



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Electric Vehicle Charging Policy

February 2025

Foreword

With record-breaking temperatures across the globe and extreme weather events, including flooding, drought, storms and much more, there is no doubt that our climate is changing. The effects of climate change and poor air quality cut across all areas of our lives, and the need to adapt and reduce the environmental impact of our transport is clear and pressing.

Darlington Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and is changing what we do and how we do it to meet our target of being Carbon Neutral by 2040, having already halved the Council's carbon emissions since 2010/11.

Addressing climate change is one of three core principles in our Council Plan, and our Air Quality Strategy acknowledges the vital role of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in reducing road traffic emissions. We now have 20 electric vehicles in our fleet and will continue with our plans to increase this number every year.

We welcome the increasing ownership and use of electric vehicles across the borough. However, range anxiety and access to reliable charging infrastructure are common barriers to greater adoption of electric vehicles, particularly where off-street parking and charging are unavailable to residents.

This policy aims to explore the potential issues around owning an electric vehicle in our borough and how, as a Council, we are working to find effective and safe solutions to enable more people to enjoy the benefits of using an electric vehicle. Technology in the low-emission transport sector is changing rapidly, and we will continue to review and update this policy as things develop.



Cllr Libby McCollom

Cabinet Member
for Local Services

Introduction

The Government will ban the sale of fossil-fuel powered cars and vans from 2035 onwards in order to reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector and contribute towards meeting the UK 2050 Net Zero target. In the Tees Valley, carbon emissions are heavily skewed towards industrial sources. The contribution from industry is high (62%) due to the presence of heavy, high energy usage industries, including the strong process industries sector. Transport is the second highest contributor of regional carbon emissions with 17%¹.

In July 2023, a motion to reaffirm Darlington's Climate emergency declaration and to bring forward the Council's Net Zero target to 2040 was passed by full Council.

During October 2023, 25% of all new cars sold were either fully electric or plug-in hybrid. By the end of October 2023, there were 1.5 million plug-in cars on UK roads, with over 900,000 fully electric and over 500,000 hybrid vehicles registered. As of the end of May 2024, there were over 60,000 electric vans in the UK.

More than 365,000 hybrid and fully electric cars were registered in 2022, showing a growth of 20% compared to 2021. This upward trend towards electric vehicle ownership will continue as we move towards 2035².

In Tees Valley it is projected that there will be over 50,000 plug in vehicles by 2030. Source Table 44.3 TVCA Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Delivery Plan (median growth)

By the end of October 2023, there were 51,516 electric vehicle (EV) charging points across the UK, across 30,360 charging locations. This represents a 45% increase in the total number of charging devices compared to October 2022. Around 18.7% of these chargers are rapid or ultra rapid chargers Source ZapMap.

Drivers' experience of EV charging will change over time as technological advances increase the range of cars and the speed of charging, reducing the need and increasing the speed of recharging. It is also expected that, in the medium term, the commercial sector will provide a market response to the provision of EV charging through increased investment. This investment could make recharging more convenient and part of everyday activities – shops, leisure, food and drink etc.

There is however a need for public investment in publicly available chargers in the interim to support the switch to non-fossil fuel vehicles and reduce "range anxiety". We must also consider the implications of home charging, particularly for properties without in-curtilage parking

¹<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Tees-Valley-Net-Zero-Cluster-Plan-Final-FULL-REPORT-Modified-References-V2-Copy-1-2.pdf>

²<https://www.zap-map.com/ev-stats/ev-market>

Key Priorities

Maintaining a Safe and Accessible Public Highway

The public highway was established to ensure that the public can pass and repass without let or hindrance. It effectively allows people to move along the highway to access land, property and to access services, unencumbered. This right to pass is the primary function of the highway and the Council have a duty to maintain free and safe movement along it, to the benefit of highway users.

Helping Residents who Don't Have Access to Off-Street Parking

Many homes in Darlington cannot accommodate an in-curtilage charging point. We want to ensure that EVs are a viable option for all residents, and recognise that for many people a lack of off-street parking is a barrier. Working with TVCA, we now have fast charging points in many of our car parks including Abbots Yard, Commercial Street West, Feethams Multi Storey, Kendrew St. West, Park Place East and West and Winston Street North.

We are also planning to deliver commercially operated on-street EV charging points at numerous locations around the Borough. This will be funded through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) project and the scheme will provide kerbside charging in convenient locations.

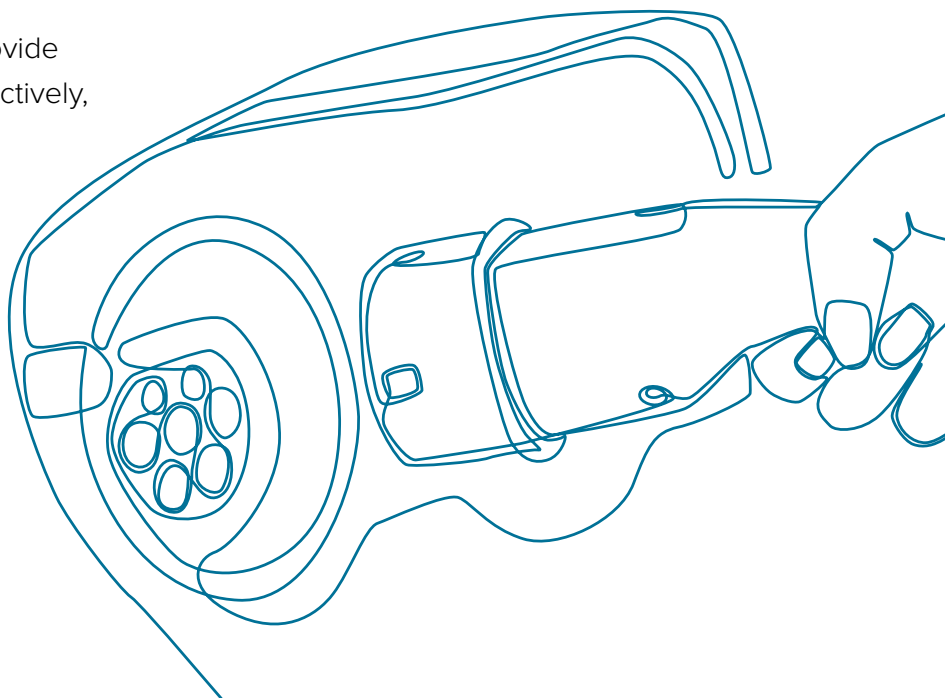
All new residential developments are required to provide EV charging points.

We do not permit charging from properties that requires cables to run across, through or over the highway as these could cause tripping hazards, impede highway users and lead to claims against the Council and householders from highway users that have been injured as a result of slips, trips and falls. Further information is provided in Appendix 1.

Private Sector/Destination Charging

Destination charging is an effective solution for many people and consideration will be given to locations where drivers are likely to stay for a significant period of time. These will be a mixture of locations where provision may be provided by DBC, TVCA and private organisations such as supermarkets wishing to promote the use of their facilities.

We will also encourage employers to provide EV charging for their staff either retrospectively, potentially utilising Government grants or through stipulating that a certain number of EV bays/equipment be provided in new commercial and employment developments.



Accessible Charging

The Equalities Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in relation to something arising from a person's protected characteristics, and creates a duty on Councils and other public bodies to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public authorities to have due regard to certain equality considerations when exercising their functions, like making decisions, developing policy etc.

We will ensure that all new charging facilities in Darlington are accessible for those with disabilities or mobility issues through the development and adoption of design standards.

All Council installed charging points will have contactless payment readers meaning residents will not have to download multiple payment apps.

Information and Publicity

We will promote the use of public charging facilities to encourage the switch to electric vehicles. This will include countering misinformation and myth busting, as well as signposting residents to charging points.

Power Supply

There will be a need to improve electric power supply over time to accommodate the increase in demand due to EV charging and the move away from gas both in terms of generation and domestic supply.

This will be a consideration when deciding on locations and in some instances provision may not be possible due to the uneconomic cost to upgrade the grid.

In the medium to longer term we will work with Government, TVCA and the power supply companies to upgrade our local power supply network to ensure that it is capable of delivering our Zero Carbon future.



Appendix 1

On Street Residential Charging

What is the Problem?

Properties with off-street parking can often easily install a 7kW home charger to allow an EV to be charged at home. However, some residents in Darlington are without off-street parking and cannot install a home charger.

Can a Cable be Run from the Property to the Vehicle?

We do not allow this. Under the Highways Act 1980, it is illegal for any person to place or run a cable or wire across a public highway. Having a cable trail from your home, across the pavement to your car will cause a safety hazard. If a passer-by injures themselves due to your cable, you can be held responsible. Furthermore, a cable across the ground can limit the accessibility of the footway and can impact negatively on people with disabilities

Can a Channel be Installed to Safely Accommodate a Cable from the Property to the Vehicle?

Technology exists to install channel within the footway to accommodate cables. **We do not allow this** as the fixed location of the channel will require a dedicated EV charging bay to be marked, effectively providing a protected private parking space for the resident who has requested the channel. There would be an assumption that residents will use and maintain the channels correctly: these types of channels will inevitably fill with detritus including litter, leaf mulch etc. that may, over time, lead to them failing. The channel slot may also pose a trip and fall hazard.

Can I Request a Charging Point to be Installed Outside of the Property?

As with the channel solution, having a charging point installed outside of a property will require a dedicated EV charging bay and therefore we do not allow this. Charge points can also increase street clutter, reducing visibility for drivers and reduce space on footways for pedestrians, wheelchairs, buggies and those living with sight loss. We propose to install commercial charge points in accessible locations.



What is the Solution?

Our approach is to provide shared public facilities for EV charging. This has already begun with provision rolled out in Council owned car parks. The next phase of work will create charging hubs in community locations and commercially operated on-street chargers.

You could also investigate whether your employer would be willing to provide charge points at your place of work, utilising Government grants.

It is very likely that charging opportunities at destinations such supermarkets, retail parks, food and drink establishments etc. will increase significantly over the coming years. Charging times are reducing and it will be possible for cars to be substantially charged whilst you go shopping, watch a film at the cinema or have a leisurely meal or a coffee.



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