

Surrey Electric Vehicle Strategy – Consultation Response

Cllr Jonathan Essex, 39 Common Road, Redhill, RH1 6HG

1. Executive Summary and Introduction

Definition of EVs, and wider consideration of E-vehicles

It should be noted that electric vehicles (EVs) are not just cars. This is implied in the report, but could be more clearly stated and reflected right from the start of the report. For example EVs can include bikes, motorbikes, private cars, taxis and private hire, buses and works/freight vehicles.

There is a need for a rapid shift to very-low and zero carbon transport across all vehicle types. There is scope not just in shifting from a petrol or diesel car to an e-car, but to an e-bus or e-bike. The potential climate and congestion benefits of a shift to an e-bike or electric bus user¹ as opposed to an e-car is far greater, and should therefore be acknowledged throughout this strategy.

For example, this means the reference (page 7) to not all houses having off-street car parking does not provide a barrier to charging all electric vehicles: e-bikes could still be charged easily, and electric car club vehicles still used, even if not home charge of privately owned electric cars. In some cases the prime charging point may be a workplace, which may fit with using solar power peak load to charge electric cars. An example of this could be a taxi driver or employee who drives a works vehicle of some kind and drives this home.

Charging of electric freight vehicles and buses should also be considered explicitly as part of the strategy.

Section 1.1 - Existing Charging Provision

The level of existing charging provision should be contrasted with other areas in the UK and Europe.

Section 1.2 – Demand

The level of infrastructure provided should not just support current (and predicted demand). If it exceeds demand, it could help raise demand for EVs. This is a rationale for more ambitious targets so Surrey can literally ‘stay ahead of the curve’ (see Figure 1).

Section 1.3 – Alignment to other Surrey strategies

It should also align to Surrey’s cycling strategy, notably in respect to e-bikes.

Opportunity – Income

It should be noted that if Surrey County Council install charging points such that these become the main (public) places EVs are charged (such as through street lighting points and in parking bays on the highway as well as in parking across all public sector estate including schools, hospitals and local government offices) then this could represent a significant revenue stream for the council. If the council was to generate significant renewable energy then these could be carbon neutral, so could be marketed as climate friendly EV charging points.

Opportunity – e-bike key destination charge points to drive significant modal shift

¹ As well as to walking and cycle (active travel) and bus and train (public transport) more generally, but that is not the focus of this strategy.

Installing e-bike charging points in town centres, at stations, schools and colleges etc could lead a significant modal shift – especially as main work destinations have limited parking provision. This could have a positive impact in not just reducing carbon emissions and air pollution but also reducing street parking and congestion levels. Providing these alongside cycle racks could increase the total number that choose to cycle rather than drive.

A significant modal shift could have an impact on the average number of cars owned per household, which would have a knock-on benefit in increasing the percentage of cars that can then be (potentially) charged at home as more cars would either be off-road (houses with driveways) or in allocated spaces (e.g. flats and other newer types of developments).

2. Aims and Objectives

Aim and Objectives

Suggest that the aim is not just to set out an approach, but also to establish targets to drive a budget and action plan. Including targets (annual installation targets, and % uptake for different vehicle types) could help to strengthen the objectives set out.

The eight objectives to support the aim appear to be more activities rather than objectives. A small number of objectives (which could build on the aim) should be established, to set real targets, budget that build on the aim. These activities should then be strengthened accordingly.

Three different approaches for Surrey County Council are set out. The role of highway authority could be more strategic, in partnership with the LEPs and sub-national transport body. The other two could also provide leadership for district and borough councils, other government organisations, businesses and others to follow and replicate across Surrey.

3. Strengthen Targets

Set 2030 as an aspirational target for Surrey to have the capacity for 100% EVs

Surrey currently has increasing carbon emissions in the transport sector. This strategy provides an opportunity for Surrey to demonstrate leadership. To meet and exceed the 2040 EV only sale of cars in the UK there is a need for infrastructure provision, and local best practice, to precede such a national target. For that reason a target of all vehicles to be electric vehicles by 2030 is proposed.

Include overall target

There should be overall targets for number of electric vehicle charging points, that are sufficient trajectory for all vehicles to be zero carbon across Surrey by 2030. The strategy should have budget set out the budget required to realise this target, as a starting point to developing financing strategies (see above) to ensure that this strategy, and the achievement of this target, is deliverable.

Specific Targets more ambitious

The car club EV target should be absolute – as well as relative – to encourage a growth in car clubs. This target should not be restricted to one supplier.

There could be a similar target for private hire and taxis (no target date has been proposed).

It is unclear why all bus routes are not suitable for EV buses. A target for EV buses and community transport should be included.

A target for e-bikes in Surrey should be included. There has been a recent massive shift towards electric-bikes (e-bikes) in many other countries, and a growing (but far less significant) shift in the UK. In the Netherlands e-bike sales turnover now exceed normal bike sales².

A target for freight transport in Surrey, whilst further off, should still be discussed. The potential for EV target in this area should also be considered.

Review action plan targets in light of this

The current version of the plan is noted as planning to indicate the 'direction of travel'. The above comments suggest that it might also set out where Surrey aims to get to, by when. This requires greater clarity in the plan when the plan is launched – not when it is reviewed in a further 12-18 months. The action plan should be strengthened and its target dates reviewed with that in mind.

4. Developing a Network with the Ability for Surrey to go Electric

Target universal coverage

This strategy risks lacking ambition. The Figure 2 looks very similar to a population map of Surrey. Why cannot Surrey target EVs to span all of Surrey's roads – and EV users? This could have different strategies of how this will be achieved in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Delivering a network that has sufficient capacity for all, and reaches all could then be delivered. It is expected that urban areas (being both principle destinations, as well as where people live) are developed more rapidly at first. However, in the same way as Surrey aspires to a 100% broadband coverage, it should also aspire to a 100% EV coverage.

Partners sign up to and share in delivering strategy

To deliver a network it may be useful to seek others to adopt this strategy such it becomes a Surrey strategy as opposed to a strategy for Surrey County Council. As a minimum this should include support from the Health clinical commissioning groups and hospitals, schools, borough and district councils, social housing providers and others such as business improvement districts, town centre partnerships.

Align to strategy to scale up renewable energy across Surrey

Rolling-up installation of EV charging capacity should be considered alongside scaling up renewable energy generation and development of mini-grids and smart-local electricity generation and storage grids across Surrey. The scaling up of Surrey's renewable energy generation and storage (which could include EV charging points) are complementary and should be planned and implemented together.

Including financing strategy(ies), budget and delivery mechanisms in final version of strategy

The report notes that 75% of installation costs are government funded but that Surrey has no current budget. This should be developed as a separate venture/LA owned business if it has no

² <https://privacy.vakmedianet.nl/bike-eu/?ref=https://www.bike-eu.com/sales-trends/nieuws/2016/11/milestone-for-e-bikes-in-holland-10128192>

potential revenue or capital budget allocation. The establishment of a business plan of how this will be financed, and how this finance can enable rather than constrain the rate of EV charging point roll-out should be developed. Innovative ways that finance and delivery have been allocated, including information on return-on-investment, invest-to-save initiatives and wider outcome/indirect savings should be investigated such that this strategy is informed by best practice. Finance should not be a constraint to delivery but ways found for it to be enabler for Surrey to lead.

It is not acceptable for the strategy to state that Surrey County Council has no funding to implement the strategy – in the strategy. The final version of this strategy must have a financing strategy, budget and delivery mechanism included. Failure to include this makes this a strategy without an implementation plan.

The business model(s) – as sketched out in Table 2 - should be developed and assessed such that the final version of this strategy matches general support for the idea for EV charging points for a clear plan as to how, and how quickly, this will be implemented in Surrey.

Planning Policy Adopted, not just Guidance

It is not clear how the planning guidance developed is intended to be embedded in each of the Local Plans across Surrey. Clarity on this – how it can be embedded as planning policy rather than exist as guidance (rather is a could rather than a should or even a shall) would mean this could be conditioned on new planning decisions across Surrey, rather than added as a nice-to-have informative. This could be embedded in plans currently under-development and/or adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents. The current approach, to publish a piece of guidance is not sufficient for Surrey to ensure EV roll-out in all new developments.

Assets

Assets considered in Section 5 should include the public highway (including street lamps). Street lamp charging has already now been trialled in Oxford³. On-street charging points could be investigated through street lamps (owned by Surrey County Council). This should be investigated for both cars and e-bikes.

Assets of other public sector partners who can be persuaded to adopt this strategy and therefore leverage wider potential rate of installations (districts and boroughs, schools, NHS etc) should be included.

³ <https://www.zap-map.com/bmw-showcases-street-light-charging-system-in-oxford/>