Transition Tavistock replies to West Devon BC EV charging survey.

Q1. We're looking to identify opportunities to support research and innovation in electric vehicles. One part of this would be to submit a new bid under the new Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure scheme. This would involve a call for sites to identify areas for off-street rural charging hubs. **Do you think this action would benefit your area?**

Strongly agree

Transition Tavistock advocates for more sustainable and healthy local transport with reduced dependence on private cars. Transport emissions in West Devon are 7% higher than in 2005, in part owing to poor public transport provision, and lack of safe routes for active travel, with resultant reliance on cars likely to remain beyond 2030. Therefore if there is national funding for research and innovation to give people confidence to choose electric rather than ICE vehicles it is important for rural sites to be included as a priority.

Significant reductions in emissions from car-based transport must make provisions for the large numbers of people living in West Devon villages who do not have off-street parking so need to use third-party charging to transition to BEVs. If appropriate support for these car users is not made then the reliance of ICE vehicles will inevitably persist.

While electrical supply to villages is typically limited, dwell times there for vehicles are typically high meaning lower-powered chargers can serve residents. Most villages have facilities such as village hall or church car parks which could be suitable locations for charging hubs.

There are also significant numbers of homes within the towns and larger villages of West Devon, as well as the very rural settlements, which lack off street parking, and their needs will have to be addressed in future.

OFGEM's significant code review last year removed direct costs associated with reinforcement costs for supply upgrades. Now only extension asset costs must be met by the party seeking a new/upgraded supply. This is of relevance to West Devon as there may be sites across the district which saw reinforcement costs render them unfeasible for public charging previously however could now be feasible.

Q2. We're looking to promote and support community charge schemes, such as Zap-Home and Co Charger. Both organisations have a network of residences

with home charge points of users that have decided to share them with other EV drivers. ***Would supporting these organisations be beneficial in your area?***

Strongly agree

This approach seems a good geographical and cultural fit to West Devon, with the potential to keep more of the cost of charging within the local economy. It also enables use of the facilities of properties (eg new build or holiday lets) with chargers but no current EV user resident.

However, given the current low base of EV ownership, this would have medium rather than short term impact. Promotion and support will need to be sustained over the whole strategy period, and go beyond the occasional mention in a council news bulletin. We suggest involving elected members, parish councils and community groups in finding ways of sharing the concept and encouraging conversation about how it works in practice. This could include access to materials tailored to the West Devon context helping people identify which scheme would suit their circumstances. Might it also be possible to invite a few existing hosts / customers to take part in, eg, a webinar that would allow people to ask practical questions?

*Q3. We're looking to promote the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Workplace Charging Scheme to businesses and workplaces in the district. The scheme provides eligible businesses with support towards the upfront costs of the purchase and installation of EV charging points****. Do you think us promoting the scheme is worthwhile?***

Strongly agree

Smaller enterprises such as those in West Devon have less capacity than larger urban ones to spot such opportunities. Again, this will need a proactive approach, using all the Council's channels of communication with businesses, explaining the benefits in locally relevant terms, and timed to attract attention well before any deadlines. We understand that there is also scope for Workplace Charging Scheme supported installations to be opened up for public use – making public money work harder and creating opportunities for revenue generation for local businesses. (Rolec is one of several suppliers with products in this space.) If possible, finding mentors who could support the application process would help. Case studies (eg short videos) explaining how a Devon company has made use of the scheme and installed charging that now serves their business needs, those of their employees and the local community would

be good – perhaps produced as a student project to build Council links with local educational institutions?

Q4. We want to work with Devon County Council, OLEV and the National Grid to install six more charging points at Council-owned car parks. ***Would this be beneficial to EV drivers in West Devon?***

Agree

Agreement qualified because this is the least that should be done. The target of six charging points is unambitious, as the Council operates 15 car parks (including the free ones). It is not aligned to the order of magnitude of publicly accessible infrastructure that will be required in the near future. (See response to Q6).

We assume the term "charging point" is used (as by ZapMap) to mean devices, rather than locations or connectors. If the plan is to have one new device in each of 6 locations, that does not fit with the Devon CC strategy of clusters of devices. The advantages of having at least 2 devices in a location are more benefit from the disruptive task of laying cables and reduced risk of drivers arriving to find no suitable connector free.

In working with National Grid, the Council will presumably identify areas where the grid capacity might restrict provision of EV charging points, and advocate remedial action where relevant. We recognise that for the 2 year strategy this will be a factor in prioritising chargepoint location. We do not agree that the Council should hold back on otherwise suitable locations in order to maintain parking income – even if there is an impact on that, which we think unlikely as there are usually free spaces in the Council's car parks, particularly overnight when residents would be most likely to use chargers.

Prospective EV owners would have more confidence that this action will be delivered if there was some public acknowledgement and explanation of why there has been a non-functioning chargepoint in Bedford Car Park, Tavistock, for a year, and why the Kilworthy Park Pod Point chargepoint has not yet been made available to the public, even though (paid for) access outside office hours is a standard practice in local authority car parks in other counties.

Q5. We want to encourage supermarkets, rail stations and other partners and stakeholders to deliver EV charging points at other key destinations across West Devon. ***Do you think this is worth us doing?***

Neutral

While exchange of information would be worthwhile, we do not see this a priority for use of Council staff time. The major supermarkets all have national programmes of chargepoint installation, as does the National Trust and probably Network Rail. If local authorities are able to influence which sites they prioritise this might be better done at County level rather than districts competing for attention.

6. What else do you think the Council can do to help improve the number of EV charging points in West Devon?

It is important to recognise that by 2030, when perhaps 40% of vehicles owned by West Devon residents are BEVs, the share of these drivers who cannot charge at home will be far higher than the (relatively) early adopters using BEVs in the district today.

The provision of affordable and accessible public charging is essential to West Devon's strategy – it is not just about the number of chargers in the ground but whether they are suitable to the needs of the population. A great deal of charging demand could and will be served by low cost, low power chargers in years to come. We understand current projections indicate in the region of 350 public charging sockets will be required in West Devon by 2030 – of which 300 would be standard, low power, sockets.

As well as pursuing any grants available to deliver EV infrastructure in areas where the public charging networks will not independently, West Devon should also, in partnership with Devon CC, enable and facilitate charge point operators to install (appropriate) infrastructure in the district without public money. This could include unobtrusive kerbside chargers in residential streets. As facilitation of those is a highways authority responsibility, it is essential that there is close working between County and Borough in consultations with both charge point operators and neighbourhoods.

There is no discussion in the strategy of making use of the district's existing or potential sources of renewable energy as a source of power for chargepoints, or of adding generation capacity at Council sites such as car parks and depots. In the medium term this will be an important way of reducing the carbon emissions from EV use and getting the benefits of using energy close to the

point of generation. While this is a complex issue, the 2 year strategy could include an explicit action to explore it in partnership with other stakeholders including Devon Community Energy Network.

Q7. Do you think our EV strategy should include investigating other methods of e-mobility, such as e-bikes or car sharing in this EV strategy?

Yes.

The case for these being part of the solution is already strong. If consideration of them is postponed, opportunities to get a good fit with the rest of the strategy may be missed. For example, use of a village car park as the base for a car club EV, shared e-bike base and charging location for private vehicles is best discussed at the same time, even if they cannot all be actioned at once. Consideration of what charging (and storage) facilities e-bike users need and where, now and in the medium term, has a potential overlap / synergy with the current work on West Devon's LCWIP, so liaison on that would be timely.

Q8. Is there anything the Council should specifically be doing as it transitions its "light vehicle" fleet to electric vehicles?

Make sure seasonal efficiency variations are suitably considered prior to procurement of any vehicles. Reach out to learn from the experience gained by councils who are further down the tracks than West Devon – eg Islington and Northampton. Don't risk putting the cart before the horse – ensure suitable infrastructure is ready and installed prior to the delivery of vehicles. (We hear a northern Council suffered public embarrassment on this.) Ensure the fleet-wide telemetry system used by WDBC is well suited to tracking the performance and utilisation of the new BEVs as well as the remaining ICE vehicles on fleet. The resolution of understanding of vehicle utilisation a good quality telemetry system enables will help refine future procurement and ensure the most cost effective (& sustainable) vehicles can be procured as the WDBC fleet continues to electrify. Start with the end in mind in regards to EV infrastructure for serving the fleet: when the whole fleet is electrified, what system will West Devon want supporting its fleet? Multiple back-office systems or one? How many depot/charging sites? – are the location and supply characteristics of the existing sites suitable? Charging solely at depot(s) or a hybrid model, using public chargers, for light vehicles in particular? To ensure mid to long term efficiencies are realised and capital is not invested in infrastructure which

delivers limited long term value West Devon must look further than the two-year time horizon the strategy currently considers.

There is no mention in the strategy of the proposed 9 new chargepoints at Council depots / HQs being made available to other users. A mutually beneficial arrangement could be made with other public sector bodies including housing associations and NHS. We recommend that this is explored within the propose feasibility study. Where different organisations all face the same challenge of covering a rural area and needing to charge during the working day, sharing infrastructure is likely to be the most efficient solution. The Council could also consider the likely future potential of allowing other selected users, eg community groups with light vehicles (including minibuses) to charge at its sites.

Carbon mitigated now is more valuable than carbon mitigated in years to come. While light vehicle electrification is worthy and timely of attention, there is a more significant impact from heavy vehicles used by contractors to provide Council services such as waste collection. In not addressing this – even as a key point for future contract negotiation – the strategy misses an important aspect of "leading by example". We understand that a number of other local authorities continue to advance with the electrification of their heavy vehicles. For example, Exeter City Council plan to transition all their refuse collection vehicles to electric in next six years. Action could be taken during the term of this strategy to raise awareness and ambition among all concerned to ensure future reductions in emissions from waste collection.