

Report of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Introduction

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 2 December 2021

1. By Councillor Atkinson on:

- progress in installing 400 electric vehicle charge points by the end of the year.
- the criteria for choice of location and
- the highways standards which must be achieved for installation with particular reference to clear street and accessibility standards and
- how many EV charge points will be required in Devon over the next 5-10 years to meet the Net Zero carbon targets and
- the plans for funding and installing these required to meet these targets
- who owns the charge points and is responsible for the repair and tariff setting
- how members of the public know where to find EV ChargePoint's

2. By Councillor Hannaford on:

Can I please request a cabinet member report on Devon County Councils official response to the DEFRA Beaver Reintroduction & Management In England consultation paper that has recently closed.

3. By Councillor Hodgson on:

A report into measures taken, funding allocated (i.e. including 106 monies) and spent, and an assessment of the outcomes in terms of air quality and behaviour change that DCC and its District Council partners have instigated to address air quality issues over the past 10 years in locations in the county with an Air Quality Management Action Plan. This would include the A385 corridor and associated AQMA through Totnes.

4. By Councillor Hodgson on:

An explanation of how the inclusivity requirements and policy is applied for Devon pedestrians.

Response

1. Electric Vehicle Charging Points

The Devon Climate Emergency partners will have provided over 400 electric vehicle charging bays by the end of 2022. 90 are active already. Progress can be viewed on the [online map](#) that will be updated regularly.

The on-street charging locations were chosen by reviewing off-street parking provision, access to the electricity grid and suitability of the highway and pavement to maintain accessibility standards. In addition, the land used for off-street charging locations has to be under the ownership of a public authority. Each authority has been responsible for identifying off-street sites under their control as part of the consortium approach.

On-street charging units are being installed following the Government's [Inclusive Mobility](#) guidance. This means the units must be 450mm from the front of the kerb and there must be at least 1200mm between any equipment and other furniture or the back of the pavement.

At this stage, the Devon Climate Emergency partnership does not have a figure for the number of charge points needed to achieve net-zero. This will depend upon the rate of electric vehicle uptake by the public, the rate and type of charge point installation by the private sector, and how users of electric vehicles chose to charge their vehicles as they become more accustomed to electric motoring (e.g. at home, at a destination - such as a supermarket, on-street or off-street). Devon County Council (DCC) is conducting research which should provide an estimate of this complex situation.

DCC will continue to make use of government funds for charge point installation and explore investment models with the private and community sector.

DCC has granted the land for 10 years to charge point operators that own and operate the equipment. The operator is responsible for repair and tariff setting. The agreement includes minimum response times for repairs by the charge point operators and a commitment to keep the tariffs fair.

Various smart phone apps and websites are available to show the location of all charge points.

2. DEFRA Beaver Reintroduction & Management In England Consultation Paper

Defra undertook a consultation on the government's proposed approach to further reintroductions of beavers in England and the management of the species in the wild. This related to future releases into the wild, current and future releases into enclosures and existing wild-living beavers. The 12-week consultation period closed on 17th October; responses will be used to inform final decisions on an approach to the reintroduction of beavers in England.

Devon County Council was well-placed to provide comment on this issue, having been closely involved in the River Otter Beaver Trial, which ran for the five year period through to 2020 and which culminated in the government announcing that these Devon beavers could remain in the wild. In the intervening period it has become apparent that beavers have become established along large lengths of the River Tamar and are believed to be present in at least one other Devon river. Enclosed beavers are also present in northern Devon and in Plymouth, with a current proposal for their release on the River Caen at Braunton.

A County Council response was submitted to Defra via their detailed online survey form, covering the 15 questions relating to the national approach to reintroductions, existing wild-living beaver populations, current and future beaver enclosures and beaver management issues.

This response strongly supported most aspects of the proposed approach to beaver reintroduction set out in the Defra consultation. In most respects, this approach mirrored those applied very successfully through the River Otter Beaver Trial, led by the Devon Wildlife Trust. The main area of concern relating to the consultation proposals is the suggested approach to funding for beaver reintroductions and the duration of this support. The scientific monitoring undertaken through the River Otter Beaver Trial demonstrated that there can be significant ecosystem and societal benefits from the reintroduction of beavers, although there can also be localised problems for landowners and others with riverine interests, which need to be addressed through appropriate mitigation and management. On this basis, our response called for national funding to be allocated for this process, with this provided over a sufficiently long 'project plan' period during the re-establishment of beavers.

3. Air Quality Management Plan

The assessment of air quality, and the establishment of Air Quality management Areas (AQMA), is a district council function. The County Council's Transport Planning and Highways Development Management teams liaise closely with our district council colleagues to maximise the air quality benefits of transport and accessibility improvement schemes and Section 106 contributions. Therefore, whilst we do not specifically seek S106 contributions nor budget specifically for air quality management reasons, transport, accessibility and behavioural change benefits do often accrue as a consequence of this work.

Over the past 10 years, we've delivered improvements like the £8.5m Crediton Link Road, which has significantly reduced pollution levels on A377 Exeter Road. This year, Mid Devon expect to revoke the Crediton AQMA for the 24-hour mean particulates objective. In 2016, the County Council delivered the £0.5m Turk's Head junction in partnership with National Highways, which is expected to see the revocation of the Honiton AQMA, which is the only AQMA in East Devon. In South Hams, the County Council has recently delivered the £0.5m Western Road scheme to address air quality issues in Ivybridge and continues to secure contributions to support increased cycling in the town. In Totnes the S106 funds have been used for a number of measures as set out in Totnes Air Quality Action Plan put together by South Hams District Council including public transport support, electric vehicle charging points, enhancements to cycle/pedestrian routes and green travel vouchers. Investment in cycling, public transport and new rail stations serving Exeter to encourage mode shift for travel into the city continues to be a priority and we work closely with Exeter City Council on the Sport England Delivery Pilot to complement this investment with behaviour change initiatives targeting inactive people, schools and workplaces. Concentrations of pollutants across the city have shown a long-term downward trend with several sites no longer exceeding the air quality objectives (based upon 2019 pre-COVID data).

4. Inclusivity requirements and policy for Devon pedestrians

Manual for Streets is used by our designers primarily for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets but it can also apply to existing streets. This was a key document that shifted away from design that focused on movement of traffic to placing a higher priority on meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The guidance advocates inclusive design principles, which includes placing people at the heart of the design process and it acknowledges diversity and difference. Through the Committee approval processes (whether Cabinet or HaTOC), the reports require equality impact of schemes to have been assessed to aid Member decision-making.

Councillor Andrea Davis

Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport