

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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NEW CHARGING POINTS WILL SPARK INTEREST IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Dozens of electric vehicle charging points are set to be installed across Wokingham borough in a bid to reduce its carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency on a local level.

Wokingham Borough Council's executive has approved a small-scale rollout of about 36 on-street points in residential areas.

This would be subject to public consultation once preferred sites are agreed and several more could be provided in about 10 of the authority's car parks.

They would be owned by the council and maintained by a supplier with expertise in the field who would cover any costs, and the scheme would operate at no net expense to the taxpayer.

The council would invest £66,000, a quarter of the cost, which it would get back from income generated, as long as it secures the remainder through Government funding this financial year.

After 18 months, the charging points' effectiveness will be reviewed and the findings will help to inform the council's electric vehicle strategy for years to come.

This, in turn, will help the authority meet its pledge to do as much as it can to bring the borough's carbon emissions down to net zero by 2030 and will also improve air quality.

Road travel is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and nitrogen dioxide, a harmful pollutant created by burning fossil fuels, so moving away from them is key to meeting these goals.

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However, many residents don't have their own driveways and this is where electric vehicles are most often charged.

Because of this, charging points will be installed in areas where off-street parking isn't available and residents broadly support the idea.

On-street charging is easier and cheaper than using rapid hubs, which are the EV equivalent of petrol stations, and typically save drivers more than £100 a year by comparison.

The council will identify sites by working with the Energy Saving Trust to work out where demand is greatest using previous resident surveys, number of EV registrations and other data including numbers of properties with no parking.

The Government's share of funding would come from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles' On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme.

Councillor Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions, said: "The climate emergency requires immediate action and we've committed to playing as full a role as possible, leading by example as well as encouragement, in achieving a net zero carbon borough by 2030.

"Electric vehicles are a crucial element in this because transport, and cars in particular, account for more than a quarter of carbon emissions so there is a clear benefit in achieving a reduction in this area.

"However, lack of off-street parking is a major hurdle for many residents who want to make the switch so we're doing all we can to help them realise the benefits, and at no net cost to our finances."

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport, added: "This is just the latest in a series of measures we're taking to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions while keeping traffic moving on our roads.

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“These also include smart traffic signals whose timings can be changed according to demand as well as electronic message signs which warn users of disruption and suggest alternatives including public transport.

“This not only fights congestion but reduces emissions by ensuring vehicles spend less time idling.”

- ENDS -

Further information:

1. More from Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions, at gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk and Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, executive member for highways and transport, at pauline.jorgensen@wokingham.gov.uk