

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 18 March 2024

Report Title

The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

In March 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and since then has annually produced a climate change action plan which covers seven themes, one of which relates to transportation. Transport is the largest emitting sector of greenhouse gas emissions, producing 24% of the UK's total emissions in 2020 and in November 2020 the Government announced the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030 (though this was pushed back to 2035 in September 2023). Therefore, part of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan focusses on expanding the Council's operational and Borough-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure in support of the transition to low carbon modes of transport.

To ensure a transparent approach to delivery of the Council's public charging network, a Strategy has been prepared covering commitments with regards to its delivery and expansion. The Strategy also details how the Council intends to select its future charging sites, and engage with residents, businesses and commercial fleets.

This report presents the Rotherham Council Public EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve the Rotherham Council Public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Rotherham Council Public Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
Appendix 2a Part A Initial Equality Screening
Appendix 2b Part B Equality Analysis
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Rotherham Council Electric Vehicle Infrastructure -Cabinet 16th October 23](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

1. Background

- 1.1 In June 2019 the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The national target will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 30 October 2019 and subsequently adopted the following targets:
 - The Council's carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2030.
 - Borough-wide carbon emissions to be at net-zero by 2040.
- 1.2 Transport is the largest emitting sector of greenhouse gas emissions, producing 24% of the UK's total emissions in 2020 (406 MtCO₂e). In Rotherham, a quarter of local emissions are attributable to cars, vans, motorcycles and taxis. In November 2020 the Government announced the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030 (though this was pushed back to 2035 in September 2023).
- 1.3 Plug-in electric and hybrid vehicles now number over 1.1 million on UK roads with new registrations continuing to grow strongly in 2022 (+40%) and more affordable used EVs are now appearing on the market (used battery EV sales up 37.5% in 2022).
- 1.4 As of 1 January 2024, the Department for Transport reports that there were 53,677 public EV charging devices available in the UK. To match demand this is required to increase eightfold to 300,000 devices by 2030.
- 1.5 In October 2023, the government published its response to the consultation on the Future of Transport Regulatory Review (zero emissions vehicles). The outcome of this consultation indicates that Local Transport Authorities will have a statutory obligation to produce local charging strategies and ensure provision of charge points. There is not yet a timeline for this, but the Public Chargepoint Regulations were passed in Parliament on 24 October 2023 creating a strong policy background for improving the consumer experience when accessing EV infrastructure.
- 1.6 In 2019 the Council installed 30 public bays of fast EV chargers at 10 sites across the Borough, with 4 sites connected to Solar PV, to supply or offset the electricity used in charging. The infrastructure for these sites is owned by the Council but the operating system is run by a company called MER Charging UK Limited.
- 1.7 The Council publishes information relating to its current EV charging infrastructure on its website. This includes signposting to *Zapmap*, an online application frequently used by EV motorists to find local charge points which are available to the public. This includes those owned by the Council and other public and private infrastructure, such as those in supermarkets or private car parks.

- 1.8 In October 2023, seven further sites were approved by Cabinet for installation across the Borough. These sites utilised funding provided by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) specifically allocated for the delivery of charging infrastructure across the region. This Strategy does not include any additional sites for delivery but sets out how the Council will approach future selection and installation of sites across the Borough if approved. Individual sites will be brought forward for approval when they are identified.
- 1.9 The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) have commissioned an organisation to undertake further studies into the regional EV charging demand with plans to deliver a strategy thereafter. This study will further inform the analysis carried out by Council officers and ensure the two strategies are integrated effectively. The Council aims to link both the regional and local need through its implementation plan which will be created following publication of the two strategies.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 In order for the Council to deliver a fit for purpose and equitable infrastructure programme it is important that a consistent and transparent approach is taken to its delivery.
- 2.2 The Strategy available at Appendix 1 therefore sets out how the Council proposes to approach and deliver its infrastructure programme and how it will choose future sites for installation.
- 2.3 SYMCA have commissioned an organisation to undertake a regional study and thereafter produce a strategy based on the information identified. As the SYMCA document does not intend to cover specific local requirements, the Council's proposed Strategy and future implementation plan will operate alongside this document, ensuring that Rotherham specific EV charging needs are met whilst ensuring that Rotherham remains connected regionally. This will also enhance Rotherham's ability to leverage funding in the future as this is largely administered regionally.
- 2.4 **The Vision for EV Charging Infrastructure in Rotherham**
- 2.5 The increase in demand for EV Charging has been slow within the Borough when compared with National figures following an observed decline in use post pandemic. This is now showing signs of improvement and changes to legislation affecting new vehicle registrations will further strengthen this demand in future.
- 2.6 To meet this expected future demand the below vision has been set out:
- By 2040, the majority of Rotherham residences are within a ten-minute walk of a publicly available charge point and residents will have confidence that they can access this infrastructure as and when they need it regardless of any disability or protected characteristic they may have.

- The Council owned charge point network will complement and enhance the private sector offer to provide access to a system of charge points across the Borough including varied types of chargers to meet demand. Charging units under Council control will be specified to meet PAS1899 accessibility standards and all new installations will provide a minimum number of fully accessible charging bays or nearby alternatives.
- The Council network should offer its users a transparent and consistent pricing structure and offer a variety of payment types.

2.7 In the above vision “publicly available” refers to charge points owned by the Council or other public-sector bodies, private sector charge points enabled via concessionary arrangements, or charge points delivered and supported by the Council for public use without Council ownership e.g., community schemes or those supported by Parish Councils. This change in terminology reflects the governments expectation of the need for private sector investment and operation as demand increases.

2.8 The Strategy proposes the following targets:

- 95% of residences to be within 3 miles of a Council owned public charge point by 2025.
- 95% of residences to be within 1.5 miles of a publicly available charge point by 2030.
- 95% of residences within a ten-minute walk (or 800 meters/ approximately 0.5 mile) of a publicly available charge point by 2040.

2.9 In order to achieve these targets, it is proposed that the Council commits to:

- Installing charge points that are matched to likely time spent at a location, keeping ahead of demand - this is ongoing.
- Installing rapid chargers at suitable locations to support the conversion of taxi and private hire vehicles to EV.
- Continuing to examine the case and opportunities for residential charging hubs and other interventions for those without off-street parking. Initial research of potential sites is underway and funding opportunities sought.
- Investigating means of incorporating solar photovoltaics into projects, in view of the additional load that EV charging will place on the electricity grid, whilst continuing to work with Northern PowerGrid. This has already been done at some sites around the Borough.
- Ensuring that the network is adequately funded to enable effective maintenance, and when required, expansion.
- Working with its partners to complement commercial networks to provide a more robust system of available charging locations for its residents, workforce and visitors.
- Working towards a consistent approach to charging and payment options where technology allows.

- Ensuring that the location and accessibility of new public charge points take into account the needs of disabled drivers. The Council will use PAS 1899:2022 EV – Accessible Charging – Specification to ensure this where site limitations do not constrain its use.
- Working to improve the quality of data provision and analysis locally.
- Developing its communication plan to improve residents and visitors access to up to date information regarding Council charge points and their status.
- Consulting with different user types throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.
- To improve the security of Council charge points by ensuring all sites are covered by CCTV, Smartwater forensic marking, and by working with South Yorkshire Police and other partners to increase prosecution of vandalism.
- Developing a policy for installing EV charge points in the Council's existing social housing stock.
- Reviewing this Strategy within 3 years so that the latest technological and demand changes can be better taken into account.

2.10 The Council also commits to report its progress annually to Cabinet as part of the Climate Change Action Plan against these commitments including any regional considerations as part of a comprehensive implementation plan.

2.11 The area of EV charging and its infrastructure is rapidly evolving. Future innovation and research may also enable officers to refine the Strategy's targets and commitments to consider the future charging needs of its residents and visitors. As such, it is proposed that the Strategy is reviewed within at least 3 years, with annual monitoring undertaken against the targets set.

2.12 To meet the 2030 target of 95% residences within 1.5 miles of a publicly accessible charge point, it is expected that ten more charge points in addition to the seven currently being commissioned will be required. To achieve this the Council will need to utilise external funding opportunities and Council Capital.

2.13 The Council will also work alongside SYMCA to develop routes to create further new EV locations with the private sector. This approach aims to reduce the impact of land availability challenges and financing from both a capital and revenue perspective.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1: That Cabinet approve the strategy presented in Appendix 1

The Strategy available at Appendix 1 provides transparency for Rotherham's residents and visitors regarding the Council's plans for its publicly accessible charge point programme. This option will also allow both regional and local EV charging needs to be met and ensure the appropriate documentation is available to meet grant funding criteria. The Council would also be ready for when local EV strategies are mandated by government.

The vision and targets set align as much as possible with the likely outcome of the regional Strategy currently under development. The vision of 95% of all residences to be within a 10-minute walk of publicly available charge points by 2040 aims to provide a charging service to those without off-street parking in a realistic way whilst some of the social and financial challenges of on street charging infrastructure are being worked through.

This is the recommended option.

3.2 Option 2: Do Nothing

In contrast to option 1, an alternative would be to do nothing and not publish an EV Strategy, relying solely on the SYMCA Strategy when published. This may mean that local needs are not wholly considered in favour of a wider regional approach.

As the Council has committed to the delivery of an EV Strategy by the end of the 2023/24 financial year this option is not recommended.

3.3 Option 3: Take an alternative strategic approach.

Alternative strategies and the targets associated were reviewed extensively by the EV Working Group. This working group includes officer representatives from several Council departments including Transport Planning and Highways. Alternatives included increasing the ambition of the Strategy to include commitments around delivery of on-street charging schemes, but it is not felt that this could currently be delivered without substantial further research and a better knowledge of the financial implications. Similarly, the legal position on trailing cables over the highway is not clear. Local Authorities across the UK are taking a varied approach to responding to this issue and it is important that a consistent and fair approach is taken by the Council in the future. An approach which included both residential hubs and destination charging was selected as being the most appropriate.

This option is therefore not recommended at this stage, but the Strategy does commit to undertaking further research and investigations into potential opportunities for on street charging in the future.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 No public consultation has been undertaken on this Strategy but future consultation with residents, businesses, and commercial fleets form part of the commitments of the EV Strategy.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 This Strategy covers the period of 2024 to 2027.

5.2 Progress will be reported annually as part of the Climate Change Action Plan.

5.3 Individual schemes for future installations will be brought forward separately for approval.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation to approve the Rotherham Council Public EV Infrastructure Strategy. The Council has received grant funding from SYMCA for a 2-year temporary post, which will be used to undertake the work associated with the implementation of this Strategy. This post will complement work undertaken by existing officers, funded by existing approved revenue budgets. Any capital works associated with the implementation of this Strategy will be funded from existing approved Capital budgets. Where additional Council funding is required, this will need to be identified as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

6.2 It is important to note that when procuring goods, works and services to deliver against the Strategy, this must be undertaken in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the procurement Act 2023 (whichever is the applicable legislation at the time).

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The Public Charge Point Regulations 2023 ('the Regulations') regulate most charge points in the UK that are intended for public access and came into force on 24 November 2023. The Regulations impose specific requirements on the "operator", which means the person (including a statutory corporation such as the Council) that is responsible for operating the public charge point, whether as an owner or on behalf of a third party. They require operators to ensure that users of such facilities over 7kW may access both contactless payment and payment roaming facilities to meet their charges, and that pricing is based on pence per kilowatt hour. This applies to new installations deployed from November 2024. The regulations also impose a 99% reliability standard and require operators to make available technical data about their charge points to enable consumers to identify ones that meet their own needs. The Strategy is in compliance with the Regulations and the Council will need to ensure it complies with the Regulations during implementation of the Strategy.

7.2 The requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2023 ("the Act") will need to be complied with in respect of each project implemented pursuant to the Strategy, especially in relation to where the Council intends to engage with a commercial operator. This will include in particular principal-based assessment of any subsidy, along with other regulatory requirements set out in the Act.

7.3 Further the provisions of Schedule 2 of the Act which is in respect of the provision of subsidies that relate to energy and environmental purposes will need to be taken into account in as part of individual projects to be implemented pursuant to the strategy.

7.4 The provision by the Council of public services normally engages the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by Section 149 of the Equality Act in relation to its access and use by persons with protected characteristics, including disability. These requirements will need to be considered as a mandatory design consideration for all EV charge points provided directly by the Council,

and similar obligations imposed as a contract condition in their provision by all commercial suppliers funded by the Council or as Council subsidy beneficiaries.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 A 2-year EV Infrastructure Officer role, funded by LEVI Capability Fund, will be the officer responsible for undertaking the work associated with this Strategy for the first two years. This will enable key commitments to be delivered throughout this initial period and allow a thorough assessment of future resource needs.
- 8.2 Should the post need to be extended past 2 years then employment rights would apply.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no specific implications for young people or vulnerable adults. Accessibility considerations are included within section 10.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The uptake of EVs is unlikely to be consistent across the Borough and in fact the UK. The high price of new EVs and the unproven longevity of the battery technology which may impact upon the second-hand market is likely to exclude many groups from accessing this form of transport.
- 10.2 Similarly, the ease of charging for those with driveways when compared with those without is also likely to further widen the distance between those able to access EVs and the charge points and those who are not. The Council aims to reduce this by choosing a charging hub-based approach, aiming to ensure coverage across the Borough.
- 10.3 The Strategy outlines how the Council will approach accessibility in newly installed infrastructure when site conditions allow. The Council aims to use the BSI PAS 1899 standard as the basic specification for all new installations which includes considerations about space, information the environment of the charge points.
- 10.4 The equalities assessments in appendix 2a and b explore these issues in more detail.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Whilst the preferred method of transport should be by active means such as walking, cycling or scooting, this is not always going to be appropriate and considering the variety of abilities, needs and conveniences, transportation by car is likely to still play a substantial role in a sustainable future.
- 11.2 Electric vehicles have zero tail pipe emissions and have a lower carbon footprint than petrol and diesel alternatives with internal combustion engines. They also still emit carbon through their electricity use which will decarbonise as the national grid becomes increasingly powered through renewable energy. Even after this, there will still be carbon emissions as a result of the cars

manufacture, maintenance and end of life. When compared with petrol and diesel alternatives, this is still less carbon intensive over the lifetime of the vehicle.

- 11.3 There will also be some short-term emissions as a result of the construction of this infrastructure, but the delivery of these works is important for the provision of a robust network of EV charging infrastructure supporting the decarbonisation of the Rotherham Borough.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are minimal implications for partners, though the Council aims to widen its consultation with businesses and residents as part of its ongoing implementation plan.
- 12.2 Counterparts at the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are presently preparing a South Yorkshire Strategy which this Strategy will work alongside.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Vandalism and cable thefts have been identified as a key risk affecting the delivery and financing of an effective infrastructure network throughout the Borough. To mitigate this risk the Council is working with South Yorkshire Police whilst also increasing CCTV coverage and installing both Smart Water forensic marking and signage to act as a deterrent and improve the likelihood of prosecutions.
- 13.2 There is also a risk that the resulting SYMCA Strategy when published does not align with the Council's Strategy. This has been mitigated through ongoing discussions with SYMCA officers and will be managed via an implementation plan which will be developed to take into account all EV related actions moving forward.

14. Accountable Officers

Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	04/03/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	23/02/24
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	22/02/24

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