

Watford Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Task Group Scope and Terms of Reference

Scrutiny review title	Electric vehicles schemes
Scrutiny proposer	Councillor Ian Stotesbury
Details of specific area for review	<p>Watford Council has an important remit in enabling residents to make more environmentally-friendly transport choices.</p> <p>Transport emissions account for 91.8kt of CO2 each year in Watford and road transport is the biggest contributor to this. Electric cars can be part of the solution to addressing transport emissions in Watford.</p> <p>The government has banned the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, and plug-in hybrid vehicles from 2035, and so the growth in ownership of electric vehicles is expected to continue to grow exponentially.</p> <p>The council's remit extends into a variety of areas including rolling out charging infrastructure, managing car parks and parking services and economic development.</p> <p>Watford already has a significant charging network; more than half of all electric vehicle in Hertfordshire were registered in Watford and 1.8% of all registrations in England were in Watford.</p>
Why this has been proposed for review, including the council priorities it supports	<p>With the development of the Sustainable Transport Strategy and the declaration of a Climate Emergency, enabling and supporting greener transport choices are a key priority for the council.</p> <p>Whilst not the highways authority, the council has significant influence and powers in a number of areas which affect vehicle ownership. The council also has a role in encouraging and communicating sustainable choices by residents.</p> <p>It is therefore important that the town continues to be accessible for these ultra-low emission forms of transport and the council has a role in encouraging greener forms of transport.</p> <p>It supports the council priority for a thriving, diverse and creative town.</p>
Purpose / objectives of the review, including key questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the barriers to encouraging wider use/purchase of electric vehicles for residents? • How is the council currently encouraging/enabling the use of electric vehicles? • Where are the gaps in the charging infrastructure? • What are the issues being faced in rolling out more charging infrastructure? • How widely understood is the messaging around the priority of enabling electric vehicle ownership for residents? • Case studies of good practice elsewhere in increasing uptake of electric cars.

Any areas excluded from the scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric forms of public transport.
Desired outcomes / indicators of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider understanding of the context of the electric vehicle market and the incentives and barriers to ownership for residents. • An overview of the coverage of charging infrastructure in Watford and the barriers to extending the infrastructure. • A review of case studies of other local authorities which have high levels of electric vehicle ownership • Developing recommendations which add value to the various council work streams enabling electric vehicles.
Timescale and key dates, including proposed meeting format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report establishing task group to Overview and Scrutiny 16 December 2021. • To meet during January 2022. • Final report to Overview and Scrutiny on 24 February 2022. • Report to Cabinet 28 February 2022.
Key departmental lead officer	Jodie Kloss, Senior Democratic Services Officer Ona Ehimuan, Democratic Services Officer
Potential witnesses	Andy Smith Head of Transport and Infrastructure Neil Walker, Energy and Housing Renewal Surveyor Susheel Rao, Sustainability Officer
What activities need to be taken to achieve the outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarising information about relevant local and national incentives for electric vehicles. • Producing a summary of charging infrastructure in Watford and understanding the next priority areas. • Reviewing learning points from case studies.
Key policies / documentation / baseline information needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of national grants available for purchasing and owning an electric vehicle. • Hertfordshire County Council's position statements / Draft EV charging strategy (if available)
Any other sources of evidence (e.g., site visit)	N/A
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of opportunity to understand how to encourage use of electric vehicles from councillors' perspective. • Insufficient engagement with backbench councillors on developing future priorities for electric vehicle infrastructure and strategies.

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