

Motion on Notice

Submitted by: Councillor Everitt
Seconded by: TBC

“Tunbridge Wells has seen a significant increase in Electric Vehicle (EV) ownership in 2019. It was 8th in the highest growth rate league of EV ownership in the UK. Yet, as of October 2019, our borough had only 21 public charging points, placing it far below the average of 40 per UK local authority area. One of our neighbouring authorities of Maidstone possessed 37.

In response to our deficit of public charge devices, this Council recognises its responsibility to increase provision for current and future need across the borough including significant kerb side provision for those who do not have off street parking. Currently devices are concentrated within central Tunbridge Wells in car parks and do not provide easy ‘close to home’ charging.

A better availability of public charging devices will promote the continued growth of EV ownership within our Borough, reduce pollution, improve air quality and decrease carbon emissions in line with the Council’s commitment to encourage a borough wide reduction of emissions by 2030. It will also be line with the objectives outlined in the Government’s ‘Road to Zero’ policy and the recent announcement of a ban of new petrol and diesel car sales by 2032.

The Council commits to an increase in the number of public charge devices across the borough to ensure that we are in the top 20% of authorities to achieve this, currently we are in the low 40% to <60% range. To help achieve this it undertakes to produce a report by Full Council 8 July 2020 showing we can deliver on this ambition in the shortest reasonable timeframe and with minimal impacts on council budgets.

Producing the report will involve consulting with other councils and associated commercial providers who have launched extensive kerbside charging schemes on practicalities, impacts and efficacy. It will include investigation of the use of lampposts, roadside cabinets and wireless roadside charging points and include transparent cost impact analyses of moving street furniture where required in relation to the deliverance of Government policy aims and health and well-being benefits.

We agree that our authority should work closely with relevant government bodies and partners to identify latent demand and suitable installation sites, spread evenly across the borough. We should identify and apply for external funding, such as central government's OLEV On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme. We should combine these initiatives with an extensive campaign to promote uptake of the OLEV grant for Tunbridge Wells residents with driveways.

We agree that we should actively encourage the switch to EV by promoting knowledge of the government's EV purchase grant and be on the front foot in the provision of adequate EV charging points to meet this increase in demand in our borough from our own residents and visiting vehicle owners."