

**ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
26 NOVEMBER 2019**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMY AND REGENERATION

**DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY FOR ON-STREET ELECTRIC VEHICLE
CHARGING POINTS**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Graeme Barnell, Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration

Responsible Officer: Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Reason for Report:

To provide a response to a public question regarding if the Council is going to sign up to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles Government funding for electric car charging points on the road.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the contents of this report be noted.

Relationship to Corporate Plan:

Priority 4: Environment Aim 2

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Financial implications would arise if any future decision was made to directly commission additional chargers, or revise parking charges to change the current level of incentives/disincentives for different types of vehicular propulsion systems.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report. It is for discussion only.

Risk Assessment:

The risk is deemed to be low.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues anticipated.

Impact on Climate Change: The increased provision of on-street chargepoints for electric vehicles could help to reduce CO2 emissions and improve local air quality.

1.0 Introduction

1.1. This report provides an update to the PDG in the context of debate following a question raised at the meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group on 24th September 2019 about 'Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Solar PV in new developments' (item 35).

1.2. The member of public asked:

"Were MDDC going to sign up to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles Government funding for electric car charging points on the road?"

1.3. The Forward Planning Team Leader advised the member of public that this would be investigated and the Group would be updated at the next meeting of the PDG. This report provides that update.

2.0 Government scheme for grants to Local Authorities for on-street charging points

2.1 The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) is a cross Government, industry endorsed, team combing policy and finding streams to simplify policy development and delivery of ultra-low emission vehicles.

Grant for residential on-street charging

2.2 In February 2013 the OLEV published a guide for members of the public "Government funding for residential on-street charging for plug-in vehicles: a guide for members the public". Since then, Local Authorities in England have been able to sign up to a scheme aimed at increasing the availability of plug-in vehicle charging infrastructure.

2.3 In March 2019 the OLEV published updated guidance for Local Authorities "Grants to provide residential on-street chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles". Local Authorities are invited to submit applications for the on-street residential grant scheme (hereafter referred to as the 'Scheme'). This is aimed at increasing the availability of plug-in vehicle charging infrastructure for those who do not have access to off-street parking. The Scheme gives Local Authorities access to grant funding which can be used to part fund the procurement and installation of on-street electric vehicle chargepoint infrastructure, to meet residential needs, in line with the minimum technical specifications.

2.4 OLEVs updated guidance states evidence indicates that most plug-in vehicle owners will wish to do the largest proportion of their charging at home. The availability of affordable and accessible domestic charging options is therefore

key to increasing the uptake of plug in vehicle in the UK. To this end the Government currently offers the Electric Vehicle Homecharge scheme (EVHS), for residents to receive a grant towards the installation of domestic chargepoints at their homes. But to be eligible they must have dedicated off-street parking in the form of a garage or driveway. Many areas of the UK, including large parts of our cities, have residential areas where off-street parking is not an option, presenting a barrier to plug-in vehicle adoption.

2.5 In order to help their residents overcome this barrier, and prepare for the future, relevant Local Authorities are encouraged to apply for grants for the on-street residential grant scheme, on a first come first served basis, to get on the front-foot, and access funding to help with the costs of procurement and installation of on-street charging points for residential use. For the purposes of the Scheme, the applicant authority must have the explicit support of the relevant highways authority that has responsibility for maintenance of the highway on the residential streets where chargepoints are to be located. This support must be obtained before any application is submitted. Devon County Council is the relevant highways authority for Mid Devon.

2.6 The Energy Saving Trust (EST) is administering the Scheme on behalf of OLEV and can provide advice and guidance to Local Authorities on the preparation of an eligible and successful application. More information can be found through this link:

<https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport/local-authorities/street-residential-chargepoint-scheme>

2.7 The OLEV has allocated £4.5m for 18/19 and 19/20 for on-street residential projects. The funding available is for 75% of the capital costs of procuring and installing the chargepoint and an associated dedicated parking bay (where applicable), in line with OLEV technical specifications.

2.8 Applications may be made by an allocated “lead” authority for a project that spans across multiple local authorities, as long as the relevant conditions can be met for each proposed chargepoint.

3.0 Devon County Council and on-street chargepoints

3.1 Mid Devon District Council is not the responsible highway authority for roads in Mid Devon. This responsibility falls on Devon County Council.

3.2 The following information is available on the county council’s website which was posted on 19th March 2018 in response to a public question about the provision of on-street charge points:

“Unfortunately, Devon County Council has taken a decision not to sign up to the grant scheme due to financial pressures on both its revenue funding (for ongoing maintenance of the charge point) and capital funding (for delivering the charge point). The OLEV grant allows up to 75% grant for the capital costs of installing the charge point and an associated dedicated parking bay, up to a maximum of £7,500 per installation. With the resourcing and funding pressures at the current time, Devon County Council is not in a position to fund the remaining capital costs of installation and ongoing running costs with the infrastructure.

We are developing a project to deploy a modest charging network in car parks across Devon with the use of European funding. The success of this project at obtaining funding will be known later in summer 2018.”

- 3.3 Further information about Devon County Council’s approach is provided in a published report for its Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills (4th October 2018 – see background papers), about the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018 and what this means for Devon County Council. The report refers to reasons why Devon County Council has resisted progressing on-street electric vehicle charging, including: interoperability (i.e. the compatibility of different chargepoint products); payment complications; and also issues around maintenance of infrastructure and health and safety implications relating to trailing leads on the highway. The report makes clear that the resistance to progressing on-street electric vehicle charging is a similar view taken by other local authorities, with a preference instead for focusing on off-street parking provision.
- 3.4 Devon County Council has advised that the technology is changing rapidly and the recent Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018 will help remove some of the barriers to Local Authorities pursuing on-street charging points. Therefore, Devon County Council is likely to review its current policy position on this, particularly in light of its declaration of a climate emergency.
- 3.5 In July 2019 Devon County Council published information about progress made for the provision of chargepoints across the county:

“DCC has secured EU funding to support the deployment of Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) chargepoints in at least 25 publicly-accessible car parks across the county. We are awaiting the funding agreement from UK government but expect the programme to start in October 2019 and deployment would start in late 2020.

DCC has partnered in a project assessing the feasibility for on-street UELV chargepoints in Exeter and this was successful, identifying over 100

locations. The private sector partner has now applied for further government support for chargepoint deployment in the identified locations. We expect to hear if they have been successful by August 2020 and, if they have been, the project would start in September.

DCC has secured and facilitated the use of Highways England funding to support the installation of ULEV chargepoints in four public car parks (Honiton, Chudleigh, Ashburton and Ivybridge) close to the main highway. Works should be starting onsite within the next few weeks.

DCC is working with other local authorities in the south west to ensure the opportunities mentioned above has the biggest impact possible, particularly through the SW Energy Partnership between Devon County Council, Bristol City Council and Plymouth City Council.”

4.0 Car park chargepoints in Mid Devon

- 4.1 The question originally raised at the PDG concerned electric charging points on the road, which would be the responsibility of the county council as set out in section 3 above, and the OLEV scheme is primarily focused on the installation of chargepoints in on-street locations. However, OLEV recognises the potential pressures that may be faced by Local Authorities when allocating parking spaces for electric vehicles on residential streets. Therefore, OLEV is willing to consider applications for chargepoints situated in car parks owned by the Local Authority where they meet the objectives of the scheme i.e. that the car park is suitably located in or near a residential area and provides an option for local residents looking to charge their car both during the day and overnight.
- 4.2 Therefore, there is some potential interest for Mid Devon District Council if it wishes to make changes to any of its car parks to meet with the scheme’s criteria (set out below):
- 4.3 Local Authorities need to meet the following criteria for installing chargepoints in car parks:
- car parks must be owned by the Local Authority and situated in or close to a residential area that lacks off-street parking;
 - car parks must be accessible on a 24/7 basis;
 - at a minimum, local residents must be to access the car parks for free overnight;
 - each chargepoint must have its own dedicated EV bay enforced by a Traffic Regulation Order.

For car parks, Local authorities will:

- commit to keeping usage under review and consider restricting access to local residents for some or all the time if residents are struggling to access them.
- produce a communications strategy that raises awareness of chargepoints to local residents.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 Devon County Council has made clear that it is currently unable to provide the additional financial support needed to facilitate the provision of on-street chargepoints in the County (although it is supporting the provision of chargepoints in Exeter City by a private partner). This would apply to streets within Mid Devon, where Devon County Council is the responsible highway authority. As such it is understood that Mid Devon Council would be unable to sign up to the OLEV Scheme, for on-street charge points in the district.
- 5.2 Although none of the four public car parks where Devon County Council is currently supporting the installation of chargepoints are in Mid Devon, there may be potential in future for Mid Devon District Council to review car parking arrangements, such that they meet the minimum criteria for a bid to the OLEV scheme.
- 5.3 Mid Devon District Council has previously (in 2016) actively promoted the provision of eight rapid chargers installed in Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton and the surrounding areas through an arrangement with InstaVolt. These chargepoints are accessible to anyone on a pay-as-you-go basis, and are part of a series of measures being taken by the Council to improve air quality and drive down carbon emissions in the area. At the moment there is limited market demand to expand the supply of chargepoints into more rural car parks, however alternative arrangements are being kept under review.

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List of Background Papers:

Environment PDG report 24^h September 2019:

<https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1115&Ver=4>

Government funding for residential on-street charging for plug-in vehicles: a guide for members of the public (February 2013):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/137855/street-charging-plug-in-vehicles-guide.pdf

OLEV updated guidance for Local Authorities “Grants to provide residential on-street charge points for plug-in electric vehicles” (March 2019):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/792884/onstreet-chargepoint-residential-scheme-guidance.pdf

Devon County Council’s response to the on-street chargepoint scheme (19th March 2018):

https://www.devon.gov.uk/accesstoinformation/archives/information_request/electric-vehicle-charge-points

Devon County Council’s further information about progress made for the provision of chargepoints across the county (18th July 2019):

https://www.devon.gov.uk/accesstoinformation/archives/information_request/electric-vehicle-charging-points-2

Devon County Council – report of Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills (4th October 2018)

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s21629/Report%20of%20the%20Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Economy%20and%20Skills.pdf>