North Northamptonshire Council

October 2021

Newsletter

Virgin Park and Charge (VPACH2) Project

Cllr Graham Lawman
the Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets

Introduction

The purpose of this newsletter is to update on progress with the Virgin Park and Charge (VPACH2) project.

The UK Government recently published Decarbonising Transport: A Better Greener Britain which provides a comprehensive and ambitious agenda for change, including a variety of measures to accelerate the widespread adoption of electric vehicles embracing regulatory options and both financial and non-financial incentives. These reinforce previous announcements, including bringing forward the date for restricting the sale of new non-electric vehicles to 2030, and banning the sale of new hybrid vehicles, including 'plug-in' hybrids by 2035.

As a driver of an electric vehicle myself, I am acutely aware of the need for charging points and am delighted that we have been able to be part of this pilot scheme to enable those without driveways to benefit from EVs. This newsletter gives you details of the plans. Graham

Background

The VPACH2 project is part of a wider set of UK Government sponsored initiatives to build an electric vehicle charging network to ensure a seamless transition from fossil fuels to electric power by 2030, when the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles will be banned. Convenient access to Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) is a recognised barrier to the adoption of electric vehicles.

VPACH2 is a fully-funded Innovate UK sponsored project. This means that North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) receives funding from Innovate UK to support its involvement. It aims to demonstrate how on-street charging can be deployed at scale and pace across the UK to meet the electric vehicle charging needs of people without off-road parking; residents with off-road parking can already take advantage of government grants to install an EVCP at home. North Northamptonshire is an ideal place for this activity because of the low levels of public charging point availability, and the large terraced (and other) housing stock without off-road parking. Public car parks and other off-highway sites, including those in commercial ownership, are out-of-scope of the project.

The VPACH2 project commenced in October 2019. The original deadline for the project was March 2021, however due to the impact of Covid-19, this has been extended to March 2022. Following installation, each site will be monitored to understand the duration and frequency of charging, and how this changes over time.

Who is involved?

There are 20 organisations within the VPACH2 consortium, of which NNC is one of 12 local authorities (or groupings). The table below lists the consortium members:

SMS plc	Belfast City Council
Liberty Charge	Croydon Council
Loughborough University	Hammersmith Council
DETA	Liverpool City Council
Ginger	West Northamptonshire Council
Fully Charged	North Northamptonshire Council
Connected Kerb	Oxfordshire County Council
CENEX	Southend On Sea Borough Council
West Midlands Combined Authority	Wandsworth London Borough Council
Worcestershire County Council	Waltham Forest London Borough Council

[1]Innovate UK is the United Kingdom's innovation agency, a non-departmental public body operating at arm's length from the Government as part of the United Kingdom Research and Innovation organisation.

Our role

The VPACH2 delivery model for North Northamptonshire is based on NNC acting as a facilitator and enabler. This means that it will be the private sector (Liberty Charge Home - Liberty Charge) which installs, operates and maintains the EVCPs. NNC does not have any liabilities associated with infrastructure, power, maintenance etc. Furthermore, NNC does not have to take on any risk at this early stage of take-up.

The collaborative nature of the VPACH2 project encourages the sharing of ideas and experiences to build knowledge of the market, suppliers, and processes with other consortium members. This includes insights on siting EVCPs and constraints, also likely demand based on modelling and analysis undertaken by Loughborough University.

All the direct costs of the project to NNC are met through the INNOVATE funding, so involvement is cost-neutral.

NNC has signed a concession agreement with Liberty Charge. This agreement is for ten years and enables Liberty Charge to install EVCPs at agreed locations. The intention is that they will be able to leverage existing telecommunications-related infrastructure and associated power. This will reduce the need for new construction activity and therefore minimise any disruption for residents. Other benefits of this approach include enabling less commercially attractive sites to come forward, and reducing the installation time.

Liberty Charge has also been confirmed as the Charge Point Operator (CPO) for all the sites being installed in North Northamptonshire. This means that they will be responsible for supplying, managing and maintaining the EVCPs, as well as the connection infrastructure. This is a new role for Liberty Charge and offers a much simplified and convenient arrangement for NNC as there is now a single party responsible for managing the EVCP project, installing the services and operating the hardware. Northamptonshire is the first place outside of London that Liberty Charge will be operating as a CPO.

Methodology

Over the last 18 months, North Northamptonshire Council, and previously the former Northamptonshire County Council, have worked with Liberty Charge to identify and progress suitable on-street locations for EVCPs. This has involved the following approach/steps:

1. Identification of potential on-street locations against set criteria
2. Informal public consultation on those locations identified as suitable
3. Review of the outcome of the public consultation responses to inform which sites were chosen to be taken forward. Sites which attracted major objections were often rejected at this stage.
4. Site visits to those locations selected following consultation to define work required and enable the preparation of detailed drawings and plans
5. Commercial analysis, tests and costing by Liberty Charge. Some sites were rejected at this stage.
6. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) public consultation
7. Analysis of response to TRO consultation and decision
8. Confirmation of related Section 50 licence and 278 agreements to enable the EVCP works and installation

The identification of potential locations was also informed by requests to the online request an electric vehicle charging point survey.

Over 200 sites have been considered and reviewed, but the majority have been dismissed following public consultation and/or for technical or commercial reasons.

Site Locations

Currently seven sites have been approved by NNC for EVCP installation (see below).

Sites in North Northamptonshire:

AREA	ADDRESS	POST CODE	VPACH REF
Kettering	9 Linnell Way	NN16 8PS	Ket-L43
Kettering	27 Telford Way	NN16 8PS	Ket-L44
Wellingborough	22 Castle Road (opposite)	NN8 1LL	W8 B
Wellingborough	Knox Road	NN8 1JA	W9
Higham Ferrers	14 Newman Street	NN10 8JP	H6
Rushden	2 York Road	NN10 0RF	R2
Thrapston	57 Highfield Road	NN14 4PG	TH2

At each of these sites there will be two charging points (four sockets) serving two charging bays (i.e. four bays in total) – a total of 28 charging sockets. Initially only two bays will be dedicated, through the application of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), to electric vehicle charging only at all times, with the remaining two bays being available for electric vehicle charging or non-electric vehicle parking. As the demand for charging points increases, the two non-EV dedicated bays can be re-designated as 'Electric Vehicles Only'. This will be subject to a further TRO consultation.

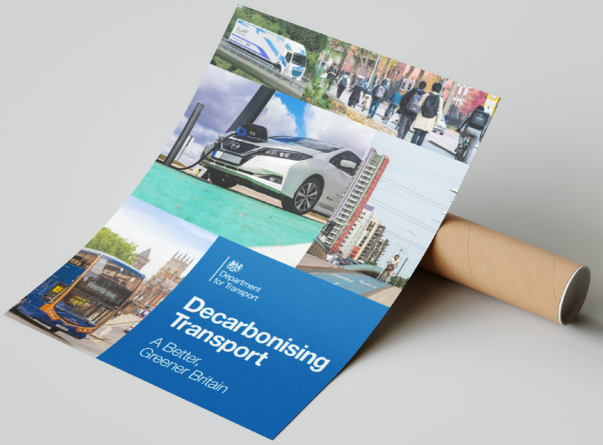
Installation of the approved sites is due to commence by Liberty Charge very shortly, with all sites 'live' by the end of November 2021. This includes the use of Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) to suspend parking whilst the groundwork and EVCP installation takes place. It also includes technical audits of submitted plans to ensure that they meet the relevant highway standards before approval is given for the works via Section 278 agreements.

Figure 1 (below) shows an example of the type of charge point that will be installed. They are 'fast' chargers (rated at 22kW/h) which allow users to charge their vehicles in under four hours.

Section 50 licences are required for any third party installing and operating apparatus on the highway. Since Liberty Charge are responsible for installing the underground cabling, feeder pillar, and the EVCP hardware, as well as operating the EVCP, only one Section 50 licence will be required with NNC. There will be agreements which ensure that the apparatus is regularly maintained and inspected. It also covers arrangements should the EVCP be damaged, or otherwise out of operation.

Communications

Residents will be notified by Liberty Charge in advance of works commencing explaining the works accompanied by location maps. This has already started for the seven confirmed sites. Further communications are planned to promote the EVCPs which are being installed to raise awareness and answer common questions regarding how they work and costs of charging etc.



Approach to identifying and agreeing further sites

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the VPACH2 project has been extended to March 2022. This provides the opportunity bring forward additional sites.

The recent report to the Council's Climate Change, Environment & Growth Executive Advisory Panel on 22 September highlighted the need to find additional sites for EVCPs to cater for growing demand for pure electric and 'plug-in' hybrids. It also outlined the opportunity to progress further sites through the work with Liberty Charge. The Panel supported the push for further sites.

NNC officers have been working with Liberty Charge to identify and evaluate further potential sites. This includes sites put forward by councillors, and residents. The scope of the VPACH2 project means that any sites must be 'on-street' in areas with limited or no access to off-street parking.

The following sites have been identified as potentially suitable for the installation of EVCPs.

Corby	81	Burghley Drive	NN18 8EB
Corby		Glastonbury Road	NN18 0DE
Oundle		Market Square	PE8 4FG
Higham Ferrers	34	High Street	NN10 8BL
Kettering		Hawthorn Road	NN15 7HS
Kettering	4	Kingsley Avenue	NN16 9ER
Kettering		Opp. 66 Montagu Street	NN16 8SE
Kettering	19	Park View	NN16 9RH
Kettering	70-76	Rockingham Road	NN16 9AA
Kettering	33	Shakespeare Road	NN16 9QR
Kettering	24-80	Pollard Street	NN16 9RW
Rushden	5	Southfields	NN10 0DD
Wellingborough	37	Cannon Street	NN8 4DS
Wellingborough	17	Mandarin Garden, 23a, Midland Road	NN8 1HA
Wellingborough	53	Zara Upholstery, 53, Oxford Street	NN8 4JH

The table below summarises the sequence of activities, and indicative timings, following the identification of potential sites:

ACTIVITY	START	END
Consultation with statutory consultees and residents, includes both the formal Traffic Regulation Order process undertaken by NNC and a resident's survey on EVCPs via Liberty Charge. A letter notifying residents of the survey will be hand-delivered by Liberty Charge. Hard copies will also be available on request.	October 2021	November 2021
Decisions on additional sites and associated Traffic Regulation Orders made by NNC Traffic Manager and/or Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets, in liaison with Assistant Director for Highways & Waste		December 2021
Approvals for works, site build and EVCP installation	January 2022	February 2022
Sites live	From February 2022	-

It is proposed to consult statutory consultees on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at the same time as local residents. Liberty Charge will be running an informal consultation on the EVCPs in parallel. This will help to ensure that an extensive, well-informed, consultation takes place which extends beyond statutory consultees.

The results of both the TRO consultation and residents survey will be carefully considered in making decisions on which sites should progress.

The number of potential additional sites which could be taken forward in North Northamptonshire is likely to be limited by the time and other constraints. This includes commercial viability for the operator Liberty Charge e.g. if additional power is required this could make the site too expensive.

How long to charge a typical car*

Single Car - charging from Empty to full **3 hours** using a 22kW Alfen Eve Compared to **9 hours** using 3.7kW lamppost charger

* Estimated using Mini Cooper electric connected to a 22kWFast chargers.

Way forward

The insights gathered from this work, and the wider VPACH2 collaboration, have provided valuable learning for North Northamptonshire Council on the deployment of EVCPs and related considerations and issues.

Over the coming months NNC will be developing its strategy, plan and activities to support wider work and help drive the adoption and take-up of electric vehicles.

Further information

Further information on the VPACH2 project is available via the following link:

Electric Vehicles in Northamptonshire |North Northamptonshire Council (smartmovenorthamptonshire.net)

If you have any questions on the project, please contact:

EV@northnorthants.gov.uk