

Council puts faith in 4x4 FMX snowploughs



The first FMX snowploughs in the UK, including the first FMX 4x4 variants, have entered service with South Gloucestershire Council.

These are also the first Volvo gritters to be operated by the authority, with the order, for a total of 11 vehicles, comprising eight FMX-330 6x4 26-tonners and three FMX-330 4x4 18-tonners.

Highways manager Owen Jenkins explains that the council maintains 1,500km of road, but is also required to keep access roads, delivery ramps and shoppers' car parks clear in urban Bristol.

Hence, in part, the choice of its all-wheel drive 4x4 FMX snowploughs, which can

work in car parks, as well as on rural main roads, such as the A46 and A38, and market towns like Thornbury, Yate and Marshfield.

Jenkins says that the short wheelbase 4x4s are ideal for this application, as they need to work on icy surfaces, on steep hills and between rows of parked cars to keep roads open.

Delivering power consistently for this kind of work is the latest D11C 11-litre engine, rated at 330hp, matched to the Volvo Powertronic PT2106 six-speed fully-automatic planetary gearbox, with integral retarder.

The PT2106 was designed for heavy-duty applications and enables smooth gear

changes, without interruption in power delivery, in both automatic and manual modes.

Jenkins says that this results in smooth start-ups and good traction, even on gradients and demanding terrain, thanks to the electronic gear selection and torque amplifier, with automatic lock-up.

As for braking, he states that drums were specified to reduce maintenance costs in the aggressive winter environment.

Looking at the bodywork, it's all by Econ, with the FMX 6x4s having nine cubic metre salt spreading bodies, complete with the company's 'low throw' distributor. Meanwhile, the 4x4s have been equipped with six cubic metre equivalents.

All the Volvos also feature the latest Econ Spargo gritter management system. According to Jenkins, this reduces waste, since each truck is only loaded with enough grit to treat the route it is working on.

And he adds that to cut wastage further and maintain legal axle weights during operation, Red Forge weigh cells have also been fitted.

Jenkins explains that South Gloucestershire Council carried out a comprehensive evaluation programme, including testing a number of demonstrators. The new FMX gritters and snowploughs are the highest specification yet implemented by the council, he says.

Large savings for Macfarlane, thanks to Paragon

Macfarlane Packaging says it has made six-figure savings since installing an integrated transport optimisation and vehicle tracking solution from Paragon.

According to John Redman, logistics development manager with Macfarlane, the system has helped the packaging distributor to maximise vehicle capacity and improve the efficiency of deliveries.

And he adds that these achievements are against a backdrop of reducing the size of its fleet by 10%, with the software continuing to provide savings through optimised delivery routes and schedules.

"We made early savings in operational costs with Paragon [because] it allowed us to identify that we had spare capacity within the fleet and reduce the number of vehicles," explains Redman.

"It makes our deliveries to customers more efficient and enables us to run fuel-efficient routes and schedules that maximise our service and vehicle capacities," he explains.

Each depot now uses Paragon for daily planning to match changing customer requirements.

In fact, the system has been integrated with Macfarlane's Cybit Fleetstar vehicle tracking system, using Paragon Fleet Controller software, which gives real-time views of delivery activity against the plan.

"The system gives us visibility," continues Redman. "We can highlight the size of orders and the different delivery areas, and even pull orders forward to ensure we have maximum loading for each vehicle. This is an important factor when we are making an average of 800 deliveries a day across the UK."

And there's more, he says. "The live feed from the vehicle tracking system allows us to see actual activity against the plan and update the scheduled route timings."



Specialised R 500 for Stirling's Scot Heating



Scot Heating has taken delivery of a specialised Scania R 500 LB8x2*6HSA drawbar unit, with triple steer axles.

The 44 tonne gross train weight vehicle is being used by the environmentally friendly heating systems supplier to deliver biomass, fuel in the form of wood chips and wood pellets, to customers nationwide.

"Our experience of Scania goes back to

a previous company, Snowie Holdings, which we owned until 2005," explains Scot Heating Company's Calum Snowie.

"At that time, 75% of our 200-strong fleet was Scania. So, with a proven track record, there was little doubt that we would go for Scania."

For flexibility, this vehicle carries a bulk body for wood chips, as well as a bulk tank

for wood pellets – both of which are demountable to enable either container to be left on site, while the truck continues to make deliveries with the other.

Loading and off-loading of the containers is handled by an on-board Multilift hookloader. After dropping the prime mover's container, the hook hauls the drawbar trailer's container on to the truck bed, ready for off-loading.

The truck also has on-board suction and blower equipment, manufactured by Tropper of Austria, which is used to load and unload wood chips and wood pellets.

Completing the picture, in terms of flexibility, the vehicle's 8x2*6 wheelplan features three steering axles (first, second and fourth), specified for manoeuvrability when delivering into locations with restricted access.

"This vehicle is the result of a six-month development programme carried out by my father, Malcolm, myself and our key suppliers Scania Bellshill, Logan Inglis/Multilift and Tropper of Austria," comments Snowie.

Lafarge trials prove Edbro CX14 tipping cylinders

A little over one year since Edbro launched its weight-saving CX14 hydraulic tipper cylinders and Lafarge started its trials, the latter is reporting success – and a commitment to the cylinders.

"The hydraulic cylinder is an integral part of a tipper and must be right," comments Nick Elliot, national transport manager for Lafarge.

"Fortunately, Edbro has a fantastic fit-and-forget reputation, and subjects all of its cylinders to extremely vigorous testing throughout all stages of R&D and manufacture," he continues.

However, Elliot explains that Lafarge decided to trial the CX14 for a year to assess the real benefits and to ensure that it operated efficiently with the loads it needs to carry.

"We are consistently achieving superb payloads," he confirms.

"The gear has performed to Edbro's standards and the weight saving cannot be ignored. We chose to specify the cylinder on all this year's vehicle builds."

In fact, Elliot says Lafarge instantly saved 65kg, without compromising the body design or risking safety issues.

That, he says, is down to the compact combined tank and cylinder unit, which can provide weight savings to rigid truck applications from 15 to 32 tonnes gvw.



Elastomerics assist compact sweeper design



Cushyfloat elastomeric engine mounts from Trelleborg Industrial AVS have been chosen by Max Holder for its new C250 and C270 street sweepers.

The company cites the product's high-capacity performance, long service life and

compact packaging as key factors determining its decision.

Trelleborg Industrial AVS sales manager Michael Rösler explains that Max Holder's sweepers are used in a variety of duties, ranging from snow-clearing to street sweeping, mowing and hedge clipping.

The design is extremely compact, he adds, with a total width of 110cm and a height of less than two metres.

So, in the very limited space available for the three-point axle suspension system, the Cushyfloats, combined with VP bushes mounted between the chassis frame and the hydrostatic engine, provide stability and good anti-vibration performance.

"We are very proud to have assisted Max Holder with this machine, as it presented our applications engineers with an interesting challenge," comments Rösler.

Both sweepers have a maximum speed of 40kph and lifting capacity of 1,100kg. Each is compatible with a wide range of tools and accessory equipment.