

Report to: Environment Committee, 6 June 2023

Report of: Deputy Director – Corporate Policy and Strategy

Subject: Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee approves the proposed Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (Appendix 1).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and committed itself to taking action to reduce carbon emissions. Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030 sets out policies to achieve this, with an ambition for the city to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 2.2 Carbon emissions from transport accounted for around 27% of the total carbon emissions of the city in 2020¹. The Government is backing electric vehicles (EVs) as the solution to reducing these emissions and supporting, and accelerating where possible, this transition to electric vehicles is therefore an important component in the City Council's strategy.
- 2.3 The Government's EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy, 'Taking Charge', (2022) sets out the role of a local authority, requiring local authorities to develop and deliver ambitious local EV charging infrastructure strategies. Authorities must enable delivery of new infrastructure, ensuring local chargepoints are inclusively designed and accessible, and ensure efficient processes for the installation of new chargepoints by third parties.
- 2.4 The Council's proposed Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy addresses this role as outlined by the Government.
- 2.5 The City Council's Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 8 February 2022 to make an allowance within the capital programme of £200K to install more EV charge points in the Council's car parks.
- 2.6 On 14 March 2023, Council's Environment Committee approved the business case to install electric vehicle charge points at Tallow Hill and King Street, with £58k of grant funding having been secured to support this project from the Government's On-Street Residential Charging Scheme.

¹ BEIS, most recent year for which data is available.

3. Scope of the Strategy

- 3.1 The strategy covers all types of plug-in cars, taxis and light goods vehicles, including pure battery and hybrid vehicles. Vehicles such as HGVs, motorbikes etc are not covered, although many electric motorbikes are able to use the same charging infrastructure. In addition, other ultra-low emission vehicles such as hydrogen options are not covered in this strategy.
- 3.2 Responsibility for the installation of on-street EV infrastructure lies with Worcestershire County Council, which as the lead transport authority has responsibility for highways. We will work closely with the County Council to identify further opportunities to provide accessible charging infrastructure close to residential homes, for those without access to private driveway charging.

4. Expected transition to electric vehicles and required infrastructure

- 4.1 The strategy outlines data from the Insights toolkit, which suggests that Worcester can expect to have around 7,600 electric vehicles by 2025, around 14% of the number of registered vehicles, rising to over 27,000 by 2030.
- 4.2 The same toolkit then predicts that by 2030, Worcester will need 682 7kW chargers to meet the needs of these electric vehicles, with a further 30-50 of each other type of charger (22kW, 50kW and 150+kW).

5. Approach to future charging infrastructure investments

- 5.1 The strategy sets out the aim to meet the needs of residents without private off-street parking who wish to transition to EVs. 33% of households in the city have no private driveway, meaning these households will be reliant upon public charging facilities. The Council vision is for all residents to have access to a charging facility within ten minutes' walk of their home, by 2030, but achievement of this will depend on funding and the chosen County-wide approach to the provision of charging facilities for those without driveways.
- 5.2 Future chargepoints are to be installed in accordance with the new British Standard for accessible charging (PAS 1899:2022). Recognising the barriers that disabled drivers of electric vehicles nationally have faced with the accessing and using public charging, including difficulties with the weight of charging cables, the force required to attach the connector, the lack of dropped kerbs around chargepoints and unsuitable parking arrangements, future infrastructure will be designed in accordance with the new standard. Guidance available from Designability will be used to ensure correct interpretation of the new standard.
- 5.3 The strategy sets out the principle of ensuring that the installation and ongoing operation of Council chargepoints is based on a sound financial business case. External funding will be sought to enable future investments, such as the funding available from the On-Street Residential Charging Scheme.
- 5.4 The Council will work closely with partners and other stakeholders in the city who may be planning or considering provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

- 5.5 When assessing future locations for chargepoints, the Council will seek to ensure 24/7 access, facilitating the use of the chargepoints for businesses such as taxis and those working through the night. Areas of land which are at significant risk of flooding will be avoided. The Council will seek opportunities to improve charging provision on land with no height restrictions, to provide infrastructure for businesses with vans above 2.2m in height, for example.

6. Consultation and feedback

- 6.1 Key partners, including Worcestershire County Council, have been invited to comment on the draft Strategy. In addition to this, the Energy Saving Trust, which runs the Local Government Support Programme for electric vehicles, has given feedback.
- 6.2 The strategy recommends introducing a webform for residents to suggest areas of the city where public charging infrastructure would be beneficial. This should help to inform future investment decisions for the Council and our partners. In addition, further research and consultation regarding the barriers to transitioning to electric vehicles will take place with local residents and businesses.

7. Alternative Options Considered

- 7.1 Creating an electric vehicle strategy was an action included within the updated Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, approved by this Committee in November 2022.
- 7.2 Not approving a strategy would mean that the Council has no agreed priorities for the installation of future charging infrastructure and no agreed principles which these installations would follow.
- 7.3 Without additional support from the Council, the transition to electric vehicles by residents and businesses may lag behind expected numbers, leading to a delay in the reduction in carbon emissions and air pollution.

8. Implications

- 8.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications
There are no immediate financial implications of this strategy. The strategy considers potential locations for the installation of additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure for which the use of the remaining £145,000 allocated funding for chargepoints would be requested. This would be subject to further reports to this Committee.
- 8.2 Legal and Governance Implications
The Council has a duty to take action to improve air quality in the city, through the Environment Act 2019, and an action plan must be developed. Accelerating the transition to electric vehicles will significantly contribute towards the reduction of air pollution locally, as electric vehicles have no tailpipe emissions (some particulate matter air pollution does come from tyre dust and brake wear).
- 8.3 Risk Implications
There are no identified risks at this stage. Risks will be identified within individual projects and actions as these are initiated.

8.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy, approved by this Committee and endorsed by Council in 2020, sets out the Council's ambition for the city to become carbon neutral by 2030. Accelerating and encouraging the transition to electric vehicles is key to reducing emissions from transport.

8.5 Equality Implications

The strategy seeks to address the inequalities currently realised with regard to electric vehicles and electric vehicle infrastructure.

The strategy sets out that the Council will endeavour to install future infrastructure in line with the new British Standard for accessible charging and will use the design guidance available from DesignAbility in order to do this. This will ensure that people with disabilities are able to use the charging infrastructure.

In seeking to address the issues of residents without private driveways for the installation of a private charging point, the strategy seeks to address inequalities in social equity.

8.6 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resource implications identified.

8.7 Health and Safety Implications

By using the British Standard for accessible charging to design charging infrastructure, health and safety issues should be minimised.

8.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

This strategy sets out the approach the Council will take to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles by those who live or drive in the city. This will reduce carbon emissions and improve the air quality, two key aims within the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

By seeking to provide charging infrastructure particularly for residents without access to private driveway charging, residents will be able to benefit from the savings that can be made through switching to electric vehicles. In addition, residents will be able to charge at chargepoints which use a market rate tariff, avoiding some of the higher priced chargepoints that can be found.

Businesses can also benefit from switching to electric vehicles where the infrastructure is in place allowing them to make electric vehicles a practical choice for their business.

Ward(s):

All

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Background Papers:

**Business Case for the installation of Electric Vehicle
Charge Points, Environment Committee, 14 March 2023**