



SFS – EXCELLING IN THE NORTH EAST

According to Maurice Stephenson, Fleet Manager at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, the relationship that they enjoy with SFS ranks as 'excellent'! And in no way is this simply a glib, off-the-cuff comment. Why? Because it comes as a result of SFS and the Council having worked hand-in-hand now for more than a decade. Indeed by the time the latest fleet newcomers reach the end of their contract hire life cycle, the relationship will move beyond the decade and a half mark.

As Maurice Stephenson comments: "Whilst from the very outset the relationship that we have enjoyed with SFS has always been excellent, it is one that both parties continue working at to develop further. Never is there any element of complacency from either party: we simply enjoy a friendly and understanding relationship, and one that is focused on ensuring we get the right vehicles for the job, which in turn ensures that Stockton's residents get the service levels they rightly deserve.

"SFS has a wealth of knowledge relating to a wide and varied number of vehicle types, and as a result they have supplied us with what can best be described as a cocktail of vehicles from HGVs through to small vans," he adds.

Based on the strength of the relationship that SFS enjoys with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, it will come as no surprise to learn that of the Council's 300 strong fleet, some 60% of it is made up of vehicles that have been supplied by SFS over varying contract hire periods dependent upon vehicle type. Standing as one of SFS's first customers, the relationship between both organisations dates back to 1996. Since this time, SFS has understandably supplied a high percentage of new and current generation vehicles given that many have completed their life cycles. In fact the latest vehicles to join the Stockton fleet are 15 Irisbus

accessible buses that are currently being used to replace a substantial part of this fleet sector. Specified with Ricon lifts, they will be deployed to transport special needs children located throughout the borough to and from schools. In all instances, SFS supplies vehicles with maintenance being sub-contracted back to the Council's own workshop facilities.

Demonstrating the diversity of Stockton-on-Tee's fleet, and supporting previous claims that it is indeed a real cocktail of vehicle types, SFS has to date supplied Dennis Eagle and Geesink refuse collection vehicles, gritters, Scarab Merlin and Schmidt Swingo sweepers, Plaxton Pronto Accessible buses, Whale tankers, Optare Solo minibuses and a mobile library.

What's more, SFS can demonstrate its flexibility in ways other than simply providing diverse and varied vehicle types, as important as this is. Last year for example, upon becoming aware that the Council was in the process of evaluating its recycling initiative, whilst at the same time having to face organising the replacement of its existing RCV fleet, SFS contracted to supply the Council with four RCVs under a flexible hire package agreement. This enabled the Council to avoid disrupting its existing waste management service whilst a definitive decision was made.

Commenting on behalf of SFS, Managing Director Bob Sweetland said: "It really does seem like only yesterday we delivered the first vehicles into Stockton, and we are delighted that they have continued to show their faith in us as an organisation ever since. Not only are they one of our oldest established customers, but one of the best."

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