Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

MEMBER SEMINAR

20TH OCTOBER 2025

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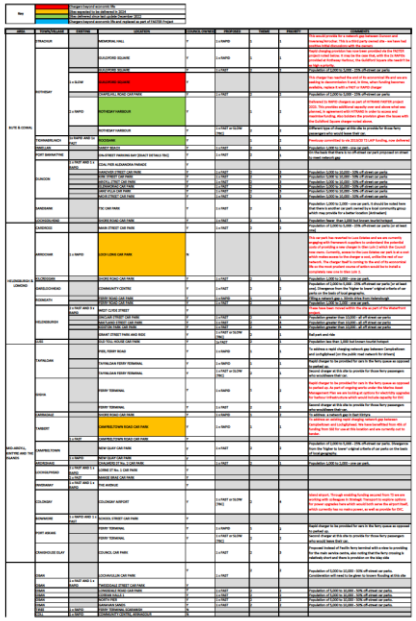
Background

- 2022 – Strategy approved: aim to fill geographic gaps and achieve equitable coverage.
- 2023–24 – Expansion plan and methodology developed – 55 sites identified
- 2024 – Committee reaffirmed direction while awaiting EVIF funding.

Current expansion plan

- In 2022 the Council approved an EV Charging Strategy based on two delivery themes:
  - Charging on the Move – ensuring drivers can travel through Argyll confidently.
  - Destination Charging – providing chargers where people dwell.
- That approach assumed further funding would follow



Funding secured

- We now have £1.033million secured for the next phase – so the key question is how best to invest it?
- In Dec 2022 our 55-site plan was estimated at £1.65million, based on previous average costs plus inflationary adjustment

A hub-based approach

- The original 55-site plan (Dec 2022) costed at £1.65m can't be delivered in full with the £1.033m now secured.
- We therefore need to prioritise investment where it has the greatest impact.
- We are therefore proposing a hub-based approach – clusters of chargers in key towns and island centres – providing:
  - Reliability: multiple chargers reduce the risk of faults or queues.
  - Better use of funds: higher usage = better cost recovery and maintenance value.
  - Visitor and local benefit: located where people already spend time and money.
  - Platform for future growth: once hubs are established, we can extend outwards to smaller communities and ferry points ("spokes"
- This hub-first model does not remove the 'Charging on the Move' theme — it remains central to ensuring through and onward connectivity along all major corridors

Proposed hub methodology

Strategic principle: Build reliable, visible hubs first, then expand to smaller "spokes" once the network backbone is established, ensuring full route coverage across Argyll and Bute. This also complements the existing network.

- Identify sites that deliver strategic coverage – locations where people visit, shop and work
- Potential for high utilisation
- Represent value for money
- Access to local amenities
- Avoid duplicating private provision
- Resilience and cluster logic

Proposed hub methodology

- We have a proposed criteria for this based on population. The hub (single-site) methodology is:

Population	Rapid	Fast	Total
10k plus	5	5	10
5k to 10k	3	3	6
2k to 5k*	2	2	4

*when not near an existing large town

- We will add in an element of population swell through tourist locations where they would therefore move up to the next bracket:
- Population centres proposed for hubs reflect places where visitors and residents visit, rather than domestic users charging at home

Proposed hub methodology

Town/area	Pop	Tourist swell	Hub/cluster
Helensburgh	13k	N	5R; 5F
Oban	8.5k	Y	5R; 5F
Dunoon	8.9k	N	3R; 3F
Lochgilphead	2.3k	N	2R; 2F
Campbeltown	4.5k	N	2R; 2F
Islay – Bowmore	3k island	Y	3R; 3F
Mull – Craignure	3k island	Y	3R; 3F
Bute – Rothesay	6k island	N	3R; 3F

Proposed hub methodology

To progress this we have asked our consultants to:

- Assess the current provision in each location including non ABC operated publicly available chargers. That assessment should consider as a ''hub'' any chargers within a cluster area less than one mile from the hub site identified in the above table
- Focus on new hubs/expansion of existing to be on a single site
- Identify the number and type of chargers required to meet the above hub targets, after accounting for existing provision both Council and non-Council.

Proposed hub methodology

- Assuming hubs/clusters will be developed on existing sites, base on following as the core deliverability criteria on the basis we are trying to assess if sites pass or fail:
  - Proximity to existing electrical infrastructure;
  - Compliance with accessibility standards;
  - No flood risk
  - Strong data connectivity
- To assess in binary terms whether the sites pass or fail

Proposed hub methodology

- Include usage information on existing chargers at current sites.
- Determine total costs for any additional EVCs required to meet the above requirement. Assume mid range costs
- Assess scalable expansion options at each site

Proposed approach

- Total funding secured: £1.033 million
- £100k reserved for repairs and maintenance (de-risking current network)
- £100k held as contingency for cost fluctuations.
- That leaves £833k for new delivery.
- Proposal:
  - Deliver Phase 1 Hubs from this £833k.
  - Once hub costs are known, apply the roads capital percentage split to the remaining balance for Phase 2 (smaller "spoke" sites)

Proposed approach

Phase 1 – Strategic Hubs

- Priority delivery of key sites across Argyll and the islands.
- Exact costs dependent on DNO connection estimates.
- Focus on reliability, visibility and usage.

Phase 2 – Local delivery

- Remaining balance after hubs delivered.
- Split by the roads capital percentage to maintain equity:
  - Bute & Cowal – 19.78%
  - Helensburgh & Lomond – 10.67%
  - Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Islay – 32.71%
  - Oban, Lorn & the Isles – 36.84%
- Phase 2 decisions at local level (area committees)

Phase Two – local delivery

- Phase 2 delivery will focus on individual chargers and smaller sites ('spokes') that maintain network continuity and local access.
- These sites could be selected and prioritised by Area Committees within their allocated share, to support local decision-making and flexibility under the strategic framework.
- Ensures alignment with the original thematic principles and equitable access across rural routes and communities.

Proposed next steps

- Finalise consultant outputs (deliverability-only).
- Confirm hub costs with DNO.
- Draft full delivery plan for EDI Committee (Dec 2025).
- Ongoing engagement with Members through area committees.

Risks and dependencies

- Hub costs unknown – DNO connection and ground conditions may vary widely.
- Private sector overlap – expansion by supermarkets, forecourts, etc. must be tracked to avoid duplication.
- Maintenance load – the growing network is managed by one officer; current resource may not be sustainable.
- Tariff sustainability – need to balance affordability with cost recovery.
- Back-office transition – migration to Scottish Power/Fuuse underway; minor risk of disruption during switchover.

Operational update

- 37 Council-operated public chargers currently in place across Argyll and Bute.
- New regional back-office contract through Scottish Power (Fuuse platform):
- Improves automation and fault reporting.
- Allows dynamic tariffs and local control.
- Tariff remains £0.70/kWh – good balance between recovery and affordability.
- Improved uptime under new maintenance arrangements.

Cross-footway charging

- Growing number of residents requesting to charge from home over public pavements.
- No national guidance from Transport Scotland.
- Local phased approach:
  - Short-term: trial approved cable protectors.
  - Medium-term: ducting pilot (2026).
  - Long-term: formal policy and asset register.
- Working with disability groups to ensure accessibility compliance
- This could be a potential source of modest future income – in a similar way to drop kerbs

Discussion

- Is the hub-first, theme-led model the right direction?
- Are the proposed funding splits fair?
- Any concerns on rural coverage?
- What role should private providers play?