

To: Cabinet
Date: 18 October 2023
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Oxford

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Lucy Pegg, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities; and Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice
Corporate Priority:	Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford; Enable an Inclusive Economy; Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24; Local Plan 2036
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 10 October 2023 to consider a report concerning the Delivery of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Oxford. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 18 October 2023, recommends that Cabinet approves the draft Implementation Plan for the Council's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (OxEVIS) delivery alongside various related delegations of authority; and agrees transition of the on-street elements of Go Ultra Low Oxford (GULO) from Oxford City Council delivery to Oxfordshire County Council delivery, subject to a number of conditions.

2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Upton (Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities), Mish Tullar (Head of Corporate Strategy), Tina Mould (Sustainable Innovation Project Team Manager) and Sarah Hassenpflug (Project Manager – Innovation Team) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities introduced the report. Oxford City Council had been very successful at attracting Government funding in the past for Go Ultra Low Oxford (GULO) and had been a pioneer in this space compared to other surrounding districts. The Council had a dedicated, prize-winning team for the delivery of Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure, which had been in place for a number of years. Ensuring fair and equitable rollout of EV Infrastructure was a priority for the Council, which included a focus on supporting car clubs, electrifying blue badge parking bays and enabling Council tenants to access EV charging.
4. National changes set out in the Government's 'Taking Charge' document shifted responsibility for EV Infrastructure to Tier 1 local authorities (i.e. Oxfordshire County Council). This was a move that the Council regretted, however the City Council would continue to work closely with the County Council.
5. The Committee asked a range of questions, including questions relating to appropriate priority for EV Infrastructure rollout being afforded to deprived urban areas; how affordability and speed of EV charging could be balanced to encourage EV uptake; potential for Oxford Direct Services (ODS) to commercialise pavement cable gulleys; opportunities for the Council to implement dedicated car club charging spaces within Council-owned car parks; how to overcome barriers to installing EV Infrastructure in conservation areas; the impact of parking constraints on onstreet EV charging; and the possibility of the Council introducing a Local Development Order regarding household planning applications to install onstreet EV Infrastructure.
6. In particular, the Committee discussed issues around parking in certain areas of the city and how this was likely to lead to situations where residents were unable to park in front of their own home; therefore they would be unable to charge their vehicle via a pavement cable gully. The Committee felt that this should be taken into serious consideration and the possibility of reserved parking spaces for the purposes of onstreet EV charging at home be explored. Linked to this, the Committee agreed that consideration should be given to how onstreet EV charging was facilitated and managed in conservation areas.

Recommendation 1: That the Council works closely with Oxfordshire County Council to consider options for reserved parking spaces outside homes specifically for at-home onstreet EV charging in areas of Oxford where a need for this provision is identified (e.g. because of parking constraints in those areas).

Recommendation 2: That the Council works closely with Oxfordshire County Council to consider options for at-home EV charging in conservation areas to ensure that residents living in these areas do not experience disproportionate access to onstreet EV charging opportunities.

7. The Committee also queried the possibility of incentives to help ensure that suppliers (“concessionaires”) repair EV chargers promptly when they are broken or faulty, as the Committee was aware of a number of instances where EV chargers had been left in a state of disrepair for prolonged periods of time, which negatively impacted communities.

Recommendation 3: That the Council works closely with Oxfordshire County Council to explore options to incentivise concessionaires to promptly repair EV Infrastructure when a unit is out of service.

8. In addition, the Committee explored the topic of co-charging and commented that co-charging on employment sites outside of working hours, whereby the public could access EV charging, could help improve residents’ access to EV charging and make best use of EV Infrastructure across the city.

Recommendation 4: That the Council works closely with Oxfordshire County Council to investigate the viability of EV co-charging between employment and the public on employment sites.

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