

Cabinet

5 March 2024

Electric Vehicle Parking Policy

Recommendation

That Cabinet adopts the parking policy at Appendix 1 to enable the designation of on-street electric vehicle (EV) parking spaces as for use by EVs only.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends a change of the Council's parking policy to support the use of EVs, by formally restricting EV charge point parking spaces to use by EVs only. The aim is to ensure that EVs can access on-street charging infrastructure installed for that purpose. The proposed policy is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Adopting the proposed policy would improve access to on-street EV charging facilities in the county, which in turn supports the environmental and transport aims of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4), and helps our residents and visitors to support moves towards Net Zero carbon in line with the Sustainable Futures Strategy.
- 1.3 When charging infrastructure first began to be introduced, EV ownership was much lower, and the level of uptake did not necessitate each parking bay to be designated as EV-only. However, as ownership rapidly increases, we need to support that growth, as the use of charge point parking spaces by non-EVs hampers the ability of EV drivers to charge.
- 1.4 Currently, on-street EV charge point parking spaces in Warwickshire are advisory only. This means that any vehicle can use them, and they cannot have signage or wording on the road surface stating they are available to EVs only. In some locations, they are marked as 'mixed use', actively advertising that petrol/diesel vehicles can also use the parking space. This approach not only results in EV drivers being blocked from using the facilities, but in residential areas where properties lack off-street parking, this is a known deterrent to residents purchasing EVs.
- 1.5 The Council has been clear regarding its intention to reach Net Zero carbon emissions as a County by 2050. One way to support progress is to facilitate the use of EVs and an increase in the speed of rollout of EV charge points. The proposed EV Parking Policy would support these aims, by maximising

availability of EV charge points, and making EVs a more attractive travel choice.

- 1.6 The Council's Road Safety Audit (RSA) team require that parking for EV charge points should be designated as EV only, to avoid the trip hazard of trailing cables being used to charge vehicles some distance from the charge point itself. This is required to be by signage and with wording on the road surface. To do this requires a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) change.
- 1.7 The proposed policy at Appendix 1 supports all EV on-street charge point parking spaces to be designated as standard as for EVs only and backed by a TRO (unless specific circumstances at a location require otherwise).
- 1.8 In order to implement the change, TROs would be proposed in the usual way for each district/borough. The standard TRO process would be followed, which involves a public consultation period with notices published locally, before a final decision is reached, taking objections into account. Local members will be engaged with during selection of sites where the TRO will be proposed.
- 1.9 The proposal is to implement the EV-only TRO in addition to whichever parking TRO already applies to the area (limited waiting, pay and display, residents permit zone and so on). The existing parking TRO would continue to apply alongside the EV-only designation. In unrestricted parking areas, only the EV bay will be designated.
- 1.10 Legislation provides that EV-only bays must be designated as "Electric vehicle recharging point only". This means that vehicles must be charging when using the space or they can be enforced against. Once charged, the EV owner is required to move on, allowing multiple EVs in the area to use the charge point. This should alleviate concerns that, in areas of low EV take-up, the designated space would effectively become the 'personal' space of one EV driver. EV drivers can and should also continue to use the other bays as normal when they are not actively charging the vehicle.
- 1.11 Adopting the proposed policy would allow more effective and efficient use of EV charge points, assets which can be costly to install, by allowing enforcement against non-EVs using the parking bays (an activity which forms the basis of an increasing number of complaints). Enforcement will continue on the current approach, which is proportionate to contravention risk.
- 1.12 The approach of adding the new TRO to existing parking restrictions will help to keep signage as simple as possible. This ensures it is straightforward for users to understand, simplifies enforcement for civil enforcement officers, and would avoid an increase in successful appeal processes against penalty charges, which has been seen elsewhere because of overly complex signage.
- 1.13 Keeping the parking restrictions as similar as possible to those for non-EVs helps us to promote EVs as a realistic change to travel behaviour for our residents. As there will, in general, be no overnight restrictions, an EV driver

will be able to use an EV bay as overnight parking (subject to connection to the charge point), giving them the peace of mind of the same residential parking as non-EV users, without the prospect of having to move the vehicle late at night once it is charged.

- 1.14 The Council will work together with charge point operators, using this new policy, to focus access to charge points on those areas most in need of assistance to shift to EVs. This will often be in locations with urban, terraced streets without off-street parking. Adopting the proposed policy is therefore intended to help improve equality of access to EV charge points for all residents and visitors, particularly those who need to use on-street charge points.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The policy change itself is not intended to deliver any direct saving and will not incur costs directly.
- 2.2 As EV charge points are delivered under the proposed policy, TRO changes would take place. TRO changes are facilitated by the Minor Works team in County Highways, and are undertaken to a regular schedule, which will incorporate any TRO changes as a result of the proposed policy. Therefore, implementation of the policy is not anticipated to impact the usual costs to the Council from TRO changes. Additionally, the TRO costs are in some instances covered by the operator of the charge points.
- 2.3 There are no anticipated financial impacts on parking management teams. Enforcement will continue on the current approach, which is proportionate to contravention risk.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The proposed policy is considered to have positive environmental implications and to assist to make Warwickshire more sustainable. Adopting the policy would allow residents better access to sustainable travel choices, by making EV parking and charging more easily accessible. Increased uptake of EVs would reduce the amount of vehicle emissions in the county and help the Council's journey towards Net Zero carbon in Warwickshire.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 Once adopted, this policy will apply immediately.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – EV Parking Policy statement

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A – This is a countywide matter.

Other members: Councillors Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Sarah Feeney, and Jenny Fradgley