

## **Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Andrew – Associate Leader, Economic Growth & Regeneration

**Related portfolios:** None

**Service:** Place & Environment (Strategic Transport)

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

### **1. Aim**

- 1.1. The report seeks adoption of the Walsall Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargepoint Strategy that sets out the action plan for the delivery of EV chargepoints focused on Council-owned land up to 2030, with interim targets up to 2026.
- 1.2. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to set the direction of government capital funding ringfenced for EV infrastructure and through wider private investment (working with chargepoint operators) in the borough. The roll out of EV chargepoints through the strategy would aim to provide equity to access of EV infrastructure, providing residents without access to off-street parking the equal opportunity to drive and charge an EV in Walsall. EV chargepoints in car parks could also support revenue generation on Council-owned assets, through concession agreements with EV chargepoint operators (CPOs).

### **2. Summary**

- 2.1. The strategy considers evidence-based forecasts for the future need for charging points in the borough. This suggests the needs for 1,134 standard chargepoints and 153 rapid chargepoints by 2030. Our action plan aims to provide at least 600 standard chargepoints and 65 rapid chargepoints by 2030 delivered by Walsall Council working with CPOs through concession agreements. It is assumed that this will be supported by private sector investment and further publicly available chargepoints to meet the full requirements of the forecasts estimated.
- 2.2. In line with the government's commitment to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars from 2035, the borough of Walsall requires EV charging infrastructure to facilitate the forecast uptake in electric vehicles (EVs). The roll out of EV chargepoints across the borough is a key action to facilitate

Walsall Council's commitment to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) target to be a carbon net zero borough by 2041, supported by our We Are Walsall 2040 ambition to be the lead regionally in carbon sustainability with a net zero economy.

- 2.3. The UK's second-hand battery EV sales were up by 71% (41,505) with a market share of 2.1% in the first three months of 2024, as more people are attracted to cost savings and environmental benefits (SMMT, 2024). This is an increase from 1.6% market share in 2023 and 0.9% market in 2022. This increase is likely to continue, so Walsall needs to be ready to facilitate this increasing demand.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Cabinet approve the adoption of the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy as set out at Appendix A.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approve the future delivery of infrastructure in line with the targets identified in the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy, subject to all relevant legal, financial, and planning approvals.
- 3.3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to award the contract(s) for the provision of electric vehicle chargepoints across the borough to meet the interim targets included in the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of any related contract(s) and/or document(s) for the provision of electric vehicle chargepoints across the borough to meet the interim targets included in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, to include 300 chargepoints across the borough up to 2026 as well as any extension and variation of these contractual arrangements should this be required throughout the duration of the contract(s).
- 3.5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to negotiate on its behalf with the West Midlands Combined Authority, government departments and private sector to maximise the values of future financial resources allocated to the council in pursuit of the delivery of electric vehicle chargepoint infrastructure. This includes signing relevant agreements and contracts for electric vehicle chargepoint investment across the borough in line with targets outlined within the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy.
- 3.6. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or

signing of grant agreements relating to the development of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure capital funding and City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme capital funding for the Black Country Transport and Innovation Programme.

#### **4. Report detail – know**

##### ***Context***

- 4.1. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy sets out the strategic vision for delivery of EV chargepoints boroughwide. Given the government ban on the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles in 2035, and Walsall Council's commitment to be a carbon neutral authority by 2041, there are risks associated with not adopting a clear strategy and making a conscious effort to deliver the infrastructure required to meet these targets. The strategy acknowledges in its four core principles that to support our decarbonisation goals the council need to continue to remain committed to support the delivery of projects that reduce private car ownership and use and encourage greater use of active travel and public transport modes. This strategy aims to provide the infrastructure needed to facilitate a move to EVs in the borough, but not to encourage short distance vehicular trips.
- 4.2. Walsall Council commissioned a consultant (City Science) to develop a draft Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy in 2023. The draft strategy was supported when consulted on publicly between 21st February – 20th March 2024. It sets out the targets for short-term roll out of chargepoints by 2026, and longer-term strategic roll out of chargepoints to 2030. The focus on 2030 was aligned to the government's then commitment to phase out the sale of new diesel and petrol cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) by this date. The council acknowledges that the date is postponed to 2035 but the strategy continues to focus on delivery by 2030 in line with the need to support Walsall ambitions to be the lead regionally in carbon sustainability with a net zero economy.
- 4.3. The strategy considers opportunities available on council-owned land for charging infrastructure including, but not limited to, on-street, council-owned car parks, libraries, leisure centres and community centres.

##### ***Progress to Date***

- 4.4. In April 2022 Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents, as well as any extension and variation of the contractual arrangements for the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). ORCS funding through the Office of Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) will generate the delivery of the first 35 public on-street chargepoints in the borough of Walsall this year.
- 4.5. Further funding has been allocated to Walsall for charging infrastructure, as well as the wider Black Country and West Midlands (see the Finance section

for more details of funding secured to date). This will kickstart the delivery of chargepoints across the borough, but further investment is required, including from the private sector, to achieve the full target infrastructure by 2030.

### ***Council Plan priorities***

- 4.6. In 2022, domestic transport was the highest contributing sector of net greenhouse gas emissions in the UK (28%). The main source of emissions from this sector is the use of petrol and diesel in road vehicles.
- 4.7. Responding to climate change is critical to the future of the borough's quality of life and therefore the EV Strategy is fully consistent with the 5 strategic priorities identified in the council's corporate plan.

### ***Risk management***

- 4.8. The council will enter contracts with CPOs as required to procure the installation and operation of chargepoint infrastructure targeted in the strategy. There are different commercial options for the council to enter which will be reviewed on case-by-case basis. It is suggested though that in any related procurement, the CPO takes on the revenue costs for operation and maintenance of the chargepoints, and key performance indicators that agree the replacement of any hardware and response times to any down time. This will reduce the financial risk and resource constraints on the council.
- 4.9. Walsall Council is already in a concession contract with Wenea West Midlands Limited for the deployment of a minimum of 35 chargepoints. This contract has an initial term of 10 years from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024, together with a right for the Provider (as the relevant licensee or tenant, as applicable) to extend the term to a total contract length of up to 15 years.
- 4.10. The contribution of capital annually through the council's transport capital funding and government capital grant funding sources, including but not limited to On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), allows the council a greater level of control over locations, costs to the customer, the type of contract with the chargepoint operator, potential levels of revenue-share and other contract terms.
- 4.11. Where chargepoints are funded through such government capital grants, the smaller capital contribution required from the CPO results in a lower financial risk than a fully funded model.
- 4.12. Due to the long-term time nature of the proposal, there is a risk that the technology may become obsolete and that the chargepoints are underutilised. This risk forms part of the key performance indicators within our existing CPO contract agreement. The contract is also structured so that the chargepoints themselves remain the property of the CPO, removing the risk of the council being left with stranded assets requiring disposal, and increasing the incentives for the operator to keep the hardware up to date to the very end of

the contract. It is included within the contract that the CPO is responsible for the removal of equipment and reinstating the site to the reasonable satisfaction of Walsall Council in the case of any early suspension of the site or at the termination of the contract.

- 4.13. In most cases, public chargepoints (both on- and off-street) would be subject to a traffic regulation order (TRO) subject to consultation. This would ensure EV access to spaces as uptake increases. Many CPO agreements are subject to TROs on chargepoints that require EV parking bays to be 'EV charging only'. It is noted this is in most cases, subject to public consultation and existing parking constraints. In response to the public consultation for the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, 16 respondents (57%) supported restrictions to be put in place at council-owned car parks and pay and display bays for spaces to be 'EV charging only' and limited hours. However, on residential streets, only 11 respondents (37%) supported restrictions, 9 respondents (30%) did not support restrictions and 7 respondents (23%) responded 'don't know'. In the early period of EV charging infrastructure, Walsall Council understand that EV uptake may be limited. There would be a balanced approach to enforcement while demand incrementally builds.

#### ***Financial implications***

- 4.14. Walsall Council commissioned City Science to develop a draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy using capital funding that was allocated through the 2023-2024 Transport Capital Programme.
- 4.15. Capital grant funding including ORCS, LEVI and CRSTS (the latter subject to full business case approval by West Midlands Combined Authority), will be used to deliver EV chargepoint infrastructure. This is in addition to wider private sector interest in the investment of chargepoint infrastructure in the borough.
- 4.16. ORCS grant capital funding is for a total of £338,712 covering up to 75% of the total capital costs of installation. The chargepoint operator Wenea and sister company Gamma Energy will provide the remaining 25% of match funding.
- 4.17. West Midlands Combined Authority secured £3,016,582 of LEVI Pilot Capital funding, of which Walsall Council has a provisional allocation of approximately £226,000 for the Pelsall Charging Hub.
- 4.18. Walsall Council has entered a concession contract with Wenea West Midlands Limited for the delivery of the ORCS and LEVI Pilot Capital funding schemes.
- 4.19. LEVI capital funding is for a total of £14.5 million for the West Midlands, including an allocation within this for Walsall Council to be determined and spent by March 2027. The procurement of CPOs for this funding is in development at a West Midlands level.

- 4.20. The West Midlands CRSTS fund includes an allocation of £7 million for the Black Country for ultra-low emission infrastructure, including EV charging infrastructure in Walsall. This scheme is currently at full business case development stage to be submitted to WMCA Board in 2024 for approval and release of funding.
- 4.21. Walsall Council will seek to provide the required match funding, develop the outcomes of the action plan in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy and seek to install additional chargepoints through the 2024-2025 Transport Capital Programme allocation of £118,493 (approved at Cabinet in March 2024).

### ***Legal implications***

- 4.22. Contract performance will be monitored regularly and will be subject to appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). If KPIs are not met then remedial action can be taken, up to and including termination of the contract.
- 4.23. EV chargepoints are considered as permitted development. However, the council's Highways, Transport and Operations service will be consulted to determine if any additional permissions are required on the final location of each piece of infrastructure.
- 4.24. The lawfulness of any installed chargepoint could be subject to challenge by a third party.
- 4.25. All works will be evidenced by a written contract in a form approved by the Director of Governance or by a call-off from a suitable framework and shall be made and executed in accordance with the council's Contract Rules. This may require the council to engage external legal support.

### ***Procurement implications/social value***

- 4.26. The council has options by which to procure services with a CPO, including calling off the existing contract for ORCS and the forthcoming LEVI Capital funding framework led by WMCA. This will be procured through an open tender which will be broken into lots for types of charging. The tender is expected to be advertised in summer 2024, followed by bidding and scoring over the following 2 months. With time for any contract negotiations, the contract may be available as early as March 2025. There is a risk of this process taking longer due to the complex nature of the agreement and owing to the number of organisations involved.
- 4.27. Any contractual arrangements will be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as applicable and the council's Contract Rules or, if applicable, the Procurement Act 2023 and its related regulations and guidance, which is due to come into force of 28 October 2024. The council's Procurement and Legal Services Teams will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers to ensure that all contracts for CPO procurement and call-offs from any frameworks are conducted in compliant ways and maximise the

best interests of the Council, our residents, and businesses, offering the best value for money.

- 4.28. Tender documentation for ORCS, and future procurement included a quality question on what social value the CPO can deliver. The documents state that potential benefits to local business, employment, training, and development are of particular interest.

### ***Property implications***

- 4.29. The council has opportunities to deliver chargepoints on council-owned land, with the land remaining in the council's ownership. This includes delivering on-street standard and rapid chargepoints. In addition to this, the strategy aims to roll out infrastructure in council-owned car parks, at leisure centres, libraries, green spaces and community centres.
- 4.30. There are no direct implications as a corporate landlord, as we are not suggesting passing any land onto other private or public organisations. Chargepoints on council-owned land will remain within the ownership of Walsall Council but operate under concession or spaces leased to CPOs.

### ***Health and wellbeing implications***

- 4.31. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy seeks to align with the Walsall Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 – 2025). The action plan included sets out the targets for the roll out of chargepoint infrastructure up to 2030, which will support the steps needed to be a healthy borough by 2040, by reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality to support the reduction of health inequality across the borough of Walsall.
- 4.32. The transition to EVs will improve air quality across the borough and support mitigation of the health impacts of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate emissions emitted by petrol and diesel vehicles. More deprived areas tend to suffer from poorer air quality, and the difference in EV ownership uptake between our most affluent and deprived areas is likely to further exacerbate this. Where Walsall Council cannot increase the uptake of EV ownership in the borough, it can provide equity of access to EV charging facilities to enable public uptake.

### ***Reducing inequalities***

- 4.33. An equality impact assessment for the EV Strategy sets out how reducing inequalities has been considered and assessed.
- 4.34. It is still the case that most EV owners have off-street parking. Owning a house with off-street parking follows the same pattern of inequalities as vehicle ownership. Approximately 39% of residents in Walsall live in flats/apartments or maisonettes and terraced houses (Office of National Statistics, 2023). The lack of suitable public charging infrastructure remains a significant barrier to switching to zero emission fleet operations (SMMT, 2024). By installing on-

street chargepoints, Walsall Council would support equitable access to EV charging for residents that lack access to off-street parking.

- 4.35. In response to the public consultation for the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, 22 respondents (77%) considered vehicle security to be 'very important' when considering charging an EV at a public chargepoint. 21 respondents (70%) also considered the location and convenience of the chargepoint to be 'very important' and 20 respondents (63%) considered personal safety to be 'very important'. This clearly demonstrates the need for equity of access to chargepoint infrastructure across the borough and where the private sector cannot provide this, Walsall Council must support the safety and accessibility of readily available, operational infrastructure. We aim to support, in particular, our residents without access to off-street parking and the economic growth of our local businesses.
- 4.36. All chargepoints and associated infrastructure will take due consideration of accessibility for disabled drivers in line with the latest design guidance, such as PAS 1899:2022. Minimum footway widths (of at least 1.2m) will be maintained to ensure the safe and accessible passage of all potential users to be able to safely complete their desired walking or wheeling journeys.

### ***Staffing implications***

- 4.37. There are no anticipated implications on staffing at this time.
- 4.38. Walsall Council is supported by 3 FTE Electric Vehicle and Transport Innovation Programme staff at Black Country Transport (BCT), working in collaboration with Walsall Council's Strategic Transport Team. BCT resource is supported by OZEV LEVI Capability Funding for Tier 1 local authorities in England, as well as funding from the CRSTS programme.
- 4.39. Dedicated Electric Vehicle and Transport Innovation Programme staff are supported by wider Walsall Council services as required through the programme delivery lifecycle. This includes, but is not limited to, Transport, Highways & Operations, Legal Services, and Procurement. It may be the case in the future as demand and EV uptake increases, there is a need to review resource capacity at the council to review the need for a dedicated FTE.
- 4.40. A concession or lease model would require less resource and minimise risk to Walsall Council, although resource will be required at the council for contract management. Engineering, installation, operation and back-office resource for the chargepoint infrastructure will be delivered and managed by the CPO. This will be clearly identified as part of the contractual agreement and monitoring through KPIs. This is the approach taken through the concessional agreement for the ORCS programme.

### ***Climate impact***

- 4.41. In 2019 Walsall Council declared a climate emergency and in 2022 adopted the West Midlands Combined Authority target to reach net zero carbon



emissions across the borough no later than 2041.

- 4.42. Our draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy builds on these climate change pledges, and We are Walsall 2040 Borough Plan which includes the ambition to have the infrastructure in place to enable residents to smoothly switch to net zero and improve air quality across the borough.
- 4.43. Promoting the uptake of electric vehicles and responding to climate change will help to reduce harmful emissions. The draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to support the draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy and our strategic commitment to tackling climate change impacts in our borough to ensure that Walsall will be a clean and green borough, fit for future generations.
- 4.44. The subject of this report aligns with Action 4.3 outlined in the council's climate change action plan 2020-2025 'to promote and encourage ultra-low and low emission vehicles in Walsall and sustainable transport options in accordance with the Transport in Walsall Strategy 2017-22 and the West Midlands / Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle'.
- 4.45. The provision of chargepoints will promote the use of cleaner technologies to reduce carbon emissions, air pollution and adverse impacts upon residents.

### ***Consultation***

- 4.46. The draft strategy was consulted on publicly between 21st February – 20th March 2024. The consultation aimed to understand stakeholders' support for EV chargepoints across the borough and the type of chargepoints Walsall's public and businesses need (slower, cheaper charging or quick rapid 'charge and go'). It also considered if respondents already had access to or were considering a move to EV.
- 4.47. Consultation was undertaken with the following audiences:
  - Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration and Ward Councillors - Email distribution of Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Briefing Note and face to face briefing with Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration.
  - The Public and stakeholders – Online questionnaire and dedicated EV Chargepoint Strategy area on the Council's Walsall Says Commonplace and Walsall Council website, with further circulation of links on social media and via press release.
  - Walsall businesses – Direct email correspondence with key businesses through Walsall Council's Business Engagement Team.
  - Council officers – Internal communications and link to online questionnaire for comments on the draft strategy on Commonplace.
- 4.48. The strategic transport team has reviewed the responses to the public consultation and will use this information to shape the final draft version of the

strategy prior to Cabinet approval. A summary of the outcomes of this public consultation is included in **Appendix B**.

- 4.49. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Commonplace page will be kept up to date with any future updates to the strategy and delivery of chargepoints. This includes links to future consultation on the roll out of specific chargepoints and locations.
- 4.50. Direct responses were made to members of the public and businesses who provided direct email correspondence to the consultation. The Strategic Transport Team continue to work through these enquiries with residents to support their EV charging infrastructure needs as appropriate.
- 4.51. In August 2023, City Science led a series of internal and external engagement workshops to support the development of the draft strategy. Each workshop had approximately 15-20 attendees. Officers across all relevant sectors of the council were invited to the internal workshop, with attendees including but not limited to Procurement, Finance, and Property. External workshops were attended by a range of local businesses, third sector organisations, West Midlands Police, and wider public sector organisations. All attendees to the 2023 workshops were invited to comment on the draft strategy as part of the 2024 public consultation.

## **5. Decide**

- 5.1. Different commercial models for the procurement of EV chargepoint infrastructure were assessed in the development of the strategy. The type of delivery model may depend on the type of chargepoint, as such to ensure equitable access to chargepoints. Government funding has focused on increasing the provision of on-street residential infrastructure, thereby supporting the charging needs of residents without access to off-street parking. As rapid operators offer fully funded models, funding to support local authorities to deliver rapid chargepoints has become extremely limited.
- 5.2. As part of the recommendations of the strategy to support choice and reduce costs to the users, Walsall Council will consider working with a variety of CPOs, providing a range of benefits including a variety of tariffs for users to choose from and allows the council to monitor both chargepoint reliability and revenue potential over time between CPOs.
- 5.3. This report recommends approval of the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy and the delegation of authority to award the contract(s) for the provision of EV chargepoints across the borough due to the timeline of requiring chargepoint delivery by 2026 for the initial targets as identified in the EV Strategy Action Plan.
- 5.4. The report also recommends the delegation of authority to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of grant agreements relating to the development of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding and City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme (CRSTS) capital funding for the Black

Country Transport and Innovation Programme to meet the delivery timescales of this funding up to March 2027.

## **6. Respond**

- 6.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report, the next step will be for the LEVI capital funding programme tender to be approved to provide a successful framework of CPOs for future installations through this funding. The full business case for the CRSTS funded project is scheduled to be approved by summer 2024, and delivery will commence shortly afterwards through the existing contract with Wenea West Midlands. The delivery of the ORCS programme is already commissioned and underway.
- 6.2 Approval of the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy will allow for preparations for the next round chargepoint delivery in line with the action plan and consideration of delivery including within council car parks and discussions with the owners and occupiers of other potential locations, such as retail spaces. This will involve the exploration of further funding opportunities including through private sector investment.

## **7. Review**

- 7.1 As is the case with the contractual agreement for the ORCS programme, future procurement tender documents will include a set of key performance indicators as part of the scheme criteria, which address operational and customer service needs.
- 7.2 The KPIs indicators will provide a series of metrics by which to measure and monitor the performance of the successful CPO. Failure to meet the KPIs will lead to discussion with the CPO about how to improve the service, financial penalties, or even termination of the contract.
- 7.3 The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy includes a set of 10 recommendations to accelerate the delivery of EV chargepoints across the borough. These recommendations include targets for delivery of standard and rapid chargepoints, opportunities to deliver on council-owned land and providing a good spatial spread of chargepoints. This action plan and the target number of chargepoints to be delivered by 2026 and 2030 will be monitored by the Strategic Transport Team working in collaboration with Black Country Transport and West Midlands Combined Authority to continue to support the delivery of the wider Black Country ULEV Strategy and the forthcoming West Midlands Net Zero Vehicle Strategy.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A** – Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy  
**Appendix B** – Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy –  
Public Consultation Response Summary

## Background papers

Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle Strategy –  
[Black Country ULEV Strategy 2020.qxp\\_Layout 1 \(blackcountrytransport.org.uk\)](https://blackcountrytransport.org.uk)

West Midlands Local Transport Plan ‘Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands’ –  
Final Core Strategy –  
[Local Transport Plan - Related Documents | Transport for West Midlands \(tfwm.org.uk\)](https://tfwm.org.uk)

West Midlands Local Transport Plan ‘Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands’ –  
Big Moves Summary  
[tfwm.org.uk/media/uuuhqpb4/big-moves-summary.pdf](https://tfwm.org.uk/media/uuuhqpb4/big-moves-summary.pdf)

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