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Report to Partnership Meeting 17 September 2021

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

The FASTER project has been granted an extension to May 31st 2023 and Louth County Council have joined in place of The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, taking on procurement for the Republic of Ireland.

In Scotland, project partner University of Strathclyde developed a data driven methodology to select sites, researching network gaps, demand projection and electrical grid capacity to make initial site suggestions. This has attracted extensive interest from the wider electric vehicle (EV) community. The 3 Scottish local authorities then input their community suggestions, continually consulting with HITRANS and University of Strathclyde to help shortlist sites in line with their individual EV infrastructure strategies. Alongside this, HITRANS completed site visits at all potential shortlisted sites, serving to identify any barriers and all site specific requirements. The University of Strathclyde also collated budgetary costings for each site.

8 shortlisted sites have now been identified in all 3 local authority areas. Those for the Western Isles and the Highland project area are included with this report, and have been shared with the

relevant Councils and SEUPB for approval. For Argyll and Bute, one site on Mull is still being finalised, but the other 7 sites shortlisted are Rothesay Pier, Oban's Corran Halls Car Park, Lochgilphead's Lorne Car Park, Tarbert Ferry Terminal, Islay's Port Askaig, Dunoon Coal/Pier Car Park (electrical capacity TBC), Campbeltown Ferry terminal (electrical capacity TBC).

Alongside this, HITRANS held a second regional EV stakeholder forum in June. Residential and fleet charging were the biggest concern for stakeholders, providing a deeper understanding of how the new FASTER chargers and public network will need to be utilised by multiple user groups.

HITRANS also continued to research procurement strategy and specifications. The focus was influenced by a procurement workshop with project Partners held in May, where design priorities were identified as accessibility, and the separation of AC outputs from rapid chargepoints in order to encourage best use of charging bays. Following a competitive bid, Cenex have just been appointed as procurement consultants for FASTER, bringing extensive technical and procurement expertise to the project. Procurement for the chargepoints is expected to complete by the end of 2021, with installations following throughout 2022.

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:
Designation:
Date:

Gemma Robinson
FASTER Project Officer
6th September 2021