

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING &amp; TRANSPORT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>15 March 2021</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>HIGHWAY POLICY: ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING ON PUBLIC HIGHWAY LICENCE - PROPOSED ONE-YEAR TRIAL</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT BOROUGH WIDE</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>SAM SHEAN</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 2138</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:sam.shean@reading.gov.uk">sam.shean@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Committee the proposed one-year trial for Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging on the public highway.
- 1.2 Encouraging private vehicle owners to move from higher polluting petrol and diesel vehicles to electric will contribute to the ambitions set out within the Reading Climate Change Strategy. However, many residents have to use on street parking which presents a challenge in relation to charging infrastructure.
- 1.3 This report seeks approval to enter into licence agreements with property owners and occupiers to facilitate private charging of electric vehicles on or across the public highway.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the one-year trial of the Electric Vehicle Charging on or across the public highway.
- 2.2 That the Committee gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Assistant Director of Finance to enter into the 'Electric Vehicle Charging Licence', as described in this report.

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 In November 2020, the Council adopted the Reading Climate Change Strategy. The strategy focuses on reducing Reading's carbon footprint by, among other activities, reducing transport emissions by encouraging walking, cycling, public transport and a switch to electric vehicles. The Council also has a duty to provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has set an ambitious target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Reading has also declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) based on the exceedance of the air quality objective for NO<sub>2</sub>.
- 4.2 As part of the Council's carbon and air pollution reduction ambitions, the Council has improved its own vehicle fleet and where possible is opting to replace vehicles with electric vehicles. Encouraging private vehicle owners to move from higher polluting petrol and diesel vehicles to electric will contribute to the ambitions set out within the Reading Climate Change Strategy.
- 4.3 The Council recognises the move to electric vehicles (EVs) will result in the need to charge electric and hybrid vehicles on the public highway and has already installed 15 lamp column and 6 other public 22kW EV charge points Boroughwide with additional sites to be installed as funding opportunities materialise.
- 4.4 The Council also recognises that suitable on-street E V charging points are not always available due to the nature of Reading's urban environment and high number of narrow terraced streets/roads in the road network, where no off-street parking is possible.
- 4.5 Residents in these streets/roads will have no alternative but to charge their electric vehicles from their property while parked on the public highway.
- 4.6 Benchmarking has shown that many Councils have licences in place to facilitate the charging of EVs on the public highway.
- 4.7 This proposed one-year trial is to look at a range of options to safely charge electric vehicles from private properties to the electric vehicle parked on the public highway.

### **5. THE PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 It is proposed to allow residents to enter into a licence agreement with the Council to privately charge their EV parked on the public highway as part of an initial one-year trial.

- 5.2 The Council has already been approached by 23 residents requesting EV Charging on or across the highway and is keeping a register. The intention is to approach these residents to be included in the EV Charging trial.
- 5.2. Property owner/occupiers will enter a 'Electric Vehicle Charging Licence', as part of the proposed one-year EV Charging trial.
- 5.3 The EV Charging Licence will include a range of criteria and conditions to reduce the risk to the public and the applicant. The licence will allow alternate solutions to trial, which will ultimately inform the final policy after the trial period has ended. The most likely suitable solution for getting the cable from a property boundary to a vehicle safely is to use a suitable cable protector. Cable protectors are regularly used in public spaces and areas of high footfall to cover cables or wires on a temporary basis.
- 5.4 The cost of the licence will be borne by the applicant, with the Highway fee for the application set to match the vehicle crossing application fee, which is currently £75 plus associated Legal costs to set up the agreement to be determined.
- 5.5 The Council propose to promote the option via a press release, using our web page and using the Council's social media platforms.
- 5.6 It is proposed to bring a report back to this Committee after the one-year Electric Vehicle Charging trial to review and to formalise a policy and licence criteria thereafter.

## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 7.1 The Electric Vehicle Charging Licence will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:
- Securing the economic success of Reading
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe

## **8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 8.1 The Electric Vehicle Charging Licence and criteria/conditions will be made available on the Council's website once approved by the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee.
- 8.2 The Council's Highway Policies are available on the Council's website.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act:

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it:
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it:

9.2 The Electric Vehicle Charging License is part of procedures to maintain the Council's existing public highway network. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time only how those service requirements are met. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance and maintain highway structures.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The proposed Electric Vehicle Charging licence will be fully funded by the applicant, as part of their EV Charging Licence application.

## **12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Supporting residents to switch to electric vehicles will directly contribute toward the ambitions set out within the Reading Climate Change Strategy by reducing carbon and improving air quality.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 Highway Maintenance Policies