

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director

To

Cabinet

On

Date 15 June 2021

Report prepared by: Claire Victory

Agenda
Item No.

Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure –Interim Policy Guidance and Draft Supplementary Planning Document

Place Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member: Councillor Mulroney
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the preparation of new local planning policy guidance for developers on the provision of electric vehicle charging points in new residential and commercial schemes, to support the Council's Green City Action Plan, and assist in delivering on relevant Southend 2050 outcomes.
- 1.2 Member approval is specifically sought to adopt a new interim policy setting out promotional guidance on charging points for electric vehicles (typically battery electric, plug-in hybrid or fuel cell electric vehicles) and the Council's broader ambition to decarbonise Southend and meet its commitment to zero carbon by 2030. The Interim Policy Guidance is intended to be used for development management purposes in advance of the adoption of a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) later in 2021.
- 1.3 Member approval is therefore also being sought to undertake a period of public consultation on a SPD for Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements in New Developments.
- 1.4 Both documents seek to boost provision of charging points for electric vehicles in new development schemes permitted in Southend on Sea.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Agree to adopt the Interim Policy Guidance for Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements to guide new developments in development management decisions (attached at Appendix 1).**

- 2.2 Agree to the Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements in New Developments draft Supplementary Planning Document (attached at Appendix 2) being subject to a 4 week period of public consultation.**
- 2.3 Agree to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Growth and Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, to:**
- **make minor amendments to the draft Supplementary Planning Document prior to consultation; and**
 - **take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory processes and procedures to undertake the consultation.**

3. Background

- 3.1** The number of electric vehicles registered in Southend is rising steadily, albeit from a low base. The number of new electric vehicles registered in England is also rising against an overall drop in new vehicle registrations. One in every 47 cars registered in the UK is now electric (including battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, and fuel cell electric vehicles).
- 3.2** Supporting the increasing use of electric vehicles within Southend will make an important contribution to reducing carbon emissions from vehicle use within the town. This will also have the benefit of improving local air quality, particularly along the main road corridors and town centres.
- 3.3** Strengthening policy on electric vehicle charging will contribute to the delivery of a number of Southend 2050 outcomes, primarily to ensure Southend acts as a Green City with outstanding examples of energy efficient and carbon neutral buildings, streets, transport and recycling, but it will also support other outcomes such as leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean and green, and being effective in protecting and improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable in our community.
- 3.4** The Local Plan Issues and Options was the subject of public consultation in Spring 2019. Feedback from the consultation revealed support for more provision of infrastructure to support the growth in use of electric vehicles to contribute towards reducing carbon emissions, although it was recognised that other policies would also need to be introduced, to more strongly encourage a shift toward more walking and cycling for local journeys and investment in public transport, to reduce carbon emissions to target levels set by Government.
- 3.5** **Appendix 1** sets out interim policy guidance to further encourage the provision of electric vehicle charging points and infrastructure in new developments until a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can be put in place. The interim guidance will encourage provision for all new major residential and commercial development providing 10 or more car parking spaces. The interim guidance encourages 20% of all new car parking spaces provided with new development to have EV charging points installed. The remaining 80% of

spaces are encouraged to provide passive provision for installation of EV charging points at a later date through underground cabling.

- 3.6 The government has consulted on changes to national Building Regulations in relation to electric vehicle charging infrastructure¹. To help to meet the challenging national target for achieving net zero carbon emissions the government is proposing that each new dwelling with an associated car parking space should have a charge point, and at least one charge point for non - residential developments with more than 10 car parking spaces provided, where this is technically feasible. This is a higher standard of provision than the Interim Planning Guidance.
- 3.7 The draft SPD for Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Requirements in New Developments proposed for consultation (**see Appendix 2**) follows the government's approach in seeking support for higher standards.²

4. Other Options

- 4.1 The Council has set an ambitious target to be carbon zero by 2030. The draft SPD and Interim Policy Guidance set out a clear approach to boosting the provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in the Borough as new development comes forward.
- 4.2 A failure to act now would result in such infrastructure coming forward at a much slower pace. Not having an adopted SPD in place for electric charging points would also risk the Council incurring costs in attempting to defend refusals of planning permission based on an outdated policy framework and related evidence base.
- 4.3 It should also be noted that other neighbouring authorities such as Chelmsford and Basildon are moving ahead with their programmes for EV charging point installation. Introducing the policy for EV charging points associated with new development will help Southend to remain competitive in attracting inward investment, providing modern housing stock and commercial floorspace whilst supporting other actions being taken to provide public charging points across the town for the benefit of residents, employees and visitors.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 To ensure the timely roll out of EV charging infrastructure to keep pace with new development in the Borough. Future proofing new development through the provision of EV charging points and passive provision of cabling will avoid expensive retrofitting to adapt for the use of electric vehicles as EV use becomes more widespread as is expected.

¹ [Electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electric-vehicle-charging-points-in-residential-and-non-residential-buildings)

² [Electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electric-vehicle-charging-points-in-residential-and-non-residential-buildings)

6. Corporate Implications

Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

- 6.1 The adoption of the SPD and use of Interim Policy Guidance, will contribute to the fulfilment of a number of elements of the Council's vision and priorities, for example improving transport provision and infrastructure, improving economic prosperity, and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.
- 6.2 The delivery of the SPD and Interim Policy Guidance will contribute to the priorities of the Council in responding to the impacts of Covid 19.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The introduction of Interim Policy Guidance and consultation on a draft SPD contributes to the 2050 outcome to act as a Green City with outstanding examples of energy efficient and carbon neutral buildings, streets, transport and recycling. It will contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions from road-based transport by providing supporting infrastructure to encourage investment in and use of electric vehicles. It is also proposed that wherever feasible on-site renewable energy be used for vehicle charging.

Financial Implications

- 6.4 Financial and human resource input is necessary to fulfil the statutory requirements for public consultation of the SPD.
- 6.5 The costs associated with preparing the SPD will be met from existing agreed budgets with the Director of Finance and Resources.

Legal Implications

- 6.6 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states: "if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise." An adopted SPD which has been subject to public consultation can be a material consideration which attracts weight in the planning balance. It will provide the authority with the framework to robustly defend planning decisions at appeal. The Interim Policy Guidance has no formal status as part of the development plan but is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.

People Implications

- 6.7 Staff resource from the Strategic Planning Team will be required in order to prepare the Interim Policy Guidance and to prepare and consult on the draft SPD. Support from Performance and Business Support will also be required, particularly with regards to the public consultation process.

Property Implications

- 6.8 The Interim Policy Guidance and draft SPD will place requirements on developers when creating parking spaces as part of new development. This will include development of Council owned assets.

Consultation

- 6.9 The draft SPD public consultation process will be carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.10 The public consultation will give the opportunity for different sections of the community to input into the plan making process. Poor air quality tends to disproportionately affect residents living in areas of multiple deprivation, for example within urban areas close to busy roads. Greater take up of EVs should improve air quality within these areas.

Risk Assessment

- 6.11 Staff resources within the Strategic Planning Team will be required to progress the SPD through public consultation and to formal adoption.
- 6.12 If the SPD were not to be published and taken forward to adoption, the absence of the planning policies may result in EV charging infrastructure being rolled out at a much slower pace in the Borough, contrary to the ambitions set out in the Green City Action Plan.

Value for Money

- 6.13 There will be beneficial impacts on value for money by carrying out the work proposed using in-house resources wherever possible. This will have considerable benefits in terms of building in-house experience and expertise for officers, as well as utilising local knowledge and experience within the Strategic Planning team which would not be gained otherwise.

Community Safety Implications

- 6.14 The SPD will have a neutral effect on community safety.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 7.2 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- 7.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

- 7.4 Planning for the Future, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, March 2020
- 7.5 Southend Local Development Scheme (2021)
- 7.6 Southend New Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation (February 2019)
- 7.7 Southend New Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Report Southend on Sea Borough Council, August 2019
- 7.8 South Essex Statement of Common Ground (2018)

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure in new development Interim Policy Guidance.
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure in new development draft Supplementary Planning Document.