**ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGING STRATEGY UPDATE**

Report by Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to advise the Comhairle of the new delivery approach and funding landscape for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, along with work undertaken to date, and proposals for the future delivery of the EV network throughout the Western Isles.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In January 2022, Scottish Government launched a new public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) designed to support the growth of the public EV infrastructure network. The new EVIF programme replaces all previous funding programmes and potentially offers £60 million over future years (2022-26), with approximately half of this funding anticipated to be invested from the private sector.
- 2.2 Each local authority has been invited to develop a Public Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy and Infrastructure Expansion Plan. Transport Scotland's Advisory Board will review all such submissions and allocate funding for investments, based on each local authority EV Strategy and Expansion Plan.
- 2.3 The Comhairle has developed a combined islands EV Charging Strategy and Plan in collaboration with Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Council, supported by HITRANS. This was submitted to the Transport Scotland Advisory Board in November 2023. The Comhairle's Strategy and Plan focuses on providing a fit for purpose network and the development of EV hubs at key strategic locations across the Western Isles. The plan also included the potential to explore commercial interest opportunities in the local EV network, and to consider any potential to develop alternative business options for EV charge point ownership and management.
- 2.4 The Comhairle, along with partnering authorities are currently awaiting a formal grant offer from Transport Scotland. However, it is anticipated that these offers will be submitted to each authority by the end of this calendar year.
- 2.5 Scottish Government have indicated that there will be a transition away from the publicly subsidised ChargePlace Scotland (CPS) model of delivering EV infrastructure. Consequently, the current contract for operating the CPS 'back-office' will not be renewed when it expires in mid-2026. In order to ensure a smooth transition to a new back-office operator the Comhairle will need to make sure they have transitioned their charging infrastructure to an alternative charge point operator (CPO) by the end of 2025.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:
  - (a) note Scottish Governments new public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF), and work undertaken to date in the development and submission of a combine Electric Vehicle Strategy and Expansion Plan;
  - (b) note the end of the ChargePlace Scotland back office provision;
  - (c) agree that Officers should continue to engage with Transport Scotland, HITRANS and neighbouring Authorities on future funding options through EVIF; and
  - (d) agree to deliver the project outcomes of the EV Strategy and Plan subject to the award of EVIF funding.

Contact Officer: Calum Mackenzie, Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure  
 Appendix: Electric Vehicle Strategy and Expansion Plan  
 Background Papers: Reports to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, 8 February 2023

## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The current EV public network model is placing budget pressure on the Comhairle, and a future change in the financial model approach seeks to mitigate this pressure. As the EV market develops, the Comhairle may have an opportunity to generate a long-term revenue stream from their network.
Legal	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
Staffing	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
Assets and Property	A lack of investment in the upkeep and expansion of the public EV network, risks slowing down the future transition to a greener transport system across the Western Isles.
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	There is a risk that many areas within the Western Isles may not be commercially viable to install public EV infrastructure, and private investment may be difficult to attract. It is therefore essential that the Comhairle takes an active approach to the development and upkeep of EV infrastructure.
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	The Comhairle's Electric Vehicle Strategy and Expansion Plan was completed and submitted to Transport Scotland (TS) and Scottish Future Trust (SFT) in November 2023.  The contents of the Strategy and Expansion Plan meets the strategic outcomes of: Investment in our buildings and infrastructure and reduction in our carbon footprint and development of an island route map to net zero under the themes of Strengthen the local economy and Be a sustainable and inclusive council.
Environmental Impact	The implications for the environment through the EV Strategy and Plan are very positive. Expanding our public network will encourage people to transition to electric vehicles, reducing CO2 emissions and moving towards a cleaner, greener transport system.
Consultation	Through future consultation with TS/SFT the EV Strategy and Plan may need to be revisited to meet the changing market conditions.

## BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has pledged to end Scotland's contribution to climate change no later than 2045. All public bodies have a duty to support and work towards this target under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 5.2 The Comhairle's commitment to tackling the climate crisis can be seen in the Local Authority Installation Programme (LAIP) project and Switched on Fleet project. Funded by both Transport Scotland and Energy Savings Trust, these projects have developed the EV public and private charging network so that EV drivers can confidently travel throughout the Western Isles.

- 5.3 The Comhairle currently owns and operates 43 charge points throughout the Western Isles, 31 public EV chargers and 12 private (Comhairle fleet only) chargers. Although the tariff applied for using Comhairle EV charge points covers the cost of electricity use, it does not fully cover the total costs associated with the management, maintenance and the full lifecycle replacement costs of the EV infrastructure.

#### **NEW DELIVERY APPROACH AND FUNDING LANDSCAPE**

- 6.1 In January 2022, Scottish Government published its vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network and launched a new public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) designed to support the growth of the public EV infrastructure network.
- 6.2 The objective of this fund is to support the expansion at scale and pace of a reliable and customer focussed public EV infrastructure network across Scotland and to create the conditions to leverage commercial investment to support this expansion.
- 6.3 The fund also aims to ensure that investment enables charging opportunities in areas where off-street parking is not possible and where commercial investment on its own would not be viable. This approach supports a Just Transition within the Western Isles, enabling residents with no off-street parking to access EV infrastructure.
- 6.4 This vision changes the approach used to provide capital funding to local authorities for the installation of EV infrastructure. The new EV Infrastructure Funding programme (EVIF) replaces the previous LAIP funding programme and offers £60 million over future years (2022-26) with approximately half of this funding anticipated to be invested from the private sector. Additionally, £140k of EVIF funding (over the lifetime of the programme) has been made available to each Local Authority to support strategic planning and project delivery. Each local authority has been invited to develop a Public EV Charging Strategy and Infrastructure Expansion Plan to identify the scope of investment required to meet the outcomes and priorities in the Vision Statement
- 6.5 At this present time, it is not clear how the private/commercial investment will work for more rural authorities. In a Western Isles context, what is clear at this present time, is that there is limited commercial appetite for large scale EV infrastructure development by the private sector. Discussions have been had with potential private sector parties, with such companies showing limited interest with operating within the Western Isles and other rural authority areas.
- 6.6 The allocation of funding for capital projects will be based on each local authorities Strategy and Expansion Plan.

#### **COMHAIRLE'S EV CHARGING STRATEGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION PLAN**

- 7.1 Since the inception of the EVIF, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, in collaboration with Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Council and supported by HITRANS, have developed a combine islands EV Charging Strategy and Plan with the view of having further collaboration with other Councils in the region. The completed Strategy and Plan was submitted to the Transport Scotland and Scottish Future Trust Advisory Board in November 2023, for comment and allocation of grant funding. To date, the Comhairle haven't received any formal grant offer. However, it is envisaged that a formal grant offer letter will be submitted to each authority by the end of the calendar year.
- 7.2 This Strategy and Expansion Plan sets out how the Comhairle and partnering authorities can invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) to meet projected demand over future years. At the outset of the development of the EV Strategy and Plan, a list of stakeholders was identified and through targeted consultation sessions contributed to the development of the document. Stakeholders were classified into four categories based on the level of influence they were likely to have on the development of the strategy:

- Core Stakeholders
- Major Stakeholders
- Minor Stakeholders
- Private CPOs

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which is attached within Appendix B of the Strategy and Investment Plan, identifies each of the organisations where engagement was sought, alongside the stakeholder category.

7.3 How the strategy and project develop from this point will largely depend on clarity on future funding. If successful in receiving grant funding, the project would be undertaken within two phases. Phase 1 of the proposed EVCI programme will both increase publicly available chargers, by the development of new EV charging hubs, or extension of existing EV hubs in Stornoway, Tarbert, Balivanich/Liniclete and Castlebay and replace any existing aging infrastructure to ensure that the EV network in the Western Isles is fit for purpose and an attractive proposition for future private investment. Phase 2 would explore the range of different business options in relation to EV ownership/management, to help the Comhairle identify the role they may choose to play in the long-term future of the EV network within the Western Isles, along with further exploring any future commercial interest in the network.

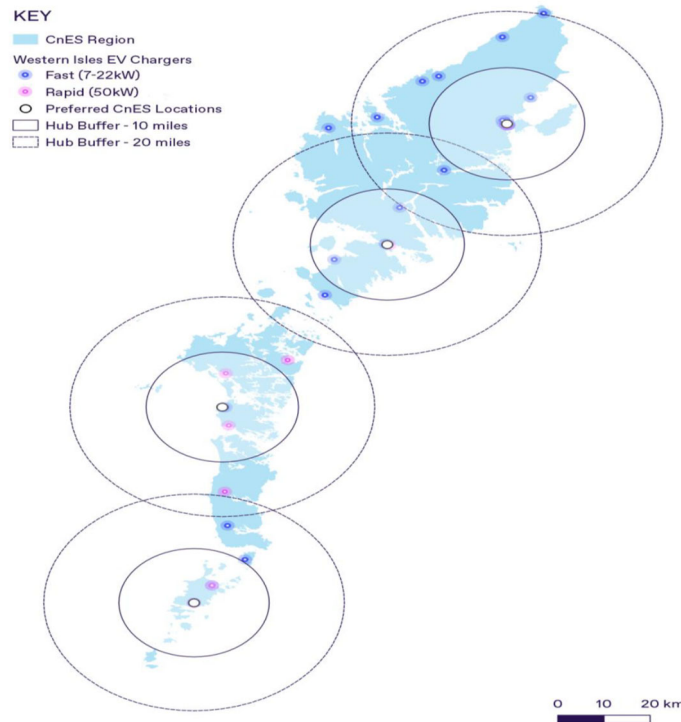


Fig 1 – Proposed Hub Locations (Phase 1)



Fig 2 – EV Infrastructure Options (Phase 2)

7.4 The identified future site/hub locations and types of EVCI infrastructure installed across the Western Isles were based on the following considerations:

- Trip attractors – including key public buildings such as community centres, schools, hospitals, leisure centres and parks, as well as other sites that may require Comhairle support.
- Main roads – proximity to well trafficked routes across the islands.
- Key communities – locations which are focal points of the community, which may attract users journeying to or passing by the community identified.
- Existing charging facilities – locations where existing chargers are present may be supplemented in some instances to co-locate infrastructure and increase provision. Alternatively, if existing infrastructure is present then this has been accounted for and the additional infrastructure is located away to increase the coverage as part of the comprehensive charging network objective of the Transport Scotland vision.
- Placemaking criteria – consider the placement of EVCI in promoting high streets and town centres, such as in public car parks near high streets.
- Transport hubs – integration with other modes of transport, particularly airports, bus stops and ferry terminals were analysed to ensure the charging network encourages public transport modes.
- Active travel routes – consideration of where active travel corridors exist and/or locate infrastructure within walking or wheeling distances to town or village centres.

#### **UK GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS**

8.1 On 24 November 2023 the UK Government’s Public Charge Point Regulations came into force with the legal requirement for public EV charging stations to adhere to established standards and provide publicly available performance reports. The new regulations are applicable to all public EV charging networks across the UK with the primary aim of improving consumer experience of public charging, including ease-of-use and reliability.

8.2 The new regulations are being introduced over 3 years. The first requirement relates to the implementation of a standard pence per kWh pricing metric and was delivered in November last year across ChargePlace Scotland(CPS). Further regulations concerning performance and minimum standards will come into effect on 24th November this year for all operators of public charging stations.

These include-

- Reliability Targets – 99% availability for all 50kW+ charge points
- Contactless Provision - All new 8kW+ chargers and all existing 50kW+ charge points
- 24/7 free to use helpline
- Open Data and Reporting
- Payment Roaming – comes into force November 2025

8.3 Within the Comhairle’s existing EV network, there are currently 3 charging posts which do not have access to contactless payment technology and therefore do not meet the requirements of the new regulation that will apply in November 2024 . The replacement/refurbishment of these charge points will be dependent on EVIF grant funding. However, if external funding is not available, these three charging posts may need to be removed from the public network and restricted to fleet use only.

#### **CHANGES TO CHARGEPLACE SCOTLAND NETWORK**

9.1 Charge Place Scotland (CPS) was established by the Scottish Government over a decade ago with the aim of accelerating the shift to lower emission vehicles. As EV adoption is expected to reach a tipping point and as the commercial EV charging sector expands, a decision has been made by Scottish

Government to transition away from the publicly subsidised CPS model of delivering EV infrastructure, to one that is focussed on encouraging much more commercial sector investment.

- 9.2 As a consequence, the current contract for operating the CPS 'back-office' will not be renewed when it expires mid-2026. In order to ensure a smooth transition to a new back-office provider and to allow for all closing actions to be undertaken prior to the contract end, Scottish Government are asking both the Comhairle and all other local authorities to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that they have transitioned their charging infrastructure to an alternative charge point operator (CPO) by the end of 2025.
- 9.3 It is considered likely that the decision on a new charge point back-office provider will be part of on-going collaboration with other partner local authorities and the development of new charging infrastructure.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 EVIF has the potential to allow significant improvements to be made to the EV charging network in the Western Isles. However, due to the limited commercial viability of the majority of EV charge point locations in the Western Isles, attracting a commercial partner to co-invest in this network has been challenging.
- 10.2 The development of four hubs with multiple chargers will best fit the needs of on the go charging in an island geography.
- 10.3 Collaboration with other island authorities has identified that they all face similar challenges, and this has been conveyed to the EVIF Advisory Board. The EV Strategy and Expansion Plan for the Comhairle has been submitted with the outcome on the level of grant funding available expected by the current calendar year.
- 10.4 As the current contract to provide the Charge Place Scotland back office will not be renewed, there will be a need to transition to a new system. It is hoped that this can be done in a way that maximises the benefits of collaboration with other local authorities, as this will make it easier for users to access charging facilities in different parts of the country.