

**Subject:** Installing additional EV chargers in Berkhamsted.

**Background:**

As a consequence of the various local authority climate emergency declarations (BTC, DBC and HCC) there is an urgent need to transform the automotive industry to electric powered vehicles. The Government has legislated that no new vehicles sold from 2030 can run on fossil fuels. Manufacturers are rapidly upscaling their EV capabilities. Total EV vehicle sales remain low (72k in 2020) but growth is exponential and needs to accelerate rapidly if Government targets to phase out sales of new fossil fuel powered vehicles by 2030 are to be met. There have been two major impediments to the growth of this market: relative cost of electric vs fossil fuel powered cars and “range anxiety”. Relative costs have been narrowing rapidly in recent years and industry forecasts are that the difference will disappear within the next 18 months to two years. The second factor, range anxiety, relates to the lack of available public chargers – ie motorists fear being stranded with a flat battery.

A number of members of the BTC CE Energy Working Group have begun investigating how Berkhamsted could improve provision of EV chargers.

Berkhamsted currently has only 8 public chargers available: 2 old and unreliable units in Canal Fields Short Stay car park (3/7kw) and 6 7kw-chargers in the short-stay area of the multi-storey car park.

Charging times vary but a small EV (such as a Renault Zoe) takes around 8 hours to fully charge with a 7kw charger. Thus, whilst the chargers are only suitable for long stay parking they are located in short-stay car parks.

Modern EV chargers have a capacity of at least 50kw which can charge the average battery in 30 minutes or less. Currently Berkhamsted has no provision of such a rapid charger and there are no plans to introduce any.

DBC staff suggest that the current stance is to be “demand led”, meaning that additional infrastructure will only be encouraged/developed when there is proven demand. DBC are in discussions with BP Chargemaster with whom they have a contract about additional chargers within Dacorum but Berkhamsted is not considered a priority site: Hemel, Tring and Kings Langley are all considered to be a higher priority.

Herts County Council recently discussed their Sustainable Strategy Plan (15<sup>th</sup> December) which acknowledged the importance of highways and transport as one of the biggest contributors to CO2 emissions levels but claimed that “reductions in emissions ....needs to wait for technology to be further developed and/or is reliant upon other parties to deliver”. The development of a County-wide EV charging strategy is declared to be a priority action with a deadline for completion of 2025. A proposed amendment to bring forward this action to end 2021 was defeated.

There are (at least) two private sector companies (Instavolt and Osprey) that currently offer a complete installation and maintenance service to supply Rapid Charge (50kw) units in public spaces (wherever there are suitable public parking spaces such as council car parks, public houses,

McDonalds etc). These suppliers offer to undertake all the necessary infrastructure upgrades including trenching/cabling, the provision and installation of the charge units. They also carry out the necessary planning applications. They enter into long term lease contracts with the relevant public sector or commercial landowners to whom a fee will be paid dependent upon the usage of the facilities.

The attraction of these facilities is that people who are low on battery charge can come into the town and recharge their vehicle whilst shopping or having a coffee somewhere. This helps bring additional transient and tourist business into the High Street. These facilities are also valuable for local residents who do not have off-street parking or those without their own EV but have visitors who do drive an EV. Tradesmen with small vans also may need to rapidly top up their charge during their day.

We have spoken with Mid-Devon Council who worked with Instavolt to install a number of units and more are planned. They confirm the service has been excellent. There was no set up cost incurred by the council who receive a steady income from Instavolt.

There appear to be several potential opportunities for such facilities within Berkhamsted with the most obvious one being in St Johns Well Lane Car Park behind M&S. This site would use the nearby high capacity electricity hub (next to the telephone exchange) which, according to UK Power Networks has ample spare capacity. This would be a good place to start.

### **Motion**

T&E NOTES the criticality and urgency of installing further Rapid EV chargers (50kw) and SUPPORTS further investigation into the practicality of delivering additional public EV charge capacity by the office under the sponsorship of Cllr de Hoest. This work will seek to:

1. Liaise with DBC/HCC so as to ensure that such a project does not contravene the existing BP Chargemaster contract terms and that appropriate sites can be identified.
2. Contact Instavolt, Osprey and other similar suppliers in order to identify suitable sites.
3. Consider the practicalities of suitable projects and liaise between the Charger suppliers and relevant landowners to encourage implementation of Rapid Chargers as soon as possible.
4. Determine an EV strategy for Berkhamsted and identify quick wins.
5. Make appropriate recommendations to Full Council if decisions are required.

By this motion, permission shall also be granted to members of the BTC Climate Emergency Energy Group to communicate with relevant parties on behalf of Berkhamsted Town Council regarding issues raised.