

Report to Partnership Meeting 11 November 2022

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

FASTER Project Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the development of the FASTER project funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project launched in October 2020.

OVERVIEW

The FASTER Project (Facilitating A Sustainable Transition to EVs in the Regions) is a joint proposal between seven Partners across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems.

The key objective of FASTER is to install 73 interoperable rapid charge points (50KW capacity) in the INTERREG VA region by June 2023, ensuring that the availability of charging stations is not a major obstacle to EV market penetration. It will also provide an additional supportive, enabling environment for suppliers and consumers, providing increased confidence and reassurance in regional commitment to the emerging EV market.

HITRANS will lead the technical work package on procurement, and will install 24 rapid charge points (or more if budget allows) across the three local authority areas covered within the programme area: Argyll & Bute (excluding Helensburgh), Western Isles, and Skye, Lochalsh & Lochaber areas of The Highland Council.

UPDATE

In July this year, our procurement for FASTER resulted in non-award, with 3 qualifying tenders coming in significantly over budget. We believe this was due to a combination of factors including volatile commodity costs, unprecedented inflation and consequent choices based on our predicted budget. Lessons learned will be fully captured in our procurement report for the project that will be commissioned next year.

To bring the re-tender in on budget, we took the following actions:

- Simplified the specification, tender structure and pricing evaluation
- Reviewed the site portfolio to reduce connection costs and identify reserves sites. 15 preferred sites were grouped to be within budget
 - In the Highlands and Argyll and Bute, sites were prioritised by those providing coverage of network gaps and then putting in double chargers on Council land to provide economies of scale

- In the Western Isles, poor existing and proposed fault response times from Suppliers caused us to prioritise sites by doubling up to build in resilience, on Council or private land
- 2 chargers end-of-life chargers were identified for replacement, eliminating the connection costs for those chargers. The replacements are in Leverburgh (upgrade from a 22kw Charger) and Tobermory, as land ownership makes it difficult to meet projected demand on Mull.
- Reserve sites were also identified and prioritised.
- A full list of preferred and reserve sites can be found in the appendix.

The re-tender was a success, and we intend to award to Scottish Power this month.

Scottish Power demonstrated strengths in environmental policy, accessibility and maintenance. They will sub contract the charger supply to Swarco who will provide Raption 50s with contactless payment, a familiar product to all the Councils. Scottish Power will provide a warranty and maintenance package for 3 years as part of this contract.

New electrical connection quotes are in progress and we expect to be able to accept those this month.

Legal agreements also continue to progress well.

PROJECT BUDGET

HITRANS has a significant budget in the FASTER project totalling €1,675,703, allowing for the installation of at least 24 rapid charge points.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – The FASTER project supports several RTS objectives, particularly in the field of low carbon transport and support for EV uptake.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – FASTER is supporting broader policy work by conducting research on the procurement and installation of a rapid charging network and how this complements existing infrastructure.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – The project attracts a reimbursement rate of 85%.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – FASTER aims to increase the number of publicly accessible charge points to encourage more EV drivers in the region.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:-

1. Note the report.

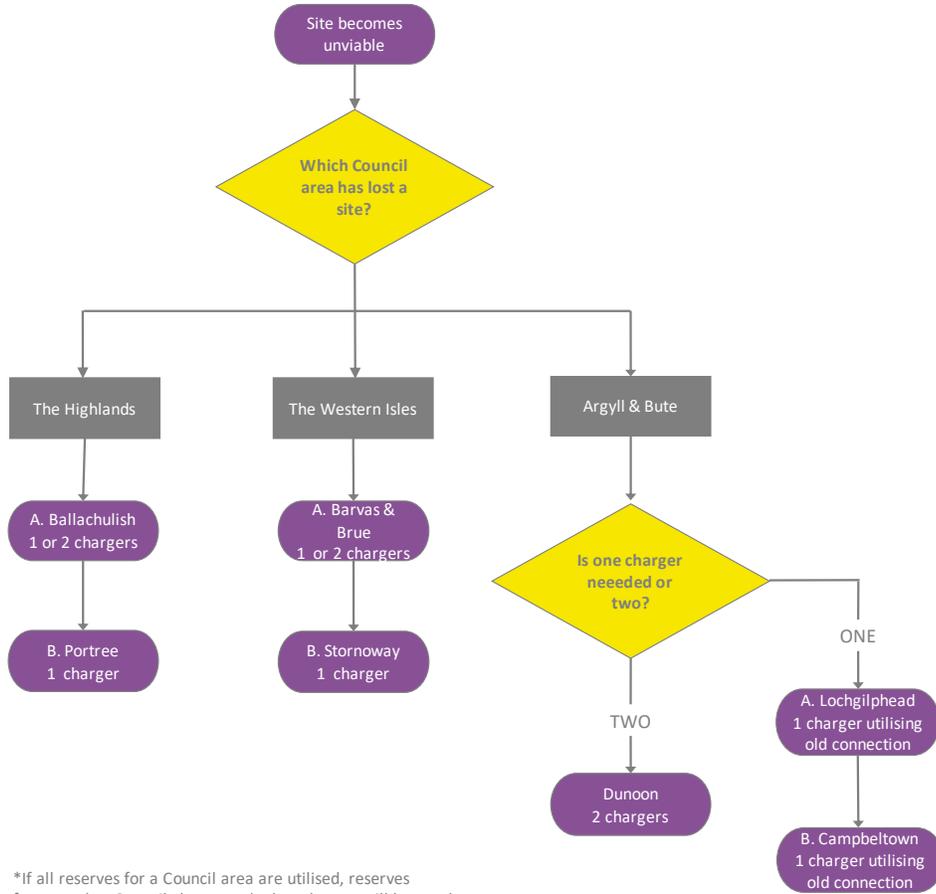
Report by: Gemma Robinson
Designation: Project Officer - FASTER
Date: 2nd November 2022

Annex 1

List of sites due to receive FASTER electric vehicle infrastructure

The Highland Council Owned Sites
Middle Street Car Park, Fort William, Highlands, PH33 6EU
Bayfield Car park, Portree, Isle of Skye, Highlands, (///tasks.exits.samples)
Ballachulish Viistor Centre Car Park, Albert Rd, Ballachulish, Highlands, PH49 4JB
Third Party Owned Sites in the Highland Council area
Glenfinnan Monument & Visitor Centre,, Glenfinnan,, Inverness-shire, Highlands, PH37 4LT
Arisaig Hotel, Main Road, Arisaig, Highlands, PH39 4NH
Strontian Stores, 1 Dalmhor, Strontian, Acharacle, Highlands, PH36 4HZ
Argyll and Bute Council Owned Sites
Car Park, Craignure, Isle of Mull, Argyll (///mincing.screaming.advising)
Rothesay Ferry Terminal, Rothesay, Isle of Bute PA20 9AQ
Corran Halls, 54 Corran Esplanade, Oban, Argyll PA34 5AB (3m height barrier)
Ledaig Car Park Tobermory Isle of Mull , Argyll PA75 6NR
Third Party Owned Sites in the Argyll and Bute Council area
Tarbert Port (Loch Fyne) The Ferry Slipway, Pier Road, Tarbert, Argyll, PA29 6UF
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Owned Sites
Leverburgh Harris Ferry Terminal, Isele of Harris, Western Isles, HS5 3UB (///navigate.clusters.paintings)
Third Party Owned Sites in the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar area
Stepping Stone Restaurant, Balivanich, Isle of Benbecula, Western Isles, HS7 5LA
South Beach Car Park, South Beach Street, Stomoway, Isle of Lewis,Western Isles, HS1 2BN
Uist Gifts and Information, Pier Road, Lochboisdale, South Uist, Western Isles, HS8 5TH

Flowchart to show process for choosing reserve sites



*If all reserves for a Council area are utilised, reserves from another Council closest to the lost charger will be sought.