

Electric Vehicle Charging Policies

Introduction

This document forms the operational guidance and strategic link for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI). It gives clear direction and limitations on decisions officers make.

Cabinet Approval Date: [date]

Aim of Policy

This policy document sets out the Council's approach to the planning, delivery, management, and use of EVCI across the city. In addition to meeting audit and governance requirements, the approval of this document formalises the procedures already in place, promotes consistency, and supports officers in their decision making. It ensures that the provision and operation of charging infrastructure is fair, transparent, and aligned with wider Council objectives, including transport decarbonisation, public realm management, and the efficient use of the highway.

Policy Scope

The policy is subordinate to any legislation, central government guidance or local corporate policy that covers these areas of administration.

Council's Corporate strategy

The policy is directly linked to the Council Plan 2023-27, its priority to be 'a city to be proud of' and goal to deliver "an accessible, clean and sustainable city", by investing in and expanding the city's electric vehicle (EV) charging network. The EV Charging Plan will deliver this by making charging publicly accessible and creating an inclusive public EV charging network that is convenient, affordable, and encourages people living and working in our city to switch to an EV.

Equalities Impact Assessment

A draft Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared to consider how the Council's approach to EV charging infrastructure may affect all users, and in particular disabled users and other disadvantaged groups. The draft assessment focuses on identifying potential barriers to accessibility and highlights areas where the design, allocation, and management of charging facilities need to be focused to promote equitable use. The findings and proposed actions will be reviewed, refined, and taken forward through the appropriate decision-making processes to ensure the policy supports fair and inclusive access for all users.

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1. General Approach to the Provision of Electric Vehicle Chargepoints

The Council's approach to the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure is founded on creating a public charging network that is accessible, inclusive, convenient, and affordable for all users. The aim is to support residents, businesses, and visitors in making the transition to electric vehicles by ensuring that safe and reliable charging options are available across the city, and by prioritising locations where charging provision can have the greatest impact in reducing transport emissions.

To meet the needs of a wide range of users, the network offers a choice of charging speeds—standard, fast, and rapid—providing flexibility for different journey types, vehicle capabilities, and user requirements. This mixed speed approach enables routine overnight or daytime charging close to homes and workplaces, as well as high powered options in key locations for those who need to charge quickly. It also ensures that visitors can easily access the most appropriate charging facilities when coming to the city by car.

The Council is committed to delivering a geographically distributed charging network that serves all parts of the city, with particular attention to areas where residents do not have access to off-street parking. Sites are selected using a data driven approach, and in a way that maximises both public benefit and value for money. This approach ensures that chargepoints are installed where they can deliver the greatest benefit to all users, increase accessibility for those unable to charge at home, and support the city's wider goals around air quality, decarbonisation, and sustainable transport.

Different types of charging provisions operate within the city depending on location, parking controls, and the needs of local users. To ensure fairness, efficient use of space, and compliance with wider parking policies, the following rules apply:

2.1. EV Only Charging Bays

Some chargepoints are installed in bays that are restricted to EVs only at all times.

Only vehicles that are actively charging may use these bays.

To support fair access and maximise the availability of charging infrastructure, some dedicated EV only bays will operate with timed restrictions. These restrictions are designed to promote turnover so that multiple users can benefit from the charging facility throughout the day.

Maximum stay periods or time of day limits may be applied, particularly in high demand areas, and will be clearly signed at each location.

2.2. Permit, Paid & Shared Use Charging Bays

In areas covered by controlled parking zones, some charging bays will be designated as Permit, Paid or Shared Use.

Users parking in these bays must comply with the existing parking requirements, including but not limited to, holding a valid resident permit, visitor permit, or paying for parking where applicable.

In addition to meeting the parking conditions of use, users must also ensure their vehicle is plugged in, actively charging and pay the relevant charging tariff.

2.3. General Parking Bays with Chargepoints

Many chargepoints are located in existing general use parking bays that are not restricted solely to EVs.

Where this applies, the underlying parking rules remain in force.

EV users must follow the signed parking rules and pay for parking or display a valid permit if required, in addition to paying for the electricity consumed during charging.

Non-EV vehicles may continue to use these bays as normal.

2.4. Disabled EV Charging Bays

Some locations include dedicated accessible bays for disabled users of EVs.

These bays are reserved solely for Blue Badge holders using an EV and actively charging.

The design, layout, and operational requirements for these bays follow the principles of PAS 1899: Accessible EV Charging, to ensure safe, equitable, and barrier free access.

These bays may include additional space, kerb free access, and placement considerations to support ease of use for disabled drivers and passengers.

Some disabled bays will also include chargepoints but will not be dedicated to EVs only. Where this applies, the underlying parking rules remain in force and non EV vehicles may continue to use these bays as normal.

3.1. Dedicated EV Charging Bays

To ensure fair access to charging infrastructure and promote turnover in high demand locations, some dedicated EV only charging bays will operate with a maximum permitted stay. Where a user exceeds this limit, an overstay charge will be applied by the network operator on behalf of the Council. This charge reflects the opportunity cost of the bay being unavailable to other users and is calculated using a standardised approach that considers both the duration of the overstay and the nominal power rating of the chargepoint. The overstay charge is determined using the following formula:

$$\text{Overstay charge (£)} = \frac{\text{minutes overstay} \times \text{nominal kW rating} \times (\text{tariff rate} - \text{elec cost price allowance})}{60}$$

This approach ensures that overstay penalties are proportionate, transparent, and directly related to the lost charging opportunity for subsequent users. All overstay terms will be included in the network operator’s terms and condition within the operator’s app, payment interface or website.

3.2. General Parking Bays with Chargepoints

In locations where chargepoints are installed within general parking bays that are not restricted solely for EVs, all existing parking regulations will continue to apply. EV users must comply with local parking controls—including payment requirements, time limits, and permit restrictions—while using the chargepoint. Failure to follow the signed parking rules may result in the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), regardless of whether the vehicle is actively charging. This ensures fair access to limited parking space and maintains consistency with wider parking enforcement across the city.

The Council operates a concession-based model for its public charging network. While individual chargepoints are operated by contracted network operators, tariff setting is subject to Council oversight.

4.1. Tariff Setting

Charging tariffs—including rates for standard, fast, and rapid charging—are determined by the appointed network operator and not the Council.

Tariffs must be submitted to the Council for approval to ensure they are fair, transparent, and aligned with local policy objectives.

Tariffs will take account of operational costs, energy pricing, and the need to maintain an economically viable network.

4.2. Tariff Review

All tariffs are reviewed annually as part of the contract management process.

The Council benchmarks tariffs to ensure they do not exceed the average cost of public EV charging across Sussex, maintaining affordability and competitiveness.

Benchmarking also ensures that the network operator provides fair value and does not disadvantage local residents or businesses.

4.3. Transparency

All tariff information must be clearly displayed either at chargepoints or within the operator’s digital platforms.

Users must be able to see the cost of charging before initiating a session.

4.4. Concessions

Concessions may be offered to specific user groups, including taxis, car clubs, and Blue Light card holders, with the value of any concession agreed between the operator and the Council and publicised on the Council's website.

The effective operation of the public EV charging network relies on fair access, responsible use, and compliance with the rules governing charging bays. Enforcement measures are in place to ensure that charging infrastructure remains available for those who need it and to prevent misuse that reduces availability for other users.

5.1. Requirement to Be Actively Charging

EVs using an EV only charging bay must be plugged in and actively charging. A vehicle that is parked in a dedicated EV charging bay but not connected to the chargepoint or not charging may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). This requirement ensures that dedicated bays are used solely for charging rather than general parking.

5.2. Adherence to Parking Regulations

In addition to paying for the electricity consumed during charging, EV users must follow the signed parking rules and pay for parking or display a valid permit if required, as well as adhere to any maximum stay periods or time of day limits.

5.3. Non EV Vehicles in EV Charging Bays (ICEing)

Parking a non-electric vehicle in any bay designated for EV charging is not permitted. Non EV vehicles occupying an EV only charging bay - commonly referred to as "ICEing" - will be liable to receive a PCN. This applies to all EV only bays, including those with time limits, accessibility features, or other operational restrictions.

5.4. Overstays in Dedicated EV Bays

Overstay management and associated charges are addressed earlier in this policy. Enforcement for overstays operates in parallel with standard parking enforcement to ensure turnover and to maintain access in high demand locations.

6.1. Position on EV Charging in Existing Council Car Parks

The council currently operates three types of car parks across the city:

- Naturally ventilated - multi-storey car parks with open sides that allow ventilation
- Enclosed car parks – underground / multi-storey locations with little or no natural ventilation
- Surface car parks – street level locations open to the elements.

The council currently has electric vehicle charging facilities located within each type of car park that present their own challenges. Within naturally ventilated and enclosed car parks, the council uses external assessors to conduct fire risk assessments on an annual basis and consult on EV charging within those locations.

If fire risk assessments show an increase in the risks posed by EV charging, then the council shall reserve the right to install additional safeguards or to remove charging facilities in the interest of safety. The Council does not currently intend to install additional EV charging infrastructure within existing Council owned car parks. This position reflects:

- The prioritisation of on-street charging to meet local residential need.
- The financial and logistical challenges of retrofitting legacy car parks.
- The availability of alternative funding routes and market-led provision in commercial parking settings.

Existing Council car parks will continue to operate as petrol, diesel, hybrid, and EV vehicle parking locations without the installation of new chargepoints.

If future opportunities arise for the installation of additional EV chargepoints within car parks then consultation with a fire risk assessor would need to be undertaken and the final decision would lie with the site responsible person for that location.

6.2. Position on EV Fire Safety in Car Parks

The Council acknowledges the public interest in EV fire safety and recognises robust evidence that:

- Electric vehicles do not present a greater fire risk than petrol or diesel vehicles.
- A vehicle connected to an EV chargepoint does not increase the likelihood of a fire.

The Council will therefore continue to permit EV parking in all Council car parks without additional restriction, as EVs do not pose an elevated fire risk when compared with internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

The council reserves the right to nominate specific parking bays for EV parking within car parks in the event of recommendation from competent professionals or legislation changes.

6.3. Requirements for New Build Car Parks

While the Council currently chooses not to retrofit existing assets, we will work proactively with developers and partners involved in new build car park projects to ensure that:

a. Fire Safety Standards Are Fully Met

All new multi-storey and basement car parks must comply with the relevant national fire safety standards and guidance relating to EVs, including appropriate detection, suppression, ventilation, and structural protections suitable for the small risk of any vehicle fire, regardless of propulsion type.

b. Passive EV Charging Infrastructure Is Included

Developers must ensure that all new car park designs incorporate passive infrastructure—such as ducting, cable routes, and sufficient electrical capacity—to enable EV chargepoints to be installed either during construction or at a future point with minimal cost and disruption.

This approach ensures futureproofing of assets without mandating immediate installation of chargepoints.

Any consideration of EV chargepoint installations would be in consultation with a fire risk assessor, with the final decision made by the site responsible person for that location.

6.4. Position on E-Bikes, E-Scooters and Battery Storage in Council Car Parks

The Council recognises the growing role of e-bikes and e-scooters in supporting sustainable transport and modal shift. However, lithium-ion batteries used in micromobility devices present different risk characteristics, particularly during charging.

a. Prohibition on Charging in Car Parks

Council car parks are not designated charging areas for e-bikes, e-scooters or other personal mobility devices. Charging such devices within car parks—including in stairwells, plant rooms or general parking areas—is not permitted due to heightened fire risk during charging cycles, especially when noncompliant or damaged chargers are used.

b. Permitted Parking and Storage

Parking of e-bikes and, where legally permissible, e-scooters may continue in designated cycle parking areas within car parks, provided that:

- Devices are not charged while parked.
- Batteries are not removed for charging within the car park.
- Parking does not block fire exits or emergency access routes.

This supports micromobility users while managing fire safety.

Car parks located beneath residential buildings will permit the parking of e-bikes and legally permissible e-scooters in designated cycle parking areas provided that the batteries are removed from the bike.

c. Design Requirements for New Build Car Parks

For new car park developments, the Council will work with developers to ensure:

- Cycle parking areas are suitably designed to accommodate e-bikes, including consideration of compartmentation, ventilation and safe positioning.

- Where charging for micromobility devices is proposed, it must be located within dedicated, fire engineered enclosures, not in open-access parking decks.
- Fire strategies account for the presence of battery-powered micromobility devices.

d. Public Guidance and Enforcement

The Council will reinforce this policy with:

- Clear signage and public messaging.
- Advice about safe battery charging practices.
- Enforcement through routine car park management.

If future opportunities arise for the addition of e-bike and e-scooter charging facilities within car parks, it would need to include fire safe battery charging locations developed in consultation with a fire risk assessor. After consultation, the final decision would lie with the site responsible person for that location.

6.5. Summary of Council Position

- The Council's strategic priority for EV charging is on-street provision.
- No new chargepoints will be installed in existing Council car parks at this point.
- EVs do not pose greater fire risks than petrol or diesel vehicles.
- New car parks must incorporate fire-safe design and passive EV infrastructure.
- E-bikes and e-scooters may be stored in designated areas but may not be charged within car parks.
- New car parks must include safe micromobility storage and charging solutions if charging is provided.

This policy ensures a safe, evidence based and future ready approach to EVs, micromobility and car park management across the borough.

7.1. Position on Cross Pavement EV Charging

The Council's approach to cross pavement charging (XPC) is founded on ensuring that installations are safe, accessible, and do not compromise the primary function of the footway. An XPC system will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- Safety and accessibility for pedestrians take precedence over private charging convenience.
- A conventional on-street chargepoint cannot reasonably be deployed at the location.
- Installations meet all licensing conditions and can be removed or reinstated with minimal impact on the highway.
- Approvals are property specific, nontransferable, and subject to ongoing compliance with Council standards.

7.2. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- The applicant occupies the residential property adjacent to the proposed installation site.
- The property is a single dwelling, not a flat or upper floor property.
- The property has no access to off-street parking.
- For rented properties, the applicant must provide written landlord consent for the home chargepoint.

7.3. Site Suitability Requirements

XPC installations will only be permitted where a public on-street chargepoint cannot reasonably be provided and where the site satisfies all of the following suitability criteria.

7.4. Residential and Parking Conditions

There must be a reasonable likelihood that the applicant can park outside their property, based on local parking conditions, and the property must not have an existing vehicle crossover. Properties in areas that have a waiting list for a resident parking permit are unlikely to be eligible.

7.5. Footway Infrastructure and Condition

The footway must be of sufficient width and good structural condition, and the route free from obstructions such as trees, utility covers, street furniture or grass verges.

7.6. Accessibility Requirements

Installations must not be located in areas where pedestrian movement is already constrained, such as narrow pavements, pinch points, in areas of high pedestrian footfall or locations where tactile paving is present for crossing points.

Clear, unobstructed pedestrian access must be maintained at all times. XPC installations must not compromise the safe use of the footway for any user, including disabled people, wheelchair users, mobility aid users, people with visual impairments, or those pushing prams and pushchairs. To ensure that footways remain safe, inclusive and fully accessible, the following requirements apply:

a. A minimum clear footway width of 1.5 metres

Minimum clearway must be maintained once the XPC system is installed and when the cable is in use. This standard ensures sufficient space for pedestrians to pass one another comfortably and allows safe movement for users with mobility aids, wheelchairs or pushchairs. In locations with higher footfall or where vulnerable users are more likely (e.g., near health facilities, schools or sheltered housing), a greater width may be required to maintain safe accessibility.

b. Visually impaired users

The design and installation must not create hazards for visually impaired users. The XPC systems must be designed so that they do not introduce uneven surfaces or ambiguous tactile cues that could be misinterpreted as part of the footway's guidance system.

c. Flush fitting

XPC systems must be fully flush with the surrounding pavement surface, with no lips, edges or protrusions. Any raised edges or gaps may pose a significant trip risk, particularly to users with reduced mobility, those using canes or mobility aids, and people with visual impairments.

d. In use

When the cable is in use, the routing must ensure that no part of the cable encroaches into the minimum clear width or creates an obstruction that could impede wheelchair users, people pushing prams, or pedestrians walking side by side.

e. Not in use

When not in use, the cable must be fully removed from the XPC system and stored on the property so that no part of the equipment obstructs pedestrian movement or introduces a trip hazard. Cables left in the XPC system whilst not actively charging pose a risk and may result in the licence being removed.

7.7. Regulatory and Planning Compliance

XPC installations in the highway require approval under the Council's licensing arrangements for which a fee is payable. This fee covers the officer time to carry out a site survey and decide the application. An annual licence fee is also payable to cover routine inspections. All fees and charges can be found in the latest fees and charges committee documents. These fees are reviewed annually.

Installation of a home chargepoint does not usually require planning permission but may require additional consents in conservation or heritage areas.

All electrical works must comply with relevant standards, including BS 7671 and appropriate earthing protection.

7.8. Insurance Requirements

Applicants must maintain adequate insurance for the XPC system and associated equipment. Public liability insurance of at least £10 million must be held throughout the licence period and proof of insurance must be provided prior to installation.

7.9. Unsuitable Locations

XPC installations will not be permitted in the following circumstances:

High Footfall or Sensitive Locations

Areas near schools, hospitals, busy commercial frontages, or where the footway surface is uneven or fragile.

Obstructed or Complex Streetscapes

Presence of trees, grass verges, drainage features, junctions, or other constraints preventing a safe cable route.

Parking Constraints

Locations where adjacent parking is heavily contested or restricted.

Safety Hazards

Locations where electrical compliance cannot be achieved, or where proximity to electrical installations or metal structures creates risk.

Planning Restrictions

Conservation or heritage settings where required approvals are unlikely to be granted.

Property Constraints

Properties that front directly onto the pavement without defensible space, flats, upper floor dwellings, or properties with off-street parking.

7.10. Fees and Charges

Applicants will be responsible for paying:

- An application fee covering eligibility screening and initial assessment.
- A licence fee permitting the installation and use of XPC in the highway.
- Full installation costs including materials, labour, reinstatement, and any traffic management.
- Any additional fees associated with obtaining consents.
- An annual inspection fee for ongoing safety checks.
- Removal or reinstatement costs where necessary due to non-compliance, safety issues, or highway works.

7.11. Licence Conditions and Responsibilities

Once approved, the following conditions apply:

- The licence is personal to the applicant and linked to the property.
- Only Council approved XPC systems may be installed, these are listed on our website.
- The applicant is responsible for maintaining the installation and associated home chargepoint.
- Charging cables must be removed and safely stored on the property when not in use.

- The Council may suspend or revoke the licence due to safety concerns, misuse, non-compliance or operational requirements.

7.12. Health and Safety

All installations must comply with electrical and health and safety regulations and work must be undertaken by competent installers, with certification provided to the Council upon completion.

7.13. Data Protection

Personal data will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation for the purposes of administering licences, monitoring compliance, and evaluating scheme outcomes.

