



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 20 JUNE 2023**

**SUBJECT: ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND STRATEGY AND
EXPANSION PLAN – PATHFINDER PROJECT UPDATE**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Committee to join the Pathfinder Project for the provision and operation of publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure following the completion of market testing.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (F) (17) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to traffic management.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee approves the proposal to join the Pathfinder Project for the provision and operation of publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Government's Programme for Government includes a commitment to phase out new petrol and diesel cars and vans across Scotland by 2032. Electric vehicles are, at this time, the main solution to providing mobility without the use of fossil fuels and are widely expected to continue to play an important role in achieving reductions in transport related emissions.
- 3.2 In February 2023 this Committee approved the Strategy and Expansion Plan for publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Moray. In Section 5.3 of that report, reference is made to the 'Pathfinder Project', which covers Highland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils.
- 3.3 The Pathfinder Project is a joint procurement exercise between these three authorities seeking private operators for the provision and expansion of the publicly available charging networks in their areas. During late 2022/early 2023 a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued seeking expressions of interest from private operators. Moray Council was included in the information

pack as a potential authority who may be interested in joining the project in the future.

- 3.4 The PIN has now been completed and information gathered from the responses from the potential operators suppliers. This information has been reviewed by Highland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Councils. HiTrans have also been part of the review process as they are representing Moray and the other Councils in the HiTrans Region. Operators have been interested in Moray, due to its geographical location sited between the other local authorities in the Pathfinder Project and its position on both the A96 and A95 strategic corridors.
- 3.5 There are synergies in approaches to the future operation and expansion of the Pathfinder Project partners and Moray Council in terms of the packaging of existing and future chargers into 'Lots' which cover a range of higher and lower utilisation sites. There is also a similar approach in terms of starting with packages of existing assets, then moving on to new expansion sites and finally to on-street charging locations.
- 3.6 The Pathfinder Project has three key objectives which align with Moray Council's approach to the provision of publically available charging infrastructure:
 - Community Wealth Building, Community Benefits and Economic Social Governance including training and the development of local supply chains for repairs and servicing;
 - Net Zero Journey, ensuring operations and expansion support a Just Transition; and
 - Commercial development, retaining an interest in the existing and future sites, but with a fair share of any profit coming back to the Councils, including a share of any new revenue streams other than charging in the future.
- 3.7 The Pathfinder Project Team will be drafting the tender documents during June/July of this year with a view to publishing the tenders in August/September. Evaluation of the submitted tenders is expected to take place throughout the autumn with an appointment (or appointments) by March 2024. Following a period of set-up and implementation with the successful bidder/s they will then commence to operate existing chargers, provide back of office facilities and expand the publicly available charging network as per each Council's Strategy and Expansion Plan. Subject to funding from Scottish Government and private investment, it is then expected that further procurement will take place for the expansion of the publicly available charging network, including on-street charger provision in Moray.
- 3.8 Collaborative working across local authorities is encouraged by Scottish Government and by joining the Pathfinder Project Moray will be more attractive to private investment. There are also efficiencies resulting from being part of a joint procurement exercise and utilising contract documents, which have already been developed by the Pathfinder Project.

- 3.9 In terms of the draft Electric Vehicle Strategy and Expansion Plan, Scottish Futures Trust have reviewed our submission and have indicated that they have revised their planning assumptions and updated their Feasibility Model, which has been used to develop the Business Case.
- 3.10 At this time officers are awaiting the award of further enabling grant funding from Scottish Government before the changes to the submission can be made, including the re-running of the financial modelling to incorporate the changes made by Scottish Futures Trust. The next update report to this committee the EVIF Strategy and Expansion Plan will be after the Pathfinder Project procurement process has been completed.
- 3.11 Finally, in the report Charges for Services to Corporate Committee on 31 January 2023 Item 8 paragraph 2.1 ii), delegated authority was granted for varying charges in relation to services where electricity supply was part of the fee. This authority includes the review of charges for council operated Electric Vehicle charge points. A review of these charges will be undertaken over the summer period, taking into consideration the changing costs of electricity to the Council.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Strategy and Expansion Plan sits within the approach of the council in its Corporate Plan of looking after the world we live in, whilst supporting the priority of creating a sustainable council through seeking grant funding and commercial partners to provide and operate the publically available electric vehicle infrastructure in Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

Scottish Government's draft vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network sets out the future approach to funding to provide, expand and operate the network. The draft Strategy and Expansion Plan and supporting Business Case have been prepared taking the draft vision into account and following the template and guidelines, and using the supporting data provided by Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust.

(c) Financial implications

The operation and maintenance costs of the council's existing charging infrastructure are met through revenue budgets, utilising the income from the charge posts. As the existing infrastructure gets older, maintenance costs are likely to increase.

Further expansion of the publically available charging network in Moray would be through a combination of Scottish Government grant funding and private investment. If funding was not forthcoming then expansion sites would not be taken forward.

(d) Risk Implications

Without an approved Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and Expansion Plan the Council will be unable to make applications to the Scottish Government Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF), which aims to provide £60m of funding to support the expansion of the publically available charging network in Scotland.

For EV charging sites within off-street car parks and on Council land that is part of 'Common Good' there may be a requirement to gain Court Consent to enable a private operator to install and/or operate above ground infrastructure.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report as the delivery of the draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and Expansion Plan is part of existing staff duties. However, the delivery and implementation of the strategy and expansion plan will require staff input from Procurement, Legal and Property Services. These services are all currently operating at capacity and the implementation and on-going management of the strategy may require additional resource, outsourcing or other work to be de-prioritised.

Part of the EVIF enabling grant from Scottish Government will be used to contribute towards a HiTrans officer acting as a shared resource to enable collaboration across a number of authorities in the north of Scotland and across the islands, and to represent the Council in the Pathfinder project that covers Highland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City councils. Collaborative working across local authorities is encouraged as part of the Scottish Government draft vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network.

(f) Property

The location of existing Moray Council charging infrastructure is within public car parks and on Council and Common Good assets. The plans for expansion focus on locations under the control of the Council. Community Asset Transfers (CATs) may reduce the number of locations available. The inclusion of some sites within the Expansion Plan may mean that they are no longer suitable for a CAT.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The strategy and expansion plan has been developed following the guidance provided by Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust Public EV Charging Strategy and Expansion Plan Template. This guidance includes specific consideration of the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on the relevant protected characteristics in Section 4.2 of the draft Strategy and Expansion Plan, as required by the SG guidance. New guidance on the design of charging infrastructure, to ensure that where practical it is fully accessible, is being developed by Scottish Government. Any new charging infrastructure will be required to follow this guidance.

PAS 1899:2022 is a new specification on accessible public charge points for electric powered vehicles. It covers the design and placement of charge points, including the location spacing and surrounding environment as well as the information, signals and indicators to be provided. www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/pas-1899/

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

Developing a strategy and guidance for the provision of publically available electric vehicles charging infrastructure is one of the key actions in the key actions in the Council's Route Map to Net Zero, which supports the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

Providing publically available charging infrastructure supports and encourages the change from fossil fuelled vehicles to electric and hybrid vehicles through addressing issues such as 'range anxiety' and proving charging facilities for households with no off-street parking. The use of electric and hybrid vehicles reduces emissions, which supports nature recovery and the overall improvement of environments.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Legal Services Manager, Chief Finance Officer, Equalities Officer, Principal Climate Change Officer, Assistant Procurement Manager, Asset Manager (Commercial Buildings), Roads Maintenance Manager and Committee Services Officer (L Rowan) have been consulted and any comments taken into consideration.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 It is proposed to join the Pathfinder Project with Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Highland Councils to seek private investment for the expansion and operation of the publically available Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Moray, optimising the procurement process and capitalising on the geographic context of Moray in relation to the A95 and A96 corridors.**

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Background Papers: EVIF Committee Report 7 February 2023

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