Agenda Item No. 13

Cabinet – 15 October 2025

Electric Vehicle Charge Point Infrastructure Programme

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew: Statutory Deputy Leader – Prosperous Places & Investment

Related portfolios: N/A

Service: Environment & Place Operations – Highways & Transport

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1 The accelerated delivery of this infrastructure across Walsall will support the borough's transition to net zero, improve transport equity, and facilitate the delivery of cleaner, future-ready infrastructure.

2. Summary

2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to enter into a 15-year borough-wide concession agreement with a private sector partner, for the installation, operation, and maintenance of electric vehicle (EV) charge-points.

2.2 The proposed contract will provide exclusivity for installations in Council-owned car parks, alongside a non-exclusive licence for on-highway provision. The private sector partner will assume responsibility for the delivery, providing capital investment over the 15-year contract term, and taking on all capital and operational risk. The Council will benefit from a percentage of gross revenue generated from electricity sales.

2.3 The arrangement will be procured using the Electrical Vehicle Charging Points & Associated Solutions framework (Y23049 - Lot 1. Electric Vehicle Charge Points) and will grant exclusivity in Council-owned car parks, alongside a non-exclusive licence for on-highway provision.

2.4 The concession contract will enable cross-subsidisation, allowing commercially viable sites such as town and district centres and rapid charging locations to offset delivery in lower-income and high-need residential areas.

2.5 The Council will receive a percentage of gross revenue generated from electricity sales, with the private sector partner assuming all capital and operational risk.

3. Recommendations

That following consideration of the information in the private session Cabinet:

a) Approves the procurement of a concession contract for the installation and management of electric vehicle charge-points using the Electrical Vehicle Charging Points & Associated Solutions framework.

b) Approves the award of a 15-year concession contract to a single supplier, providing exclusivity for installations in Council-owned car parks and a non-exclusive agreement for on-highway locations.

c) Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Environment, Housing & Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Prosperous Places & Investment, to award and enter into the contract.

d) Notes that the Council will receive an agreed percentage of gross revenue generated from electricity sales.

e) Note that all installation, maintenance, and operational responsibilities will be fulfilled by the private sector partner, with no direct cost to the Council.

4. Report detail – know

Context

4.1 The UK Government's Net Zero Strategy and Transport Decarbonisation Plan set out a phased ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035. Nationally, at least 300,000 public charge points are targeted for delivery by 2030. Local authorities are expected to play a leading role, supported by funding streams such as the LEVI Fund, ORCS, and CRSTS, but with a clear emphasis on private investment as essential to delivery at scale.

4.2 Walsall's Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy, approved in 2024, identifies a significant infrastructure gap. Current public provision is limited to around 100 sockets, with few on-street charge points in operation. However, modelling forecasts a requirement of 1,134 standard and 153 rapid charge points by 2030 to meet demand.

4.3 More than 39% of Walsall households do not have access to off-street parking, and many are located in wards with high levels of deprivation. These areas are less likely to attract private sector investment without public facilitation. The concession model proposed mitigates this risk by enabling commercially attractive sites to subsidise equitable provision in communities where market appetite is low.

4.4 It is proposed that the Council enter into a 15-year borough-wide concession contract with a private sector partner for the installation, operation, maintenance, and renewal of electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI). The concession will provide exclusivity in Council-owned car parks and a non-exclusive licence for on-highway sites.

4.5 The private sector partner will be responsible for the delivery and lifecycle management of the charging assets under the programme. At the conclusion of the contract, the EVCI may either be handed back to the Council or incorporated into future infrastructure plans, subject to delivery outcomes and procurement strategies.

4.6 Delivery will be undertaken by the private sector partner, with comprehensive back-office support provided by their digital partner to deliver system management, customer payments, and service requirements. This approach will support employment within Walsall, deliver best value, ensure efficient deployment, and reduce carbon emissions by minimising the need for external resourcing.

4.7 The programme will be structured as a concession agreement. There will be no cost to the Council for the maintenance and operation of the charge points. Operational costs will be met through revenue generated from EVCI utilisation. The private sector partner has committed to providing the council with a percentage revenue share from usage, ensuring a direct financial return alongside wider strategic and social benefits.

4.8 The planned rollout will deliver a balanced and strategically aligned mix of an estimated 957 charge points across Walsall, comprising approximately:

- 374 slow chargers (<22kW)
- 279 fast chargers (22–50kW)
- 276 rapid chargers (50–150kW)
- 28 ultra-rapid chargers (150kW+)

4.9 Modelling for infrastructure deployment has been undertaken by the private sector partner, reflecting Walsall's EV Strategy (approved 2024). The analysis incorporates housing type, existing EVCP coverage, and socio-demographic data to ensure a fair and equitable distribution. As a result, every ward in Walsall will benefit from at least one publicly accessible charge point, supporting equitable access for all residents.

4.10 The charger mix has been designed to ensure financial sustainability while promoting inclusivity. Higher-yielding charge points in areas of strong demand will cross-subsidise the operation and maintenance of charge points in lower-demand areas, which remain critical to achieving equitable coverage and encouraging long-term adoption. This holistic approach ensures that the programme not only meets current demand but also lays the foundation for a scalable and inclusive charging network.

4.11 The installation programme will deliver a sustainable model that balances economic efficiency with social value and environmental responsibility. All capital and operational risks will be borne by the private sector partner.

4.12 This model provides scale, inclusivity, and resilience while avoiding any capital or operational costs for the authority. The programme will also generate local economic and social value, including the creation of apprenticeships, engagement of local suppliers, and investment in inclusive service design.

Council Plan priorities

4.13 The proposal directly supports the Council Plan 2024–2028 by contributing to the "Green Walsall" and "Resilient Communities" priorities. It improves transport equity, supports air quality improvements, and enables clean growth through enhanced infrastructure provision.

Risk management

4.14 Risks related to demand, maintenance, technology, and public perception are mitigated through a concession model that places all capital and operational responsibility on the supplier. This model ensures that financial risk to the council is minimal, while contractual safeguards, performance monitoring, and annual reporting will be built into the agreement.

4.15 Reliability standards are embedded in the national framework, requiring 99% uptime for rapid chargers, while compliance with the Public Charge Point Regulations 2023 provides additional protections, including transparent tariffs and mandatory contactless payment options.

4.16 The business case acknowledges wider risks such as, delays in securing power connections, inaccurate site selection, insufficient community engagement, and alignment with regeneration plans. These will be mitigated through early engagement with the distribution network operator, data-driven modelling, robust consultation via the Commonplace platform, and close coordination with the Council's Strategic Assets, Planning, and Regeneration teams.

4.17 Supplier performance issues will be addressed through KPIs, step-in rights, and termination clauses for persistent failure, while governance risks will be managed by establishing a cross-departmental programme board under a senior responsible officer.

4.18 Cybersecurity and data protection risks will be mitigated through ISO 27001 compliance and data protection impact assessments, and reputational risks will be managed through proactive communications and political engagement.

4.19 Income to the Council has been based on certain assumptions (see financial implications section), that if varied may reduce the level of return that is being forecast. Likewise, even though the Council is not providing any capital investment, if capital costs increase the number of units deliverable may reduce. These risks are mitigated by the fact that significant contingency has been built into the forecast, with only 50% of income calculated assumed so it is possible that income returns will be higher. The Council will also receive a percentage of gross income (as opposed to a net position after operational costs).

Financial implications

4.20 There is no requirement for an upfront capital contribution from the Council, with all installation, operational, and maintenance costs to be borne by the supplier. This represents a capital saving to the Council of approximately £20–25m compared with a publicly funded model, which would be unaffordable under current financial constraints.

4.21 In addition, the Council will receive a percentage share of gross revenues from electricity sales. The business case projection has been deliberately reduced to reflect the significant uncertainty surrounding future utilisation of electric vehicles. The income forecast has based on only 50% of predicted utilisation and assumes no further increases in usage beyond 2030. The forecast also reflects an assumption that the full planned charging infrastructure is delivered. Should the scale of infrastructure be reduced—for example due to changes in local transport policy, objections to traffic regulation orders, significant underutilisation or, delays in delivery—the forecast income will reduce accordingly. This cautious approach ensures that the income estimate is realistic while still allowing the Council to benefit directly from growth in EV adoption and to support wider financial sustainability.

4.22 An additional Principal Engineer role will be funded to support the implementation of the EVCI. The post will be funded from the gross revenue share returned to the Council.

4.23 The income forecasts are calculated based on tariffs of between £0.38 and £0.63 per hour and utilisation between 12% and 16% depending on the type of charge point.

Legal implications

4.24 The Council has clear legal powers to facilitate the installation of electric vehicle charge points on both Council-owned land and the public highway. Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Council has the power to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to regulate, restrict, or reserve parking spaces, including for the exclusive use of electric vehicles when charging. On-street installations fall within the Council's highway authority functions under the Highways Act 1980, which provides powers to place and maintain objects or structures in the highway, subject to ensuring that the highway is not obstructed or rendered unsafe. For installations on Council land, powers are derived from the Local Government Act 1972 and the Localism Act 2011, which allow the Council to manage, adapt, and utilise its land and assets for the benefit of the community.

4.25 Procurement of the concession contract will be undertaken under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023, which sets out the principles of transparency, value for money, and public benefit. The Electrical Vehicle Charging Points & Associated Solutions framework is a fully compliant national framework, which is open to Local Authorities and permits direct award to the top-ranked supplier by Lot.

4.26 In respect of operation, the programme will be subject to the Public Charge Point Regulations 2023, which establish national standards for accessibility, reliability, and consumer protection, including requirements for transparent pricing, contactless payment, and maintaining 99% uptime for rapid charge points. Compliance with these regulations will be contractually required of the supplier, ensuring that installations are legally robust and that residents benefit from a fair and reliable service

Procurement Implications/Social Value

4.27 In developing the procurement approach, the Council considered several options. A full open market tender would have maximised competition and allowed any supplier to bid, but this would have been a lengthy, resource-intensive process with higher risk of legal challenge and potential delay to achieving 2030 targets. Alternative national frameworks were also reviewed, but these do not provide the same comprehensive coverage of EV charging services and, in most cases, do not allow for direct award, making them less efficient. Running a mini-competition under the Electrical Vehicle Charging Points & Associated Solutions framework would have introduced additional time and administrative effort, though with limited benefit given that proposed private sector partner is already the top-ranked supplier. The recommended option is therefore a direct award to this supplier through this framework. This route is legally compliant, transparent, and efficient, and it ensures that the Council secures a supplier with a strong delivery record while avoiding unnecessary delay.

4.28 Procurement will be undertaken through the Electrical Vehicle Charging Points & Associated Solutions framework agreement, which is a nationally procured and fully compliant route under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023 (in force from February 2025). This framework agreement provides a legally robust and transparent mechanism for awarding contracts, ensuring that value for money and public benefit is achieved. Importantly, the framework agreement expressly permits direct award to the top-ranked supplier for each lot, and the proposed private sector partner has been awarded the top position across all four lots against the framework. This enables the Council to directly award the concession contract in full compliance with procurement law, avoiding the need for a lengthy competition process while retaining assurance that the supplier has already been competitively benchmarked at a national level.

4.29 The private sector partner's performance as the Council's Street Lighting PFI service provider offers further assurance. Over the past five years, they have achieved consistently high performance, with zero financial deductions applied under the contract. This strong delivery track record demonstrates reliability, responsiveness, and an ability to maintain assets at scale within the borough, giving confidence that the company can deliver the EV charge point programme to similarly high standards.

4.30 Through this framework route, the Council can therefore balance compliance, efficiency, and assurance. It ensures that the private sector partner is held to the nationally benchmarked standards of the framework agreement while also providing continuity with a supplier that has a proven local delivery record. Social value outcomes are embedded in the framework agreement, including the creation of apprenticeships, employment opportunities, and participation of local SMEs in the supply chain. The long-term nature of the concession created by the framework agreement incentivises innovation, quality, and inclusive service delivery, aligning procurement with both the Council's Net Zero objectives and wider corporate priorities.

Property implications

4.31 Site selection will be undertaken in collaboration with the Council's Strategic Asset Management team. This will ensure alignment with asset management

priorities and avoid conflicts with regeneration or development plans. Exclusivity for Council-owned car parks will only be granted for sites with demonstrable long-term operational viability.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.32 Transport-related emissions are a major contributor to poor air quality and associated health issues in Walsall. This proposal will reduce exposure to pollutants, improve respiratory health, and support active travel and mobility improvements.

Reducing Inequalities

4.33 This programme addresses structural barriers to EV adoption by prioritising delivery in communities with high deprivation and low car ownership. It targets areas where residents lack off-street parking and where the private sector is unlikely to invest without public-sector coordination. The borough-wide model ensures a fairer distribution of infrastructure, enabling residents in all wards to benefit from the transition to clean transport.

4.34 All infrastructure will be designed to PAS 1899:2022 which sets out the minimum requirements as well as best practice recommendations for accessible EV charge points. It covers aspects such as physical placement and location of charging units, spatial and height requirements and signage, information and user interface considerations.

4.35 The proposed procurement route incorporates provisions from the Public Charge Point Regulations 2023, which help ensure that customers pay a fair and transparent price for EV charging. These include requirements for clear display of tariffs in pence per kWh before a charging session begins, mandatory contactless payment options for all new rapid and higher-power charge points, and publication of live availability and pricing data to support comparison and roaming between networks.

4.36 The framework agreement also enforces high operational reliability standards, 99% uptime for rapid chargers, and is backed by government enforcement powers through the Office for Product Safety & Standards. By procuring through this framework, the Council will ensure that its appointed supplier operates to consistent national standards, delivering transparent, accessible, and equitable pricing for EV users across Walsall.

Staffing implications

4.37 Timely delivery of the TRO process will be essential to facilitate delivery and realise income projections. An additional Principal Engineer role will therefore be funded to support the implementation of the EVCI. The post will be funded from the gross revenue share returned to the Council.

Climate Impact

4.38 Transport is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions in Walsall. This proposal supports delivery of the Council's Net Zero Strategy, which targets borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2041. Expanding access to EV infrastructure will facilitate a shift away from fossil fuel vehicles, reduce particulate and NOx emissions, and support wider resilience and sustainability outcomes. The project complements local Air Quality Management Area objectives and contributes to national climate targets.

Consultation

4.39 The Council has undertaken significant external engagement to inform the Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in 2024. This included the use of the Black Country Commonplace digital engagement tool, targeted surveys, and stakeholder workshops, which gathered feedback from residents, businesses, and community organisations. Engagement revealed strong support for the expansion of EV infrastructure but also highlighted concerns about affordability, accessibility in deprived areas, and the importance of reliability. Lessons from this consultation have been embedded into the Strategy and shaped the approach to delivery through the concession model.

4.40 Furthermore, all on-highway charge points will be subject to Traffic Regulation Orders, which will undergo statutory public consultation to ensure transparency and allow residents to shape the detailed implementation.

4.41 Extensive internal consultation has been carried out with Legal, Finance, Procurement, Planning, and Public Health.

5. Decide

- **Option 1: Do Nothing**: Under this option, the Council would take no further action beyond existing charge-point delivery, relying on the market and small national grant schemes. While this carries no financial risk and requires minimal staff resource, the private sector would only invest in the most profitable areas, leaving deprived communities and households without off-street parking excluded. Delivery would be slow, uneven, and fall far short of Net Zero targets. This option is a poor fit with the Council's ambitions and would risk reputational damage, with Walsall falling behind regional and national benchmarks.

- **Option 2: Private Sector Concession** (Recommended): This option proposes a 15-year concession with a private sector partner for borough-wide installation, operation, and maintenance of EV charge points, using a cross-subsidy model to ensure equitable access. It leverages private investment at no cost to the Council, with all capital and operational risk borne by the

supplier. The Council would receive a percentage gross revenue share from electricity sales, over the concession. Although the Council would have less direct control and exclusivity in Council car parks reduces flexibility, this option strongly aligns with the Council's ambitions by delivering accelerated, inclusive, and future-ready infrastructure. It also supports apprenticeships and local employment, positioning Walsall as a regional leader in EV infrastructure.

- **Option 3: Hybrid Private Sector Concession**: The hybrid model mirrors the private sector concession but includes a £1m capital contribution from the Council, in return for a slightly increased revenue share. This provides a slightly higher long-term return and marginally greater influence over delivery priorities. However, the revenue uplift may not justify the investment, and the Council would still bear some financial risk. While this option remains a strong fit with project objectives, the £1m contribution represents a relatively small increment compared with total programme cost and may not outweigh the opportunity cost of diverting scarce resources from other priorities.

- **Option 4: Publicly Funded Delivery**: This option would see the Council fully funding and directly delivering the charge-point network required to meet 2030 demand (approx. 1,134 standard and 153 rapid units). While this would allow full control over delivery locations and pace, it carries a very high upfront capital requirement estimated at £20m, alongside ongoing operational, maintenance, and technology risks. Given current budget constraints, this option is financially unsustainable. It is only a partial fit with objectives, as it could deliver scale and equity but at unaffordable cost and high risk.

- **Option 5: Delay / Await Additional Grants**: The Council could pause the decision and rely on future central government funding, such as the LEVI or ORCS programmes, to scale up delivery. While this could reduce the Council's financial exposure if further grants became available, national funding is highly uncertain and insufficient to meet the scale of demand. Delay would risk Walsall falling behind, missing its Net Zero targets, undermining public confidence and, perpetuating inequalities in access.

6. Respond

6.1 Subject to Cabinet approval in October 2025, the concession contract will be awarded by the end of 2025.

6.2 Mobilisation, site assessments, and statutory approvals, including Traffic Regulation Orders, will take place during the first half of 2026, with Phase 1 installations beginning mid-2026.

6.3 A progressive rollout will then continue through to 2030.

7. Review

7.1 Annual reporting to Cabinet will monitor performance, revenue, and social value outcomes throughout the concession, with a formal mid-term review in 2030 to

assess progress against strategic objectives. The concession will conclude in 2040, when a full evaluation will be undertaken to determine future delivery arrangements.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

Walsall Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy (2024)
Walsall Net Zero Strategy (2023)

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