

Place Scrutiny Committee

**In-Depth Scrutiny Project
2022/23**

**‘Preparing Southend for
the Electric Vehicle
Revolution’**

Final Report and Recommendations (July 2023)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am pleased to be able to present this report and recommendations of the in-depth scrutiny project for 2022/23.
- 1.2 Electric vehicles and the reduction of the use of fossil fuelled vehicles is something that I am particularly passionate about. This project was an important piece of work not solely because of the Government's ambition to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with all new cars and vans being fully zero emission from 2035 and the continued usage on fossil fuels but also to improve the air quality and environment within the City and removing barriers to potential EV ownership where residents may be unable to install their own charging units.
- 1.3 In undertaking this work, the Project Team was conscious that the Council needed to identify some solutions to kick start the preparations for the EV revolution in Southend and reduce the barriers for increasing electric vehicle usage. This will help identify the right technology, the necessary infrastructure and appropriate solutions.
- 1.4 I would like to thank everyone involved for their contribution to the in-depth scrutiny project, including Shirley Long at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and representatives from both companies who kindly gave their time to share their expertise and experiences to inform our work.
- 1.5 Finally, I would like to thank officers of the Democratic Services Section for their assistance and support during the course of the in-depth scrutiny project and in the production of this final report.



Councillor Kevin Buck
Chair of the In-Depth Scrutiny Project Team

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Each of the Council's scrutiny committees (the People Scrutiny Committee, the Place Scrutiny Committee and the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee) has traditionally undertaken an in-depth scrutiny project each year. The in-depth projects are selected at the beginning of each municipal year and generally focus on the Council's corporate priorities or matters of local concern. Recent in-depth scrutiny projects have also been aligned with the ambition and outcomes arising from the Southend 2050 programme.
- 2.2 The in-depth scrutiny projects lead to the development of reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council on its policies, budget provision and service

delivery. Participation in the in-depth projects enable councillors to be actively involved in a specific topic and to influence and shape proposals around service improvement that will result in improved outcomes.

3. FRAMEWORK OF THE IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY PROJECT

3.1 At its meeting in July 2022, the Place Scrutiny Committee agreed that an in-depth scrutiny project be undertaken during the 2022/23 municipal year on the theme of 'Preparing Southend for the Electric Vehicle Revolution', as part of the scrutiny work programme for the year.

3.2 There were a number of reasons for the identification of the in-depth scrutiny project. In particular, the project aimed to bring Southend into the 21st Century in preparation for the increased use and ownership of electric vehicles, ensuring appropriate infrastructure would be available given the Government's plan end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with all new cars and vans being fully zero emission from 2035.

From the outset of the study, it was felt that the focus should be on on-street charging facilities, particularly given the complexities enabling charging facilities in densely urbanised areas with streets which have limited or no off-street parking suitable for private home chargers and very high levels of on street parking.

3.3 The agreed scope of the in-depth scrutiny project was:

- (a) To review and develop the vision proposed in the Southend City Council Electric Vehicle (SCC EV) Feasibility Study in particular the provision of chargers in residential areas.
- (b) To identify and develop an appropriate timeline for the introduction of any proposals.
- (c) To identify an appropriate revenue model which will realise short and medium-term benefits for the City.

3.4 The review was set within the context of the Council's 2050 ambition and priorities and the Project Team was tasked with reviewing relevant issues and to report back to the Cabinet with appropriate findings and recommendations.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The review was undertaken on behalf of the Place Scrutiny Committee by a Project Team comprising the following members appointed by the Council on 19 May 2022:

Councillors M Berry, K Buck, J Courtenay, M Dent, A Jones, N Ward, J Warren and P Wexham

4.2 Councillor K Buck was appointed Chair of the Project Team at its initial project scoping meeting held on 16 November 2022.

4.3 The Project Team was supported by relevant officers including J Burr (Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment)) and T Row (Principal Democratic Services Officer/Project Co-ordinator). Other officer support was provided in respect of specific elements of the in-depth scrutiny project, including:

N Hoskins (Head of Civil Engineering)
J Gay (Interim Head of Waste and Climate Change)

- 4.4 The Project Team met on three occasions between September 2022 and March 2023. Efforts were made by the Project Team to ensure that the timescale for the delivery of the project was maintained and that the project was completed within the 2022/23 municipal year.
- 4.5 The in-depth scrutiny project was undertaken using an evidence-based approach to the consideration of existing governance and joint working arrangements, through a mixture of experiences presented by councillors and informative presentations that supported the understanding of the barriers, challenges, opportunities and aspirations of the issues involved. One witness session was held in respect of the project, where an officer with significant experience in the matter within a number of London Boroughs and two commercial companies presented to the Project Team.
- 4.6 A project plan and work programme for the in-depth scrutiny project was adopted by the Project Team in November 2022, having been agreed by the Place Scrutiny Committee in October 2022. The project plan and work programme set out the scope and framework for the project, alongside a programme of thematic evidence-gathering activities around the following specific areas identified as key to the desired outcomes for the project:
- (a) The context and expectations of the in-depth scrutiny project.
 - (b) The current provision of charging facilities in the City.
 - (c) The barriers to and opportunities for charging facilities in densely urbanised areas and potential options.
 - (d) The experiences from other local authorities on providing such infrastructure
 - (e) What eligible local authorities need to do to apply for appropriate funding sources such as LEVI electric chargepoint infrastructure funding and the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) 'on-street residential chargepoint scheme' (ORCS)
- 4.7 The following sources of evidence were considered as part of the in-depth scrutiny project:
- (a) Overview of challenges and opportunities for increased EV charging infrastructure in Southend-on-Sea – July 2022
 - (b) Relevant strategies, surveys, data, documents, reports and plans.
 - (c) Feedback from providers and other local authorities
 - (d) Government guidance

5. CONTEXT AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY PROJECT

- 5.1 From the outset of the study, the Project Team was mindful of the Council's ambition to become a Green City, with low-emission transport a key focus in the City Council's sustainability reporting. The Council had also declared a Climate Emergency on 18 July, 2019, and announced a commitment to achieving carbon neutrality in their operations by 2030 (or before), as well as supporting the wider City to achieve net zero by the same date. To assist in achieving this target, several strategy documents and enabling policies had been produced including:
- (i) Supplementary Planning Document regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure for new development.
 - (ii) A Feasibility Study regarding charging infrastructure by Net Zero East entitled "Overview of challenges and opportunities for increased EV charging infrastructure in Southend-on-Sea".

It was also mindful that there were two Air Quality Management Areas covering sections of the A127, which currently exceed national air quality goals.

- 5.2 The Project Team had regard to the Government's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, published in March 2022, which summarised the need for a particular focus on chargepoint infrastructure:

"We expect around 300,000 public chargers as a minimum by 2030. Our goal is to ensure these chargepoints are installed ahead of demand, inspiring confidence in drivers who have not yet made the switch."

This equates to between approximately 250-260 public chargers in Southend by 2030.

- 5.3 The Project Team noted the level existing provision of charging infrastructure within its car parks and other facilities. Public electric vehicle charging points across Southend were limited and most were centred across the seafront and the middle of the City. The network across the wider city and smaller areas was, however, somewhat scarce. According to the DfT, as of April 2022, the total public charging devices within Southend stood at 19 devices. This equated to 10.4 devices per 100,000 people. The Council did, however, have the ambition to install further devices in public areas within its control.
- 5.4 The Project Team also noted the Council's ambition to ensure that no resident was more than a 10 minute walk from an EV charger by installing facilities at Council car parks and leisure centres. A plan taken from the feasibility study regarding charging infrastructure produced by Net Zero East was shared with the Project Team. It was explained that by mapping a "10-minute walk" radius to different potential public charging locations on council land, it was possible to identify potential gaps to ensuring adequate access to charging for all residents. The scenarios set out in the plan indicated how the spread of EV charging would enable the greatest access for residents. It was felt that the Council should continue to assess charging volume requirements at the different car parks and begin discussions with companies that could install 'destination' charging options. The type and speed of chargers at each location would need to be determined.
- 5.5 The Project Team accepted that the installation of electric charging infrastructure across the City needed to be accessible for all demand users. It quickly identified that the more challenging issue was the complexities in providing charging facilities in densely urbanised areas with streets which have limited or no off-street parking suitable for private home chargers and very high levels of on street parking. If on-street charging is installed in such areas it would be important that the density of parking spaces is not adversely impacted and the residents who use the on-street parking are still able to keep their car close to their house.
- 5.6 For those properties with driveways off-street parking and dedicated parking facilities, charging at home was a relatively easy and convenient solution, with many energy suppliers now offering EV charging solutions along with specific tariffs. There were also innovative solutions coming to market to enable EV's to act as flexible assets and sell electricity back to the grid (Vehicle to Grid). This could be attractive source of income for EV owners in the future and could encourage EV uptake. Many people who lived in multi-story dwellings or rely on on-street parking, however, would require alternative methods of charging.
- 5.7 There are many areas in the City where roads and pavements are narrow, with vehicles parking on the kerb. Most terraced houses also very often offered no dedicated parking spots, and residents may therefore feel it too risky to invest in an EV charge point if they are not guaranteed ability to park near their home. There are also roads where vehicles are parked and lining both sides of the road. In some cases, residents could run private

charge points from their houses however, there were health and safety concerns particularly in relation trip hazards etc. although residents could seek permission to run gullies from the properties to facilities charging cables. Many roads also have narrow pavements but with the inclusion of traffic calming systems and kerb-side furniture. Any existing kerb-side furniture (such as lamp-posts) could make installing EV charge points difficult without affecting pavement accessibility.

- 5.8 The Project team heard that whilst such street furniture could make the installation of EV charging points difficult without affecting pavement accessibility, these assets provided an opportunity for alternative solutions eg lamp post chargers, pop-up chargers or concealed chargers. Where additional kerb-side furniture is less likely to impose additional further restrictions to accessibility dedicated bays for charging could be considered. Southend is fortunate in that the majority of lampposts in the City are still located at the front of the pavement. This means that a lamppost can be retrofitted very quickly and without any additional cost such as having to use a satellite post, etc.
- 5.9 Although one of the largest challenges for Southend when installing, upgrading and maintaining an electric vehicle charging network is the upfront, operations and maintenance costs, there various funding streams now available for the benefit of local authorities to aid with the installation costs. There were also new companies able to provide appropriate solutions for on-street charging systems with a variety of financing options available, meaning that the facilities could be installed with no financial input from the Council while still generating an income for it.
- 5.10 Two such companies were Connected Kerb and ChargeLight. Representatives from both companies were invited to a meeting of the Project Team to explain their services and what they could do for Southend. Copies of the slides used in the presentations are attached as appendices to this report.
- 5.11 Connected Kerb have developed a multi-award-winning EV charging and smart cities infrastructure solution, recognised as market-leading and addressing many of the issues that have plagued EV charging technologies. The ChargeLight solution uses lamppost charging hardware made by CityEV, a leading charge point manufacturing firm based in the UK.
- 5.12 The Project Team heard that by end of 2022, more than 7,000 lamppost chargers had already been installed in the UK Lamppost chargers already notably in London, Brighton, Coventry, Portsmouth, Hampshire, Wirral, Reading amongst others. In most London Boroughs, lampposts make up appropriately 80% of public charging points
- 5.13 It was evident from the presentations that some locations could facilitate a dedicated on-street parking pay and charging pillar, but this would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis in discussion with residents. There are also a number of terraced streets that are both too narrow to facilitate on-street charging posts but would leave residents greater than a 10 minute walk from the nearest charge-point without a local solution. It may be worth exploring whether adapting street lighting to incorporate charge-points would be viable in these areas.
- 5.14 Both companies identified some options for the Council to provide a network of charging points. These schemes would qualify for grant funding from the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) and both had experience in working with local authorities with submitting applications. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) is a cross Government, industry endorsed team established to promote the uptake of zero emission vehicles (ZEV). OZEV has the remit to dispense funding for the 'on-street residential chargepoint scheme' (ORCS) to local authorities, supporting the roll-out of EV charge point networks across England. The purpose of the scheme is to increase the availability of on-street

chargepoints in residential streets where off-street parking is not available, thereby ensuring that on-street parking is not a barrier to realising the benefits of owning a plug-in EV.

- 5.15 There is also an opportunity to encourage both the take up of EV's, ensure 'close to home' charging, but also to generate additional income for the council, to introduce a time limited incentive of dedicated EV charging bays in 'high stress' parking residential streets. Subject to agreeing to the terms and conditions, meeting full compliance and passing all legal and statutory due diligence, an opportunity exists to allow residents to apply for a dedicated parking permit at a fee to be agreed, to solely use a specific EV charging bay enabled for this purpose.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 We consider that the in-depth scrutiny project was undertaken within the context of the Council's 2050 ambition and priorities and that the proposed outcomes for the project have generally been achieved.
- 6.2 It will be a challenge to balance competing demands for on-street, car park and destination charging to ensure that provision matches uptake at different locations. Ongoing community engagement and careful strategy development can reduce the risk.
- 6.3 Moving forward the Council should look to continue to assess charging volume requirements at the different car parks and other Council facilities and begin discussions with companies that could install 'destination' charging options as well as fast and rapid charging at car parks and selected third-party destinations. It should also investigate further the potential for on-street charging options particularly in densely urbanised areas where there is no off-street residential parking and areas of high parking stress.
- 6.4 Throughout this report, we have highlighted support of the Council's ambitions to improve its electric vehicle charging infrastructure in terms of aspects of the work programme for the in-depth scrutiny project, alongside the following substantive recommendations to strengthen its preparations for the EV revolution.
- 6.5 We therefore recommend as follows:
- (1) That options be developed for pilot schemes to be mobilised within the current civic year of 2023/24 in appropriate areas as identified by the suggested maps, for pilot schemes for both options including feeder pillars with dedicated charging bays and lamppost and street furniture charging units.
 - (2) That the Council continue to assess charging volume requirements at the different car parks and other Council facilities and begin discussions with companies that could install 'destination' charging options as well as fast and rapid charging at car parks and selected third-party destinations.
 - (3) That ambitious bids be submitted for any available sources of funding to support the increase of the EV charging network.
 - (4) That the success of the pilot schemes be monitored and reported to a future meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee after the first 12 months of implementation of 1 above for consideration.
 - (5) That the Council installs sufficient numbers of destination or other appropriate EV chargers at all sites where the Council has any form of fleet vehicle operations, to facilitate the transition of its own fleet to EV's.