

Report to to Stronger Place Select Committee

Date of meeting: March 2022



Portfolio: Environment and Technical Services

Subject: Transport Strategy and Sustainability a Strategic Overview and Status Update

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Members consider and comment on the report.

Report:

1. Off-street EV Charging

EFDC is working hard to maximise use of its own land and assets to provide EV charging:

- **Rapid 120kWh chargers supplied by Instavolt** - coming very soon at Oakwood Hill East car park, Loughton IG10 3TZ. Among the fastest in Essex and ideal for anyone on the go, but especially higher local mileage residents and businesses (taxis, minicabs and businesses with a light commercial van fleet). Crater development is adjacent for Costa and food plus our popular MoT station, so users can charge up after their test.
- **Pilot of conversion of empty garages to EV charging bays** - We are applying for a grant from [OZEV/ORCS](#) scheme to convert empty garages in the Ninefields estate Waltham Abbey to 'fast' or overnight neighbourhood charging spaces. We think it is unfair that only those who can afford homes with off street parking and access to things like higher rate tax breaks account for most new EV purchases.
- **EV Charging at other car parks** - within the next 2-3 years, we should see a number of other car parks including those at Leisure Centres, with fast or overnight charging facilities. Most do not have the available power supply for rapid chargers, but they can plug the cost and speed gap between 'premium' rapid chargers and charging using your domestic power supply.
- **EV charging built into major new developments** – starting with Epping's Qualis developments, we will see public EV charging in the multi-storey car park and then in all major housing schemes across the District, some open to non-residents.
- **Coming at little or no cost to residents** – Instavolt's business model generates site rental and profit share for EFDC and involves no upfront costs for survey, installation etc. All the other proposals above involve grant funding and/or Section 106 contributions from developers or other match funding sources.
- **Electrifying our own fleet** – fleet vehicle charging is available at all our sites and we currently have switched 30 vehicles to electric or plug-in hybrid models

- **Reviewing Tenant guidelines** – a number of requests for EV charging facilities (including Motability users) mean a review of best practice is needed, balancing parking pressures, resident sentiment and the need to encourage switching to EV.
- **Communication with residents** – web page with a summary of the updates above is now live under Parking & Travel, plus an enquiries email to register interest

2. On-street EV Charging

- This is the responsibility of Essex County Council. They are still finalising their strategy in this area but one thing unlikely in Essex is the use of streetlights to supply overnight EV charging.
- EFDC has joined ECC's multi-District on-street charging bid to [OZEV/ORCS](#) which could see up to six on-street charging bays in the District, with sites in Loughton, Chigwell, Epping and Buckhurst Hill proposed.
- Ongoing dialogue with ECC and providers to establish the true number of charging points of all types needed in the next 4-5 years and beyond - the sum total of measures above is well below the likely need: for example counties such as Kent and West Sussex have firm plans to see 5-7k chargers live over this period.

3. Licensed minicab engagement (conversion to EV)

- Switching to EV is in many ways ideal for the taxi and minicab trade – high local mileage, lower running and maintenance costs, less to go wrong, proven in the London market (black cab and minicab/Uber). However, we needed to run a survey of the EFDC licensed base to understand the incentives and barriers to switching as EV minicabs are still a rarity in Essex.
 - Whilst non plug-in hybrid vehicles are common (36%), diesel is the fuel of choice for 51% and plug-in hybrid and EV are almost non-existent.
 - Almost all vehicles are kept at home overnight, but 56% have no viable way to charge at home (this appears much higher than the general population)
 - Even pre-Covid, 80% of drivers were doing average daily mileages well within the range of a modern EV in a fully charged state although the typical “very busy” day pre-Covid would have likely meant a topup charge during the day for around 45%
 - A quarter had considered or are considering switching to EV
 - Across all respondents, the main benefits of EV were seen as: low running and maintenance costs, high reliability and avoidance of ULEZ type charges
 - The main barriers to adoption were unaffordable initial acquisition costs, lack of public charging points and range anxiety
 - If a way were found to soften the blow of upfront cost, the % prepared to switch to EV went up to 30% with a further 30% unsure
 - Up to 900 black cab drivers live locally – LTDA (membership body) has helped analysis with driver location data and will help publicise rapid charger launch
 - NEXT STEPS – review at March Licensing Committee: consider tariff increase to help make switch easier? Especially as trade has suffered during the Covid crisis.

3. DaRT87 Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) trial – ends March 22

- Background: Launched Jan 2021 as emergency 'hybrid' Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) following the cessation of subsidy by Essex CC of Arriva's 87 bus service. This saw a 60%+ drop in passengers during 2020 phases of the pandemic and was costing EFDC £100k per year subsidy alongside ECC. A decision was taken to run a three-month trial (@£26k) from 1/1/21 and then 12m (@£85k, minus returned fare revenue).

- Summary of progress to date: Very difficult trading conditions due to: Lockdowns and slow recovery of bus usage; lack of confidence in buses among concessionary pass holders; major reduction in 5 day per week tube commuting; school/college disruptions; marketing reach.
- Positives: 1,096 viewers of website leading to 178 online registrations of interest ytd (16%). Examples of 'lifeline' users (NHS staff/users & others). Good/reliable service. We provided a 'supplier of last resort' solution in a lower carbon way than empty conventional buses.
- Negatives: conversion of 'interest' to actual usage is low; fare revenue returned to EFDC is well below estimates @2%-3% of running costs; EFCT are constrained on vehicles, driver availability (incl covid impacts) and due to covid bus regulations had max occupancy of 6 passengers for long periods.
- Learnings: 33%+ of interest is from SW Harlow residents (desire to get to our tube stations and educational sites); Epping Green shows highest % residents expressing interest (rural isolation); Unclear whether elderly are comfortable with approach (no evidence of others having problems except pre-booking disliked)
- NEXT STEPS – Cabinet decision whether to continue for another year; refresh marketing now that we are emerging from pandemic conditions; possible route reductions to increase frequency on highest demand portion of route (Harlow-Epping Green-Epping/station)

3. ECC & Highways

- Meeting is scheduled for 9 March 2022 with ECC and the Conservators to finish scoping out the development of an updated Transport Strategy for the Epping Forest.
- Ride London and local lobbying appears to have brought EFDC area back into ECC focus for cycling infrastructure review and improvement using the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) methodology covering SW areas adjacent to GLA boundary – budget needed