

Scrutiny task group review update

Title of scrutiny review:	Electric Vehicles
Chair of scrutiny review:	Councillor Simon Feldman
Final report published:	24 February 2022
Forwarded to Cabinet:	28 February 2022
Date of review:	1 February 2023

Recommendation:	To extend and develop the communications around electric vehicles, including the development of an information hub, with a focus on preparing residents for the shift to electric vehicles and enabling access to clear information for users.
Update:	We have provided a map on the Council website https://www.watford.gov.uk/parking/find-parking-space/4 that shows the location of existing charge points available to residents. We are in the process of producing a list of the locations to accompany the map and will continue to expand the information that is provided to residents. It should be noted that some locations are within the CPZ areas and residents need to have a permit in order to use the infrastructure during the hours that the parking controls operate and we will incorporate this information into the website.

Recommendation:	In order to help the council make the case for funding and to increase understanding of the interest in different areas, an online form should be developed to enable residents to make an expression of interest for a charging unit in their neighbourhood.
Update:	As discussed above this facility is available on the Council's website https://www.watford.gov.uk/parking/find-parking-space/4 where residents can request an electric vehicle charge point to be placed in their road. Requests are looked at individually against criteria set by HCC as Highways Authority to ascertain if - a) there is sufficient footpath width of 1.8m or more in order to site a charging unit, b) No other electrical equipment is within a 2.5m distance of the proposed site, c) there is a suitable UKPN power supply within the area of the site, d) the location is not directly outside the pathway leading to the premises that would impede access. The implementation of requests is also subject to the availability of funding.

Recommendation:	For the public Sustainability Forum to hold a session discussing electric vehicles with residents.
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Update:	We will hold a session on electric vehicles with the Sustainability Forum in the summer when the outcome of the current EV funding bid is known and the new Watford car club has gone live. We will invite representatives from our car club operator and/or other EV experts to present to the forum and invite questions and discussion.
Recommendation:	To continue to work collaboratively with Hertfordshire County Council to increase the charging infrastructure in Watford and to make the case to reinstate the use of lamp columns for that purpose as well as other public highway land.
Update:	Regular meetings continue to happen with HCC and other neighbouring local authorities with a view to highway land being made available for destination charging locations to be created. We have continued to raise this issue with HCC and they have now softened their approach for the use of lamp column charging. In order to use HCC lamp columns the asset needs to be a steel column which must be located at the front edge of the footpath (near the kerb edge/road). This is to deter trailing cables over the footpath.
Recommendation:	To develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy for Watford.
Update:	Through consultation with HCC we have been helping to develop the HCC Electric Vehicle Strategy with a view to adopting the main features to enable Watford to develop an EV strategy that would align with the Transforming Travel in Watford programme. The HCC EV Strategy is currently being finalised following consultation and is expected to be published in March 2023.
Recommendation:	To make further consideration about how the taxi fleet can be enabled to transition to more electric vehicles.
Update:	The 50% subsidised taxi licence fee for electric vehicles remains in place. This was discussed as part of the wider licensing fees and charges report considered at Licensing Committee on 12th January. Further in-house work to assess the feasibility of providing charging infrastructure will be undertaken. The current government funding criteria does not permit making bids for funding the installation of EV charge points to support taxis.