

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2022

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport:

Electric Charging Infrastructure

The Council didn't approve the Green proposal to spend some of the Community Infrastructure Levy local spend money on more electric charging infrastructure for our terraced roads where residents don't have driveways. What is the Council's plan to increase the electric charging infrastructure in Reading especially for our terraced roads?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport):

I thank Cllr White for his question.

Over the past few years Reading Borough Council has provided electric vehicle charging infrastructure through a number of schemes to increase the provision of charging facilities open to both residents and visitors.

Publicly available charge points installed by the Council have been delivered under the 'Go Electric Reading' project using an Air Quality Grant from DEFRA. Phase 1 of this project installed 15 lamp column charge points. These charge points have been installed on terraced roads for residents and are operational on: Coventry Road, Filey Road, Manchester Road, St Bartholomews Road, East Street, Anstey Road, Caversham Road and Wantage Road. The locations were selected following the Council's 'Go Electric' public consultation where Reading residents who either owned an electric vehicle or had an interest in buying one could register their potential interest. We are also offering residents the opportunity to suggest a location for a publicly available EV charging points through our website.

The second phase of the Council's 'Go Electric Reading' project installed 22kW charge points for residents in: Chester Street Car Park, Thames Side Promenade Car Park and Kensington Road Car Park.

We are undertaking a 1-year trial issuing licences allowing residents in terraced streets without off-street parking to charge electric vehicles on-street using cable protectors or similar between their property and their EV. The results of this trial will be used to inform future policy in this area.

Through the Council's investment in leisure facilities at both Rivermead and Palmer Park, in partnership with Greenwich Leisure Limited, we will deliver a significant number of EV charging points open for public use later this year and next. We are also looking to provide further EV charging facilities at the Cattle Market car park, off Great Knollys Street.

The Council is also developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy. Once adopted later this year, our strategy will provide a framework for providing more electric vehicle charging points and charging infrastructure by implementing appropriate provision across the Borough.

I would remind Cllr White that Reading has one of the highest proportions of terraced streets without any off-street parking. An additional complication is the extent to which residents' parking schemes impact upon the future provision of dedicated charging points and associated parking bays. Over the years we have also relocated most of our lampposts away from the kerbside which has also reduced the possibility of converting them to include charging points.

These problems are not unique to Reading and do require more work by the DfT. It is regrettable that in their 137 page White Paper '*Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy*', published on 25th March 2022, very little is said about overcoming these practical difficulties.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2022

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

Tackling Fly-Tipping with Free Bulky Waste Collection

Green councillors have long campaigned for action to tackle fly-tipping in Reading. We were pleased to see the introduction of a free bulky waste collection service. Please can the Lead Councillor update me on how the new free bulky waste collection service has been going. What has been going well and what challenges have there been?

REPLY by Councillor Rowland (Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety):

I'd like to thank Councillor White for his question as it allows me the opportunity to highlight the hard work done by Officers and this Administration on this service.

However, if Cllr White, in his eagerness to let us all know that his party has campaigned against fly-tipping (something that all parties across the town do), had held off a bit longer raising that point, we would have far more tangible indications in our data, as analysing a programme that has barely been in for a month will always lack comprehensive data. Nonetheless, I'm pleased to highlight our work so far.

Whilst the scheme was designed to reduce fly-tipping across the town, it was put in place to especially address:

- Residents that do not have a vehicle to access to Re3's Smallmead facility;
- Residents that are digitally excluded;
- a reduction of extra single car journeys to the tip, further improving air quality.

The new free portion of the Council's bulky waste collection service commenced collections on 6th June.

There are 16 free collection slots available per day, Monday to Friday, totalling 80 a week. Four of those slots per day are set aside for those that are digitally excluded, and are bookable by ringing the Contact Centre, with twelve slots bookable online daily. Residents can book one free slot per six months with free collections slots released daily, two weeks in advance of the collection date. This is in addition to the existing paid for service (which operates two days per week).

The new online booking system has proven to be extremely successful and has greatly improved the customer experience, making it faster and easier for residents to book bulky waste collections. Previously, bulky waste collections were only bookable by telephoning the Contact Centre.

We are pleased to report that the online booking system is working well with collections being completed daily, resulting in the uptake of the service being positively received.

The online form was briefly down on 1st July but was resolved within hours, allowing residents to book up collections without disruption to the service provision.

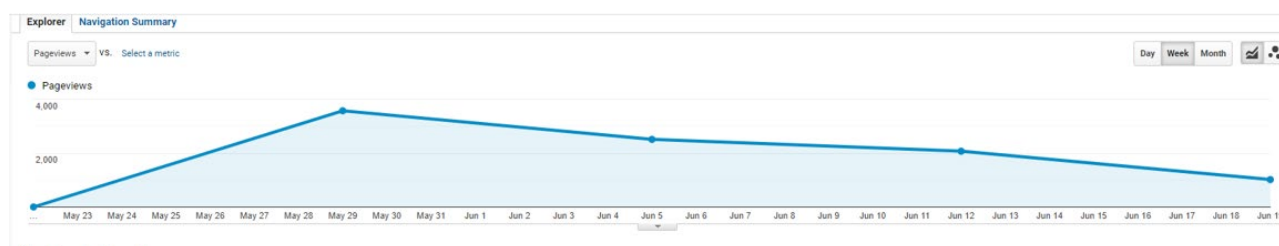
Further to this, the collection crew is now using an in-cab system, rather than previously being paper based. This has allowed them to report any issues quickly, so potentially we can feed back to the resident, if collections are delayed by problems such as a road closure.

The bulky waste service performance rough statistics, during the period 6th June to 5th July are as follows:

- 453 free collections booked (328 completed with 128 booked for future dates).
- 71 of those free bookings were made on behalf of digitally excluded residents, roughly 16% of the free service.
- 95 paid collections have been booked, an unexpected but welcome increase.
- The Contact Centre dealt with 174 general telephone enquiries regarding bulky waste collection. 196 online bulky waste additional enquiry forms were received and responded to, which can be further broken down into:

Residents On-line Enquiry Form - Enquiry type:	Percentage of enquiry forms received
Item enquiries	54% (43% approved, 57% rejected)
Advice on how to book a collection	23%
Address queries	9%
Cancellation requests	5%
Slot availability enquiries	5%
General enquiries	4%

From the launch of the online booking and website for free bulky waste collections, after an initial surge in users, the website traffic has stabilised and is expected to continue a manageable level. The graph below shows the page views for the bulky waste service for the period 23rd May to 19th June:



Early indications show that there is good, general awareness of the service around the town. However, early service requests suggest a potential need to do more specific promotions of the service in certain areas to ensure the goals of the service are met. This is being monitored weekly and where necessary, promoting the scheme into areas especially where there is digital exclusion may be tailored.

The service is still in its initial operational phase and will require time to settle in and demonstrate that it is clearly achieving the aims of reducing fly-tipping and reaching those most in need of the service. That analysis is ongoing, and we will be looking to make adjustments as warranted in order for the scheme to fully achieve its goals.