



13 March 2024

Title	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Across Public Highway Licence – Trial Outcome
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Sam Shean, Highways & Traffic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy & Transport
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Committee note the outcome of the trial of Electric Vehicle Charging on or across the public highway.2. That the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services be authorised to enter into ‘Electric Vehicle Charging Across the Public Highway’ licences with applicants under the terms of the licence, as described in this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To report to Committee the outcome of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging on the public highway trial that commenced in April 2021 and that the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services be authorised to enter into ‘Electric Vehicle Charging Across the Public Highway’ licences with applicants under the terms of the licence.
- 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 informs the committee that officers will enter into licence agreements with property owners and occupiers to facilitate safe private charging of electric vehicles on or across the public highway.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The Council also has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy is informed by and supports delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities including its commitment to address the climate

change emergency and seeks to ensure that the Council is “fit for the future”, with sound finances that allow the Council’s future funding challenges and spending pressures to be met in as sustainable a way as possible.

- 3.2. The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council’s finances are sustainable in both the short (one year) and medium term (three years). The Strategy is also informed by the Council’s Vision: “to ensure that Reading realises its potential – and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success”, as well as its Corporate Plan priorities:
 - Securing the economic success of Reading.
 - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs.
 - Protecting and enhancing the life outcomes of vulnerable adults and children.
- 3.3. The Council 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 NO₂.
- 3.4. 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 older polluting 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.

Current Position

- 3.5. The Council recognised the move to electric vehicles (EVs) would 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 when funding is successfully secured.
- 3.6. The Council also recognised that suitable on-street EV 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.
- 3.7. Residents in these streets/roads will have no alternative but to charge their electric vehicles from their property while parked on the public highway until suitable and sufficient on-street charging points are installed boroughwide.
- 3.8. Benchmarking has shown that several Councils have licences in place to facilitate the charging of EVs on the public highway.
- 3.9. The trial looked at a range of options to safely charge electric vehicles from private properties to the electric vehicle parked on the public highway.
- 3.10. The trial enabled residents to enter into a licence agreement with the Council to privately charge their EV parked on the public highway.
- 3.11. The Council was approached by 71 residents requesting information on EV Charging on or across the highway.
- 3.12. Of the 71 expressions of interest and / or applications received to date, 8 No. properties have entered into a ‘Electric Vehicle Charging Licence’ with the Council using the following solutions, (Appendix 1 refers):
 - 2 opted for the ‘cable protector’ solution.
 - 2 opted for the ‘drainage channel’ solution.
 - 4 opted for the ‘Kerbo channel’ slot drain solution.
- 3.13. The main reasons for the remaining applicants / enquiries not progressing at this stage was that they were in the process of purchasing an electric vehicle and were not in a

position to proceed, and that the licence does not secure the parking space in front of their house to guarantee that they can charge their vehicle overnight.

- 3.14. The EV Charging Licence includes a range of criteria and conditions to reduce the risk to the public and the applicant (Appendix 2 refers).
- 3.15. 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, (reviewed annually as part of the 'fees & charges' review).
- 3.16. The cost of the channel installation and / or cable protector option will initially be borne by the LEVI fund, as part of the on-street EV Charging rollout scheme delivery programme. Once the delivery programme is completed all new applications will be required to cover the cost of installation themselves and no extension to cover the installation costs will be possible from that point.
- 3.17. It is anticipated that the channel installation option would cost approx. £ 1,250 per site and that the EV on-street charging delivery programme will take up to 2-years to complete.
- 3.18. A report on the progress of the EV Charging installation programme will be brought back to this Committee on an annual basis and will also report on the uptake of the channel installation and / or cable protector solutions.

Other Options Considered

- 3.19. The EV Charging across the public highway licence will be available to residents and will sit alongside any future on-street vehicle charging solutions brought forward by the Council.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. Reading Borough Council's vision is: To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.
- 4.2. The EV Charging across the public highway licence will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2022 – 2025.
- 4.3. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 4.4. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
 - People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 4.5. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers), and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions.

- 5.2. The EV charging across the highway will encourage residents to switch to hybrid or fully electric vehicles that will ultimately lead to lower carbon emissions boroughwide and support the Council's net zero carbon emissions ambition.
- 5.3. A climate impact assessment has been conducted which suggests a 'net low positive' impact. Highway maintenance, including the installation of channel kerb EV charging solutions is an energy intensive activity and some carbon emissions from the process are inevitable, but a number of steps are being taken to mitigate these impacts as far as possible. There will be an overall decrease in the amount of carbon using EV compared with using older polluting vehicles.
- 5.4. The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The Council published an EV strategy which encouraged residents and the public to have an input into the final policy. The public and residents are able to request a licence for installation of EV charging facilities across the public highway to charge their EV / Hybrid vehicle.
- 6.2. This report along with the EV Charging across the highway licence application with conditions will be available on the Council's website following Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee approval processes.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.
- 7.2. 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.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are none.

9. Legal Implications

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

10. Financial Implications

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

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. Applications will be processed as received going forward.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices.

1. Appendix 1 - EV Charging Solutions.
2. Appendix 2 – EV Charging Application and Conditions