

Environment, Health and Wellbeing Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	Tuesday 25 th January 2022
Report Title	Electric Vehicle Strategy
Cabinet Member	Cllr Tim Valentine, Cabinet Member for Climate and Ecological Emergency
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment & Leisure
Lead Officer	Grace Couch, Climate and Ecological Emergency Project Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. Consider and discuss the content of the Strategy and make any recommendations for change ahead of public consultation.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The draft Electric Vehicle Strategy (hereafter ‘the Strategy’) aims to clarify the council’s position on EV charging infrastructure, including the debate between on- and off-street charging.
- 1.2 The Strategy includes:
- Clear vision and direction for the types and locations of charge points in Swale;
 - Strategic and focused actions and measures to encourage Electric Vehicle uptake;
 - Engagement and support process with all stakeholders and delivery partners on the installation of charge points;
 - Recognition of the needs and demands of both EV and non-EV owners at the time of writing;
 - Considerations of air quality improvement aspirations;
 - Additional steps to futureproof the proposed strategy due to the nature of EV technology; and
 - Implementation and delivery plan for the Electric Vehicle Strategy for 2022 - 2030.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan sets out the ambition to install EV charging points across the borough, as well as to develop an EV charging strategy including publicly accessible fast and rapid chargers, in council and private

car parks (e.g. hotels, shopping centres), and working with KCC for on-street charging. EV charging is also identified as a measure in the Air Quality Action Plan, draft Transport Strategy and parking SPD.

2.2 The Strategy aims to establish where charging will be focused in the borough, and the relationship with Kent County Council as the Highways Authority. The current EV ownership and parking levels are presented alongside the relationship with AQMA areas, before the key objectives, proposals and solutions for Swale are presented in section 7.

2.3 The objectives stated are;

- i. Creating and facilitating a network of EVCPs that meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, with sufficient coverage by 2030
- ii. Design sites that take into consideration accessibility concerns and other road users/pedestrians
- iii. Ensure the charging network has capacity for further expansion and is futureproofed
- iv. Encourage the uptake of EVs through education, campaigns, supporting trials, initiatives and public engagement
- v. Lead by example through use of electric vehicles wherever possible for delivering council service and promoting the benefits.

2.4 The Strategy identified home charging as the priority area to focus on, encouraging uptake of the home-charge scheme and installing charge points in council owned car parks in areas with high levels of on-street parking demand. Where this is not possible, cooperation will be sought with stakeholders to identify suitable locations for charge points, particularly in AQMA areas. This is followed by destination charging.

2.5 At present, on-street charging is not suitable for the parking demands of Swale, however technology in this area will be monitored. This also adheres to KCC guidance stating that on-street charging should only be selected as an option where it is not possible to serve demand elsewhere. Additionally, KCC will not currently allow private EVCPs to be installed on the highway or charging cables to be brought from a private property to the highway land. This results in charging hubs in car park locations are the most coherent strategy for the delivery of EV charging infrastructure.

2.6 Other key features include:

- Recognising driver and pedestrian safety, inclusivity, coherence, attractiveness and reliability as key
- Recognition of technological advances and the actions that will need to be taken to ensure the charging network is future-proofed
- Summary of the resident consultation conducted Summer 2021
- Commitment to 'lead from the front' with an electric fleet
- The utilisation of a car club to provide an opportunity to trial an electric vehicle and encourage more sustainable travel

- Support for businesses and encouraging uptake of the workplace charging scheme
- The anticipated review of the taxi licensing policy as an opportunity to include mechanisms to encourage the uptake of ULEV taxis
- Utilisation of social media, Inside Swale and other marketing avenues to inform residents of the benefits of EVs and our charging network

2.7 The Strategy recognises the On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme as a source of funding, with analysis undertaken by the Energy Saving Trust informing future plans (at present this is in the region of 11 charge points across 5 car parks, creating 22 charging bays).

2.8 Swale's approach will also focus on the direct procurement of charging equipment rather than entering into profit share arrangements and not owning the equipment. This enables full control of the equipment and maintenance, along with fee rates ensuring we can maintain the standards set out in this strategy. This will also ensure we can be responsive to what is a rapidly changing market in a way that is sensitive to the unique needs of the Swale district. This does not mean we need to manage all payments via the units as this is achieved via the charger company software.

2.9 There are a number of questions that we ask Members of this committee to consider;

- Do you agree with the stated objectives of the Strategy as shown in 2.3 above?
- Do you feel anything is missing from the Strategy that needs considering?
- Does the action plan help meet the objectives?

3 Proposals

3.1 Consider and discuss the content of the Strategy and make any recommendations for change ahead of public consultation.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 Members could choose not to have a Strategy. This is not a feasible way forward as we would lack a coherent direction for the installation of future charging infrastructure. The lack of clarity surrounding charge point design and clear stipulations against trailing cables (and other concerns surrounding on-street charging) could result in un-safe charge point installation across the borough.

4.2 We could adopt a more ambitious strategy, including on-street charging as a priority and higher installation rates, in an attempt to encourage EV uptake. At present there is not sufficient funding for this direction of travel, nor evidenced demand. Approval for on-street charging is likely to reopen resident debate about the right to park outside their house.

5 Consultation Proposed

- 5.1 The draft Strategy will be posted on the Council’s web site for an eight-week public consultation period in Spring 2022 with an online survey and comments section. This can be publicised in the Council’s ‘Inside Swale’ publication which is distributed to households in the Borough and on our social media platforms.
- 5.2 An invitation will be issued to stakeholder organisations such as Town and Parish Councils to submit their comments on the Strategy.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges</p> <p>The Climate and Ecological Emergency is recognised as the biggest global challenge this generation will face. Electric Vehicles are integral to reducing emissions and halting global warming.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The Strategy itself does not propose any immediate additional expenditure. £50,000 has already been approved through the Improvement & Resilience Fund to support an application to the On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme.</p> <p>EV charge points will become an increasing asset to the Council which must be maintained and future proofed to prevent incurring additional costs later on – the Strategy recognises these challenges and proposes solutions.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The provision of EV charge points is not currently a statutory function.
Crime and Disorder	<p>Car parks and assets within them such as charge points could be susceptible to vandalism adding to the annual maintenance costs. The Strategy sets out the requirement for adequate lighting. Encouraging community education and awareness is necessary to mitigate this.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>The Climate and Ecological Emergency is recognised as the biggest global challenge this generation will face. Electric Vehicles are integral to reducing emissions and halting global warming. Encouraging low emission vehicles also contributes to improving air quality in the borough.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	Improved air quality as a result of the switch to electric vehicles will have a positive impact on the health of residents.
Safeguarding of Children, Young	No implications

People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Council is required to meet its obligations on Health and Safety. The Strategy sets out considerations for driver and pedestrian safety.
Equality and Diversity	<p>The Strategy aims to provide facilities for all residents in the Borough. It is recognised that EV charging needs to be accessible to all, including those without off-street charging, in order to increase the speed of transition to electric vehicles. The Strategy sets out the intention to maintain electric charging rates in-line with the market level for similar speed public charge points.</p> <p>The Strategy also states measures required to ensure inclusivity on a number of bases.</p>
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Electric Vehicle Strategy 2022-2030