around 2,700 vehicles and, between 2021-22 and 2023-24, spent almost £11 million on vehicle repairs and maintenance at its internal workshops. However, staffing capacity to carry out this work has reduced, resulting in an increased reliance on external contractors which are more expensive. The report also found an increasing number of vehicles were off the road due to the need for repairs and maintenance. The proportion of the fleet in workshops on any given day increased from an average of 6 per cent in 2021 to 16 per cent in 2023 and, at its most extreme, almost 500 vehicles were off the road (representing a fifth of the fleet).

Capacity issues are also leading to delays in getting police vehicles ready for use in frontline services. The average time to commission a vehicle was nine months, however many individual vehicles took much longer, with almost 25 per cent taking over a year to commission.

These issues mean that fleet replenishment rates are not keeping pace with the plans outlined in the Strategy, and the PSNI has had to maintain higher numbers of vehicles than anticipated. It has therefore been unable to achieve expected cost reductions through standardisation and improved maintenance.

The PSNI has ambitious plans to increase the number of electric vehicles in its fleet, with almost 700 to be introduced by 2026. However, today's report notes that the introduction of these vehicles has been slower than expected. This is partly due to issues with commissioning capacity - on average, it has taken 14 months to commission these vehicles. The report also notes that installation of the necessary charging infrastructure has

lagged behind the purchase of EVs, and finds that there was inadequate assessment of the challenges, timescales and investment required. The report also references previous findings from the NIAO's audit of the 2022-23 PSNI financial statements, which revealed that 100 EVs (with capital value of £2.4 million) had been purchased but not commissioned for use, being stored unused at PSNI's Seapark facility for nearly a year.

Commenting on the report, Northern Ireland's Comptroller and Auditor General, Dorinnia Carville, said:

*"Effective fleet management is a critical element of the PSNI's operational effectiveness. Achieving the planned fleet replenishment rates within the current financial environment will be challenging, however managing an ageing fleet is also costly, with potentially significant operational impacts.*

*This report finds that progress has been made in a number of areas but that there is much more to be achieved, particularly in relation to the introduction of electric vehicles. The installation of adequate charging infrastructure for a large number of EVs should have been a fundamental consideration before vehicles were purchased. Instead, a significant number of vehicles were acquired, at considerable cost to the public purse, and not put to timely use. A more joined up approach within the PSNI, alongside a comprehensive Electric Vehicle Strategy, is overdue and should be completed as soon as possible."*

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### **Notes for Editors**

1. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (the Audit Office). She and the NIAO are totally independent of Government. The C&AG certifies the accounts of Government Departments and a range of other public sector bodies. She has statutory authority to report to the Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and public bodies use their resources. Her reports are published as Assembly papers.
2. The report is available on the Audit Office website at [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk). The report is embargoed until 00.01 hrs on Tuesday 08 April 2025.