

## **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 12 April 2022 at 6.00 pm in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT**

**Present:** Councillors S Bentley, E J Carter, V J Holt, T L B Janke, C R Turley (Chair) and D Wright

**In Attendance:** A Astley (Executive Director: Housing, Communities & Customer Services), H Bolton (Strategic Transport Team Leader), L Gordon (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)), A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance), M Powell (Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), D Sargeant (Director - Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), -, and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)).

#### **COMSC41 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor B J Thompson.

#### **COMSC42 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **COMSC43 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

#### **COMSC44 Travel Strategy - Electric Vehicles**

The Committee invited the Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services and Strategic Transport Team Leader to update the committee on the council's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy.

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services provided a background to the council's EV strategy. It was explained that the first EV strategy was adopted in 2018 when the benefits of EVs were recognised and the requirement for charging infrastructure was outlined. Members heard that in June 2019, the UK Government had announced ambitions to achieve net zero by 2050. Following that in November 2020, the target was set to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. It was said that, in July 2019, the council declared a climate emergency and are committed to ensuring that the authority is carbon neutral by 2030.

The Strategic Transport Team Leader provided an update to the committee regarding the current situation of EVs in the Borough. It was explained that, since 2018, the number of locations of public EV chargepoints have almost doubled from 11 to 21, and a further three more were planned. It was explained that this would provide 42 public charging devices in the Borough. Members heard that there was a number of different types of charging points that were available to people in the Borough. This ranged from slow charging points to residential charging points. It was noted that the Zap-map website was the recommended source for people to find out about the local charging points. It was also reported that 599 residents have installed an EV chargepoint through the EV Homecharge scheme (EVHS). An additional 51 sockets had been installed through the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) at the time of the meeting. Members were informed that grant funding for zero emission vehicles would be changing this year and that some of the changes could include funding for landlords, flats and apartment development to have EV chargingpoints.

Members heard that the number of ultra-low emission vehicles that were registered in the Borough at the end of 2017 was 164 and by the third quarter in 2021 the figure was recorded as 1,310. This reflected an increase of 699% in comparison to the figure quoted in 2017. It was said that this is still less than 1% of all registered vehicles in the Borough.

Following the update of the number of EV's the members were shown information regarding the numbers of licensed plug-in cars, vans and quadricycles that were registered in Telford & Wrekin. The data was from the Department For Transport vehicle licensing statistics to date. It was explained to Members that since 2018 there has been a sharp increase in EV's to date. One of the reasons that was used to explain this trend was linked to government funding. It was said, however, that in comparison to petrol and diesel cars, EV's are still expensive to purchase.

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services then discussed the Council's EVs. At the time of the meeting there were 6 Council EVs, with an additional 7 EVs expected for April 2022. Members heard that there are 10 chargepoints at Granville House and in the Southwater Multi-storey for Council Vehicles. It was noted that there were an additional 6 chargepoints for IdVerde and Balfour Beatty EV's. The council still have 30 diesel vans and the policy will encourage teams to change these to EV at end of life if not before. It was explained that some of the reason for having these remaining diesel vehicles was down to logistics and practicality. The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services cited the use of mini-buses which were used to look at the logistics of elements like seating to usage, usage and range that EV equivalents could have. It was said that the current focus was on replacing the older vehicles with ones that produced less pollution. Members heard that the authority are working with external partners like Arriva to see if EV could be applied to public transportation.

In the Summer of 2021, a strategy review was started that consists of three elements: Public EV Charging Strategy & Toolkit; Council EV Charging Strategy & Toolkit; and Funding, procurement and delivery of EV Chargepoints. Members heard that, at the time of the meeting, reviews had been completed on Policy & funding; Technology & Markets; Commercial models; and, Demand analysis. It was noted that the draft strategy recognised that while the Council can take responsibility for chargepoint installation in its car parks or on-streets, support was needed from residents, workplaces, retail and leisure destinations to install chargepoints. It was said that partnerships would be key to help with funding the chargepoints. Members heard that the team are taking an evidence based approach and discussions with suppliers regarding funding were ongoing.

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services reported to the committee that the team are currently reviewing draft EV strategies and toolkits with the hope to present them to Cabinet in Summer 2022. Members also heard that the process of procurement has started, as well as exploring funding opportunities with a view to procure an operator to install and maintain EV chargepoints later in 2022.

After the presentation Members asked questions:

*Was there scope to look at using carparks that are heavily used like the Southwater carpark for EV chargepoints for members of the public to use?*

The Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services explained that they need to work with suppliers of privately owned car parks in order to install chargepoints. Members heard that they are looking at the Council owned car parks such as Hall Court car park and Southwater Multi-storey to provide EV chargepoints. It was noted that their demand analysis showed that these car parks are to be looked at for public EV chargepoints. Southwater is already used for the council's EV fleets.

*Was there a possibility to work in partnership with tourist organisations to encourage tourists to use the EV chargepoints?*

Members heard that this is a possibility and that this could be looked at as a partnership avenue.

*Were there plans in place for residential areas with limited or on-street parking?*

Members heard that as part of the analysis and planning for EV points, types of roads and areas are to be considered before the installation of EV chargepoints. It was said that further information and analysis needed to be explored and that this was ongoing due to ever evolving technology.

*Were we looking at the engagement with social housing and planning arrangements to accommodate EV chargepoints?*

Members heard that new planning laws will be coming into effect later this year, requiring all new homes and new non-residential buildings to have an EV chargepoint installed. It was noted that existing new residential developments like Station Road, Newport are already starting to include EV chargepoints in new homes. 50% of the houses on the Station Road site will be fitted with an EV chargepoint. This requirement won't apply to existing builds although they were able to apply for grants from Office of Zero Emission Vehicles for installing EV chargepoints.

*Did the data regarding the number of EVs in the Borough include those that were leased and was there a way of putting the Zap Map data on the website for residents and visitors?*

The Strategic Transport Team Leader explained that the data regarding the number of EVs in the Borough is provided by the DVLA, and that the figures include all of the **registered** vehicles in the Borough so those leased but registered outside of the Borough would not be included in these figures. Incorporating Zap Map data on the website could be considered.

*Was there anything that the Council could implement or fund, prior to Government implementation of initiatives?*

The Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services replied that the team would take comments back from the Committee and use them to plan the next stages of the strategy. It was highlighted that this included the gaps in infrastructure and other areas that could be utilised for chargepoints. This information was to be used as part of the demand analysis to further plan the strategy. The committee heard that alongside this the team were exploring working with partners to provide the best possible service to the Borough.

Following the discussion it was **RESOLVED** that –

- a. **The Communities Scrutiny Committee notes the approach taken with the Electric Vehicle Strategy, progress made to date as outlined in this report and offer areas for further review.**
- b. **Notes the role of the Council in developing/delivering this infrastructure alongside the role the market has.**
- c. **Notes the current plans to replace council operated vehicles with EV's as they reach the end of their contracted period.**

#### **COMSC45 Work Programme Review**

The Director: Policy & Governance provided Members with a summary of what the Committee has scrutinised over the last municipal year. Members also heard about the outstanding items that are on the work programme and

that they could be carried over to the next municipal year considering that this meeting was the last of the 2021/22 municipal year.

It was noted that the Work Programming process for the next municipal year was already underway and that they will be updated accordingly following Scrutiny Management Board.

**COMSC46 Chair's Update**

The Chair thanked members and officers for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.36 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** Date Not Specified