

Warwickshire County Council response to electric vehicles inquiry

Why we are interested in promoting electric vehicles

In November 2017 Warwickshire's EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy was approved by Cabinet. This sets out Warwickshire County Council's aspiration to deliver electric vehicle (EV) charging points to help lower vehicle emissions. EV uptake is one means of WCC helping improve air quality around our town centres, particularly in our Air Quality Management Areas.

In addition to the above, major vehicle manufacturers namely Jaguar Landrover and London Taxis International are and will be manufacturing EVs and EV batteries in Warwickshire and for that reason WCC aims to help deliver the infrastructure to support this.

Details of any obstacles you have faced in developing associated infrastructure

The key obstacles that have been faced include those relating to supply and grid capacity, cost of installation and available funding. Specific issues are detailed below;

- The Distribution Network Operator (DNO) has expressed its concerns over the power supply and the 'harmonics' of power distribution in some of Warwickshire's town centres. In some locations the DNO has indicated that we are near capacity and upgrades to the grid will need to be undertaken at some stage. There is uncertainty regarding who is responsible for meeting the cost of these upgrades. If the Local Authority is required to fund these upgrades as part of an EV charging point installation scheme there is a significant risk that the scheme becomes financially unviable and will not be delivered.
- The quantity of infrastructure that can be delivered is dependent on installation costs. These costs can be substantially higher than anticipated. In addition to the installation costs there are significant other costs that need to be included; these consist of the charging point itself, the DNO's fee for the connection. As a result, in some cases, the cost of installing a fast charge point can total nearly £10k.
- The On-street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS) fund administered by OLEV is available for Local Authorities to apply for in order to provide EV charging points in on street residential locations should they wish to however funding is capped at £100k per LA. There are a number of issues with this fund;
 - Funding is capped at £100k; given the high total scheme costs detailed above only very limited infrastructure could be provided.
 - Any infrastructure installed requires ongoing maintenance; there is no ongoing funding stream for this purpose.
 - There is a significant risk that by providing residential on street charging points, there will be a level of parking displacement. This will compound an already highly emotive and competitive residential issue.
 - Any on street EV scheme would require a full Traffic Regulation order and associated consultation. This is resource and cost intensive and again places further pressure on already constrained local authorities.
 - The fund has recently been extended to include LA owned off street car parks. Whilst this does overcome some of the difficulties outlined above the likely overall scheme costs and ongoing infrastructure maintenance requirements still persist.

What Government could do better to support us developing the electric vehicle agenda

- Issues with the power supply v demand need to be recognised and the challenges this presents to LAs. The Government should work more closely with the DNO's to establish how capacity issues can be overcome.
- It would be useful if LAs were consulted with on how best to deliver EV infrastructure prior to any new funding schemes being announced. This would allow LAs to express their concerns and/or ideas. Or the funding criteria needs to be more flexible from the outset.