

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA550179765

Submitted: 24 November 2023 11:57 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Formal Adoption of the Electric Vehicle and Charging Strategy

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: The Electric Vehicle (EV) and Charging Strategy outlines the vision and objectives for enabling a sustainable transition to EVs. Accompanying the strategy is an action plan which will deliver priorities for the next two years.

Everyone's Essex sets out four strategic aims and 20 commitments. Within the strategic aim of strong inclusive and sustainable economy it includes a commitment to deliver green growth supporting technologies and business models to transition the Essex Economy to net zero. Everyone's Essex also makes a commitment to supporting people to switch to more sustainable travel options so that we can achieve our targets for achieving net zero carbon emissions. The Electric Vehicle and Charging Strategy will support this commitment.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The long-term vision of the strategy is to have "the right charger in the right place" to support a sustainable and just transition to EVs without making it so easy for people to use EVs that they replace trips that can be made by more sustainable modes.

The Strategy's six objectives are reflective of the objectives in Everyone's Essex:

- Social equality: levelling up access to and use of EVs especially for people who do not have access to off-street parking and no viable means to charge a car using their own domestic supply, which in some areas of Essex is over 50%.
- Healthy environment: by decarbonising transport, reducing emissions from transport, and improving air quality (but recognising EVs emit Particulate Matter (PM) because they are still a car which contributes to high levels of congestion, particularly during peak times)
- Resilient and safe network: that is reliable, accessible, safe, compatible, and easy to use.
- Integrated network: to have an EV offer that complements the promotion of reduced car use, increased sustainable travel and future mobility solutions.
- Connected network which meets essential demand for EVs.
- Creating better places: with infrastructure in the right place, designed to complement public spaces and minimise impact on all members of society.

Modelling suggests that there could be:

- 30k-55k EVs on Essex's roads by 2025
- Rising to 120k-220k by 2030
- This means there will be a demand for 1,500 publicly accessible charging points by 2025 and over 6,000 additional points by 2030 (currently there are around 350 publicly accessible charging points which is behind the national average)

Public consultation on the draft strategy and action plan took place between 15th June and 30th July 2023 and received 743 responses to the consultation survey and an additional 36 email responses. The consultation report has been appended to this report. The overall responses showed support for the strategy. In particular, the Vision

and Objectives and Action Plan were given strong support. 44% strongly supported the Overarching vision, whilst a further 31% supported it. The specific objectives of the strategy also received strong support. Added to this, 25% strongly agreed with the Action plan, whilst a further 41% agreed with it.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Mark Ash (Climate, Environment and Customer Services)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Tom Cunningham (Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: The action plan attached to the strategy will run until 2025. It contains measures we can deliver directly within Essex. This strategy will inform our policy decisions and our design guidance that we would expect to be applied to EV infrastructure in the county. We will consult on and update our design guidance, specifications for accessible charging, parking policy and legislation to define how EV infrastructure is delivered within the wider transport network. We will work with the borough, city and district councils within Essex on the roll-out of the strategy.

We need to ensure that we are making the most of public funding opportunities and any available investment aligns with the strategic objectives and principles of this initial Phase 1 Strategy. We also need to monitor the geographic and demographic uptake of EVs and the expansion of the public and private charging network to ensure the different key user groups we have prioritised in this strategy are not being left behind.

We will need to monitor key outcomes over the Phase 1 Strategy period of the next 2-3 years including, but not limited to, the following examples:

- The level of public funding secured by the council through Government grant schemes and private investment for the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- The number of publicly funded charge points delivered by the council and our partners.
- Expansion and number of registrations of private and public charge points in the county and how this compares with the projected level of need for different user types.
- How the delivery of charge points aligns with the objectives and principles of this strategy.
- Rate of EV uptake across the county for different user groups, locations and demographics. How this compares with trends from other counties and Government forecast.
- Rate of transition of the council vehicle fleet to EV.

Monitoring technology

Technology is rapidly advancing and continuously changing. We will need to understand these changes and how they will influence the charging network and how EV users charge across Essex. We will use our engagement with industry partners to keep up to date and ensure we enable the ongoing delivery of a network that is innovative, forward thinking and meets the needs of organisations, residents, and visitors to Essex. We will explore the potential for a user group to meet regularly, to draw from local and industry expertise, and feed into the changing needs of users, available technology and any future strategy refresh.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Net zero, Transport and built environment, Green communities, Levelling up the environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Place based working, Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Sex

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Age – we will need to monitor the impact of charging points installations on this group (but we believe these risks to be low):

- The dexterity for all and plugging in cables,
- Any technology barriers, for example – downloading apps and setting up accounts,
- Potential trip hazards (though this is for all age groups)

Disabilities:

Most CPO's will conform with the BSI accessibility standards on charging points, but we will ensure that it's incorporated into our contracts with CPO's. The EV team will be able to help users with any queries they have via customer services. The CPO's will also offer assistance as required.

We will assess each chargepoint location for accessibility to all groups.

Safety:

There is potential for the charging cables from on-street EV charge points to cause a trip hazard and/or a barrier to many disabled people (this includes for people with a wide range of disabilities such as people with physical impairments, people who are blind/have low vision, people who may have a carer with them).

Areas where there are restricted widths and uneven road surfaces can contribute to exacerbating issues experienced by people with a wide range of impairment types by increasing barriers to accessibility. There is also potential for negative impact regarding safety for wheelchair and mobility scooter users as, even with installation of such features as cable protectors, surfaces will be uneven, potentially resulting in unsafe practices such as manoeuvring around these potential obstacles into the road.

Advances in technology can be less accessible for some and it is identified that related difficulties in activities such as setting up user accounts, using charging points themselves have the potential to result in negative impacts, for example, for people with learning disabilities.

There is potential for negative impact arising from difficulties, especially for people with a range of disabilities (e.g. upper mobility, dexterity etc.) around plugging in cables.

We will need to work with CPO's to ensure that charging points are installed in areas where there is good lighting, they are visible to others and the charging points are in areas that people do not feel vulnerable using them during quieter times of the day / night.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: From a pedestrian safety and convenience point of view, we will not permit the temporary placing of cables across the footway or highway. Any permanent solution will require local consultation and permission from Essex Highways prior to installation, on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will need to be given to conflicting demands for limited street space and local parking pressures affecting both EV and non-EV car owners.

In 2022 the British Standards Institute (BSI) published a new accessibility standard for public EV charging points to encourage providers to apply best practice and consider inclusive design at the outset of the design and planning process. We will incorporate this guidance into our own planning processes and the Essex Design Guide to provide for disabled EV drivers. We will also require that charge point operators (CPO) commissioned by the council and our partners adhere as closely as possible to these standards.

We will ensure that any on-street charging provision adheres to current Health and Safety rules and regulations around obstructions on the highway.

From monitoring the charging points, we will take any appropriate action to reduce the risks to all highway users. Most CPO's offer assistance to charging point users and we will include this as a requirement within our contracts, where necessary.

We have also met with a representative from the Essex Sight Loss Council who are keen to work with us on implementing the EV strategy across Essex and we will engage with other representatives from accessibility groups when implementing the strategy.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Advances in technology can be less accessible for some and it is identified that related difficulties in activities such as setting up user accounts, using charging points themselves have the potential to result in negative impacts, for example, for people with learning disabilities.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: Most CPO's will conform with the BSI accessibility standards on charging points, but we will ensure that it's incorporated into our contracts with CPO's. The EV team will be able to help users with any queries they have via customer services. The CPO's will also offer assistance as required.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: We will focus on the delivery of charging points in area's which have a high proportion of dwelling without access to off-street parking and also in our identified levelling up area's to facilitate a just transition to EVs.

We will look to deliver e-car clubs where possible to increase transport choices for people who are perhaps on low incomes, so it levels up access to EV's.

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: None

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People on low income

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The provision of an increased Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure network will enable more transport choices to all people; particularly those who can access an Electric Vehicle. This will lead to more and better opportunities for people.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The strategy covers the whole of the greater Essex area. Charging points will be in all areas across Essex if there is an identified need. This will provide residents wherever they live with more transport choice, and it will particularly benefit the 36% of dwellings in Essex which do not have access to off-street parking.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: We will focus on-street infrastructure in areas where we know there are dwellings without off-street parking. But recognising that there is a balance between providing enough charging points to meet demands, without undermining our wider sustainable transport goals or creating charging points as a trip generator. We will also look at charging opportunities that allow residents without off-street parking to charge their vehicles using their own home power supply and produce the guidance for this. We will look to deliver e-car clubs where possible to increase transport choices for people who are perhaps on low incomes, so it levels up access to EV's.

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: An improved EV charging network will enable greater transport choices to help family members to fulfil their roles within the family unit.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: We will ensure that the right charger is installed in the right place for people to use.

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Negative

Extent of impact: Low

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: None

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

There is a low risk that charging points could be criminally damaged.

There is a risk that charging points could be hacked; this has already been documented in the media:

<https://www.wired.com/story/electric-vehicle-charging-station-hacks/>.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

Most charging points are fitted with cameras for security purposes.

CPO's will need to ensure that their back office systems containing people's financial and personal details are fully compliant with all data security protocols so credit card fraud can be avoided.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

We can decide, in some cases, what design of charging points we use. Some CPOs offer several designs, which vary in cost and we can make decisions in partnership with our chosen CPOs to install the most appropriate infrastructure within each selected location. We will work with the Districts and conduct public consultations on the locations and type of infrastructure to include. We will put social justice and equity at the forefront of any decisions.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: N/A

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: No

What is your transition plan to introduce electric vehicles?: No, installing EV charging point infrastructure to enable EV use, but the strategy will not provide residents with the electric vehicles.

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: None

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: None

Extent of impact

Sustainable Transport / Travel: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The EV strategy is all about providing more choices for residents and businesses to be able to travel and conduct business around Essex. This greater transport choice should serve to help ECC achieve its targets on transport decarbonisation, emphasising that where car travel is necessary, then they need to be as "clean" as they possibly can. The strategy encourages sustainable transport above any vehicular use, including EVs and this narrative will be continued when implementing actions from the action plan.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 02/11/2023

Name of person completing the ECIA: Rachel Brody

Email address of person completing the ECIA: Rachel.Brody@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Climate, Environment and Customer Services

Your service area: Highways and Transportation

Your team: Sustainable Travel Planning Team

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: Yes

Function: Climate, Environment and Customer Services

Service area:

Team:

Email address of Head of Service: Tracey.Vickers@essex.gov.uk