

Environment Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	30 th June 2022
Report Title	Electric Vehicle Strategy 2022-2030
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins - Director Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell – Head of Environment & Leisure
Lead Officer	Grace Couch – Climate and Ecological Emergency Project Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Adopt the Electric Vehicle Strategy 2022-2030

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The draft Electric Vehicle Strategy 2022-2030 (hereafter ‘the Strategy’) aims to clarify the council’s position on EV charging infrastructure, addressing the balance between current demand for charging infrastructure and the ambition to ‘lead the way’ in addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- 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 the most suitable solution for the parking demands of Swale, however technology in this area will be monitored. This also adheres to KCC guidance stating 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 at present. The Strategy recognises the rapid changes within the industry, and therefore commits to learning from other local authority trials and create new solutions for on-street charging.
- 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. This funding has been granted to install 9 new twin charge points in 2022.
- 2.8 Swale's approach will also focus on the direct procurement of charging equipment rather than entering into profit share arrangements in which we do not own the equipment, for all infrastructure installed within council car parks. 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. Other solutions for on-street charging are to be investigated on a pilot basis.

2 Proposals

- 2.1 Adopt the Strategy and commit to take forward the Action Plan to deliver electric vehicle infrastructure in Swale. By adopting the Strategy the Council can effectively deliver EV charging infrastructure in an effective and coordinated manner, continue to monitor demand by collecting data and encourage EV purchase via other initiatives set out in the Strategy.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 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. The lack of direction may also hinder charge point installation rates, preventing the Council from reaching net-zero targets set out in both the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration (June 2019) and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan (April 2020).
- 3.2 The Council could choose to adopt a more ambitious strategy which installs infrastructure at a much faster rate. At present there is not sufficient funding for this direction of travel, nor evidenced demand. Additionally, the rapidly changing nature of this industry, the infrastructure and charging solutions available. It is therefore sensible to focus on monitoring and responding to data-led demand, as well as changes in national and Kent-wide policy.

4 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 4.1 The Strategy was taken to the Environment, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee Meeting on 25th January 2022, pre-consultation, providing an opportunity for member discussion to inform the final version. Many areas were raised, including provision for taxis, the effect of the rising cost of electricity and the spread of EV charge points across the borough. The full discussion can be found in Appendix III.
- 4.2 Consultation on the Strategy was conducted between 07 March and 13 April 2022 via Survey Monkey, promoted to residents via social media and to stakeholders via the Swale Means Business e-Bulletin and Parish Council mailing lists. Full results of the consultation can be found in Appendix II.
- 4.3 70% of respondents stated that they ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the objectives stated in the Strategy.
- 4.4 When asked if they think anything is missing from the Strategy, 70% said ‘yes’ and the comments are summarised below. This includes where amendments were made to the final Strategy document, and where topics had already been sufficiently covered in the Strategy.

Consultation Comment	Strategy Amendment/Response
Lack of provision of On-Street Charging	Section 7.3 of the Strategy sets out the Council’s position for on- vs off-street charging. As we are not the highways authority, our influence in this area is limited. Although we will still predominantly focus on creating charging hubs within our car parks, making data-led decisions, we have amended the Strategy to include the consideration to investigate on-street solutions, such as charging bollards, on a pilot basis - with the support of KCC.
Reduction in Car Ownership	Overall reduction in car ownership as a method of reducing CO2 emissions has been recognised in the Strategy, however the Strategy also recognises that some car ownership is to be expected, as this is the most practical solution for many people, especially those in rural areas. The transition to cleaner, electric vehicles is an integral part of our work to reach net-zero across the borough by 2030. Our strategy for this is included in section 8.2.2, including the recent launch of Faversham Car Club, however, links to Active Travel and Public Transport have now been emphasised.

Request to set more specific targets	<p>The Committee on Climate Change, which advises the government, says there should be one EV charger for every thousand cars by 2030. This suggests that across all sectors in Swale there should be at least 75 EV chargers by the end of the decade, and the Strategy recognises that this target seems unambitious.</p> <p>Section 7.7 of the Strategy sets out the importance of future proofing as well as the rapidly changing nature of this industry, the infrastructure and charging solutions available. It is therefore reluctant to set annual targets within the Strategy but commits to monitoring and responding to data-led demand, as well as changes in national and Kent-wide policy.</p>
Increased Promotion of EVs	<p>The consultation re-affirmed local commitment to the climate emergency, with respondents encouraging the council to provide more information about its own work to encourage EVs, as well as promoting the move away from Internal Combustion Engine vehicles to residents.</p> <p>Information about our new Climate Webpages, a promotional plan agreed with the Communications Team, and recognition of the Energy Saving Trust Local Government Support Scheme, have now been included in the Strategy (Section 8.5) as developments launched after the Strategy consultation commenced.</p>
EVCP Design/Solar Canopies	<p>Comments were raised regarding the design of EV charge points. Much of this has already been highlighted in Section 7.6 regarding the safety of users, however additional weight has now been given to investigating innovative solutions in our car parks such as solar canopies (Section 9.3 Action Plan - 1.2d), which both provide a power source for charging and shelter for users.</p>

5 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 the match funding</p>

	<p>required with the successful 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	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.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	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.
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, with a recognition of the need to encourage EV uptake both in AQMA areas and within the industries which travel through them most often.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
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, as well as the design requirements for the charge points.
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	Data Protection principles will be adhered to when implementing data collection exercises within the scope of the Strategy.

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Swale Borough Council Electric Vehicle Strategy 2022-2030
- Appendix II: Consultation Results and Comment Summary Spring 2022
- Appendix III: [Environment, Health & Wellbeing Committee Jan 2022 \(551\)](#)