

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Meeting of Council 28 July 2022

Public Questions

Number	Question by	To be answered by	Subject
1	Mr Christopher Whinney	Councillor Lewanski, the Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources	Electric vehicle charging points

Council Meeting: 28 July 2022

Mr Christopher Whinney asked the **Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources, Councillor Lewanski** the following question:

Question: Electric vehicle charging points

The cost of petrol and diesel is so high and the prime challenge of climate change and the aim to achieve zero emissions by 2050 or sooner will encourage drivers and organisations to change to electric vehicles. However, drivers etc will wish to be satisfied that there are sufficient chargers available locally.

The Council has a policy and procedure to arrange installation of electric vehicle charging points on its own buildings. It is also a planning requirement for any organisation and resident submitting for a new dwelling to install a charger.

Will the Council be increasing the number of chargers on its premises in the next full two calendar years? Will it given an indication of numbers and whether it will amend the planning requirement to include a charger for any addition to properties?

Response

The Council currently has 15 electric vehicle charging points on land that it owns. This includes some to service our own electric vehicles and 7 which are accessible to the public. There are 6 more charge points being installed in Banstead that will go live later in the year.

When it comes to charging points, there are three main models of installation and operation.

The first is Council owned and operated. This is the approach that we've used so far, but it is not realistic to continue with this model as the demand for charging points increases.

Another option is leaving the installation of charging points to the private sector. This though brings concerns that it could result in uneven coverage as a private provider may 'cherry pick' sites according to their commercial attractiveness.

Our preferred model for future electric vehicle charging point roll out on public sector owned land is therefore via a partnership – or concession agreement – with a private operator.

Surrey County Council is currently looking at this model and we are exploring options with them and other districts and boroughs to be part of this arrangement, which will enable charging points to be provided in a cost-effective way at a much greater scale.

In the meantime, we will continue to explore options for increasing the number of charge points on council owned land where feasible and where resources allow.

Finally, you mention planning policy. Although this is not my portfolio of responsibility, I am informed that our planning policy is not exclusive to new dwellings only and that the planning team has started to require (where appropriate) new charging points on – for example - garages and front extensions. I am sure they will continue to look for opportunities to secure more charging points from new development.

Supplementary question

It is a good principle to explore different cost-effective options for the installation of electric vehicle charging points. However, will residents be kept informed regarding these options? Additionally, could a more precise response on how planning policy is used to encourage more electric vehicle charging points be provided by the Portfolio Holder.

Supplementary response

I can confirm that residents will be kept informed about electric vehicle charging points. Also, that I will be in touch with the relevant Portfolio Holder for planning to provide you with a more detailed explanation.

Supplementary response (provided subsequent to the meeting)

The 2019 Development Management Plan contains Policy TAP1, which states:

1. All types of development across the borough will be required to:
- f. Provide electric vehicle charging points.

The policy is routinely applied to all new residential development. It is not restricted to new dwellings and can be applied to householder extensions and other developments as well. I have previously discussed with the Head of Planning requiring electric charging points on planning applications for new garages or front extensions. This is something that the officers have committed to do, either through the use of conditions or informatives. Planning conditions have to meet certain tests including that they are reasonable and necessary. Therefore, it is not felt that other householder developments at the rear or upper floors could warrant the same requirement. Future-proofing developments near to driveways or other areas where cars are kept is considered to be a reasonable approach to help tackle climate change.