

Item:
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Report to Partnership Board Meeting 20th September 2024

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Shared Service

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on regional activity by a project management shared service under the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF). The shared service covers Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council.

OVERVIEW

In January 2022 Transport Scotland announced a restructure of their electric vehicle infrastructure funding model. Local Authorities are now required to leverage in private sector funding to enable delivery of infrastructure at the pace and scale required to meet demand and encourage further car users to switch to EV's to support the wider climate change objectives, collaborating regionally where possible.

The new proposed structure will allow Local Authorities to access £30 million worth of funding and aims to leverage in a further £30 million of private sector investment, bringing the total investment for Scotland to £60 million. The funding is aimed at identifying market failures to support local authorities in enabling a Just Transition.

Moray Council is joining Highland, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils in their strategy, which aims to generate a revenue long term for further investment and utilises a hub and spoke approach to ensure charging in remote and rural areas is deployed as an essential spoke to the more commercially viable hubs.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council are developing a combined Islands' EV infrastructure strategy and may then have further opportunity to collaborate with other Councils in the region.

UPDATE

Moray

Moray, The Highlands, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils have put their strategy to tender as The North Of Scotland EV Charging Infrastructure Partnership (NoS EVCI Partnership). HITRANS attended a Bidders day with suppliers, which gave insight into how the market is reacting to a new commercial partnership opportunity. An evaluation team including HITRANS has since evaluated bidders on SPD requirements and technical questions to shortlist 4 suppliers that will go through to dialogue stage. Four cycles of discussion will take place before tenders are submitted in January, with the contract due to start in April 2025.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands Councils

HITRANS led a request for ambitious funding for EV infrastructure across the Northern and Western Isles. Balancing this with the requests from other Scottish LAs, Transport Scotland have recently indicated that we can apply for £2m of capital expenditure, which needs to deliver some private investment as well, likely a Charge Point Operator (CPO) who would oversee the charging network. This necessitates a long-term partnership to secure a return on investment for the private sector. It is therefore critical for the Councils that the EVIF programme delivers an EV charging network that is self-sustaining financially, which it has not been in the past. Any delivered infrastructure cannot be a long-term liability.

Market engagement shows the private sector investment opportunity in the Northern and Western Isles is possible but very limited and work is ongoing to re-scope our combined strategy and develop an optimal and attractive commercial package.

Work on the strategy so far has highlighted that in a region where charger utilisation is low but essential, collaboration on infrastructure delivery is key. HITRANS are therefore collaborating on the following:

- Carbon Neutral Islands Project - EV infrastructure is being planned for Hoy, Yell and Barra on both projects and we are trying to align locations and planning for mutual benefit
- Shetland Rural Energy Hubs project – as above
- Argyll and Bute Council – The Council developed their own strategy and expansion plan with themes of journey, destination and residential charging. We are in discussions to explore how combined strategies and/or procurement could benefit communities and improve value for money
- Fleets – HITRANS have secured additional funding to aggregate projected fleet demand, primarily from ferry data. Being able to estimate an anchor demand for public chargers is attractive to commercial investors
- Ferry and Aircraft operators – HITRANS are speaking with HIAL and CMAL about their EV infrastructure plans to explore synergies. As above, electric charging demand from aircraft or ferries will be attractive to private investors

A report analysing the telecommunications options for EV infrastructure in remote and rural areas has been completed, which will aid optimisation of charging sites when we procure a partner. A feasibility study into the proposed location for the 50kW+ chargers has also been completed, highlighting risks at each site and making mitigation recommendations.

HITRANS aim to finalise the Strategy and Expansion Plan for committee approvals and grant applications towards the end of the year and procure early 2025.

Contactless Regulations

One of the challenges that has arisen during the EVIF programme is that the UK Public Charge Point Regulations 2023 came out, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-public-charge-point-regulations-2023-guidance/public-charge-point-regulations-2023-guidance>, mandating that all existing 50kW chargers need to have a standalone contactless payment terminal on site by 24th November 2024. This affects 24 chargers across the 4 Council areas in the shared service and given the replacement plan in place through the EVIF programme, compliance impacts budgets, value for money, Council reputations, consistency of EV drivers' experience and EVIF requirements and procurement plans. At the time of writing, a solution for each charger has been drafted for action and integration with the EVIF programme.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports RTS objectives and the monitoring of their implementation.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports the development of our Electric Vehicle Strategy Policy, particularly with regards to remote, rural and island provision.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – Cost savings as a direct result of this shared service approach

Equality

Impact – Positive.

Comment – HITRANS support for improving electric vehicle infrastructure helps eliminate the barriers to decarbonised travel for all

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the report.

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Date: 13th August 2024