

## Minutes

### **PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE**

**17 November 2021**

**Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge**



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Keith Burrows (Chairman) Teji Barnes (Vice-Chairman) Tony Eginton Becky Haggar Richard Lewis John Morgan Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Steve Clarke, Democratic Services Officer</p> <p><b>Also present:</b> Dr Henrik Thiele – Managing Director, Qwello GmbH (Witness present for Item 5) Brian Renwick – UK Operations, Qwello GmbH (Witness present for Item 5) Councillor John Riley – Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Transport (Witness present for Item 5)</p>
33.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Kuldeep Lakhmana, Colleen Sullivan and Steve Tuckwell with Councillors Tony Eginton, Becky Haggar and John Morgan substituting.</p>
34.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor John Morgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as he was in the process of purchasing an electric vehicle.</p>
35.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was highlighted that, in the attendance list for the 19 October 2021 meeting, Councillor Stuart Mathers was mistakenly listed as present, and Councillor Kuldeep Lakhmana was mistakenly omitted from the list.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That, subject to the aforementioned amendments to the attendance list, the minutes of the meeting dated 19 October 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.</b></p>
36.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE</b></p>

**CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

It was confirmed that all items were marked Part 1 and would be considered in public.

37. **SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW: ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUTURE POLICY DIRECTION FOR THE BOROUGH** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Chairman briefly introduced the item highlighting that it was the third witness session of the Committee's review into Electric Vehicles (EVs), EV infrastructure and future policy development for the Borough. The Committee began by welcoming both Dr Henrik Thiele, Managing Director, and Brian Renwick, UK Operations, of Qwello GmbH to the meeting. By way of introduction, it was highlighted that Qwello were an EV charge point provider and operator, operating in Europe, and looking to enter the emerging UK market. A presentation was delivered and some key points were highlighted, included:

- Demand for EV charging infrastructure was due to increase exponentially over the coming years in Hillingdon as the number of new EVs on the road grew. At the current rate of installation in the Borough, supply would soon fall short of demand;
- Some EV charge point providers required any user of their charge points to either sign up to a membership or create an account before using one of their charge points. This brought about issues around equitable use and it was highlighted that Qwello's charge points did not require a specific account (although the option to sign up to one was available) and could be used by anyone with a contactless payment card;
- It was noted that many EV charge point providers also operated an app to help facilitate the user experience, although it was not always necessary to download the apps in order to utilise the charge points. Qwello had developed a similar app with voice control allowing users to book a specific charge point through their phone whilst driving;
- Pavement installed charge points were designed to take up only a small amount of space on the pavement to ensure adequate space was left for wheelchair users and pushchairs. The importance of a clear indicator on top of each charge point was also emphasised to ensure drivers could easily see whether a charge point was in use, had been reserved, or was available to use;
- It was emphasised that, under Qwello's business model, the installation and maintenance of charge points was, to an extent, covered by the charge point provider;
- 350kW charging was currently the fastest charging speeds available, this was understood to be roughly equivalent to the energy consumption of a 300-bed hospital. These types of chargers were extremely expensive and they were also deemed to have the potential to greatly burden the local electricity grid;
- Regularly using faster charging speeds led to eventual deterioration and reduced capacity of the lithium-ion batteries used to power the majority of common EVs;

In terms of charging speeds, it was highlighted that people who were generally not affiliated with the EV industry had a tendency to stress an importance on the availability of rapid and ultra-rapid chargers. This was attributed to the general public mostly looking to recreate the experience of filling up their Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle at a petrol station, which would usually take 5 minutes. Rapid chargers were considered those with a power of above 22kW and ultra-rapid chargers had a power above 100kW. It was highlighted that faster charging speeds would play an important part in any national EV charging infrastructure; however, the need for faster chargers would primarily be at service stations on motorways for longer journeys, when drivers would wish to recharge their EV battery as quickly as possible to get back on their way. This was considered to be in contrast to urban and suburban areas, where it was understood that a cultural change would take place whereby EV owners who could not easily charge at home would become accustomed to the concept of grazing using chargers with regular charging speeds. Grazing was seen as charging the EVs battery by a relatively small percentage during shorter stays, for example when visiting supermarkets, shopping parades and car parks.

Members sought to discuss what mechanisms could be imposed to stop vehicles parking in an EV charging space when they were not intending to use the charging facility. It was noted that Qwello had a reservation system built into their mobile app which allowed users to reserve their charge point a maximum of 15 minutes ahead of time, this stopped other EV users from charging using that particular charge point. However, it was understood that there was no physical means of stopping a vehicle from merely parking in the space and therefore blocking the charge point from use. To combat this, Qwello had sensors attached to their charge points which could identify whether the space had been blocked and could redirect the individual who had reserved that charge point towards another available local charger.

The Committee discussed the possibility of public charge points becoming subject to vandalism and sought assurances that charge points were as vandal-proof as possible. It was noted that the charge points operated by Qwello were certified for IP10, a standard measure used for mechanical and electrical casings against intrusion and damage in addition to ingress of water and dust. It was understood that charge points would not be impervious to direct vandalism but would be fine and operational in cases of incidental damage for example if an individual smashed a glass bottle over a charge point.

Members also sought confirmation that residents without a smartphone would still be able to use publicly available charge points. It was confirmed that anyone could use a charge point as long as they had a contactless payment card. It was emphasised that the mobile app was primarily a tool for looking ahead at the availability of charge points and reserving a specific charger.

With regard to the capacity of the electricity grid to handle future electricity demand associated with EV infrastructure, it was highlighted that each charge point installed would require a significant amount of electrical installation and a tremendous amount of power to operate. Major concerns were raised over whether the electricity grid in the UK would be sufficient to cope with the increased demand going forward, however, it was noted that there were regional differences and aggregate development of the power grid in the future should compensate for the increased demand. Further to this the adoption of EVs was expected to be a gradual process over the next two decades, therefore the new demands and stresses on the electricity grid would not materialise overnight.

Following this, concerns were raised that some OEMs, including Toyota, Porsche and Subaru were developing evermore efficient synthetic fuels for internal combustion engine vehicles that were moving towards carbon neutrality; it was highlighted that the development of such fuels and technologies may severely impact the EV sector and the widespread need for EV infrastructure. Members noted that, in 2030, when the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles would come into force, ICE vehicles would remain on the roads for some years to come. The development of carbon neutral and even carbon negative technologies was welcomed, particularly where wider scale energy production was concerned, and particular emphasis was placed on the fact that the transition to EVs was expected to be a part of the solution, not the complete solution, to the climate emergency. The Committee also highlighted a larger debate, not necessarily under the Committee's purview, over the production of lithium-ion batteries which were currently the most common means of powering EVs. The mining of lithium was noted to have a detrimental environmental impact on the countries where it was mined, and the development of more sustainable and socio-economically friendly battery technologies was seen as imperative to improving production practices as the EV sector was expected to grow rapidly.

The Committee were also informed that there were many legitimate requirements and concerns surrounding the installation of new charge points including narrow pavements, distance from gas and utility lines, proximity to listed and heritage buildings and various administrative requirements.

Members raised concerns around the prospect of neighbourly disputes over the use of residential on-street charge points. It was highlighted that there were already many instances of parking disputes in the Borough unrelated to EVs and by adding in the requirement for residents to sufficiently charge their EVs in future, potentially at a frequently used on-street residential EV charge point, it could lead to an increase in more complex neighbourly disputes. Members emphasised the importance in adequately preparing Council policy if and when these disputes over EV charge points arise. Further to this it was highlighted that proper consultation with residents ahead of any EV charge point installation would be likely to improve outcomes. It was later highlighted that EV battery technologies were continuously evolving and with larger capacities and ranges, could come the need to charge less often, perhaps once every fortnight, which could alleviate some of the neighbourly disputes.

The Committee thanked the representatives from Qwello for attending and presenting information about their innovative charge points and for discussing facets of EV infrastructure at length with the Committee.

Councillor John Riley, the Cabinet Member for Public Safety and Transport, was also present as a witness for the review and gave the Committee an update on where Hillingdon currently stood in terms of the provision of EV infrastructure and the direction in which the Council would be going. Key points included:

- There was an enormous challenge ahead to ensure that appropriate EV infrastructure was in place in the Borough although it was noted that the responsibility for providing the infrastructure was not solely that of local authorities. Going forward, it would be a mixture of government, both local and national, car manufacturers and private charging operators who would be assisting in the transition from ICE vehicles to EVs;
- Current EV charging infrastructure in the Borough was insufficient. Many of the previously installed publicly available EV charge points were unsuitable and

required modernising;

- When researching what other local authorities were doing in terms of implementing EV infrastructure, the Cabinet Member had come across two common approaches; to move headlong into installing as many public charge points as possible, and to be more cautious in approach to ensure that the technology being installed does not become obsolete within a relatively short time. It was highlighted that Hillingdon had been favouring the cautious approach but recognised the importance in now moving forwards;
- It had been decided that the Council would look for a commercial partner with technical expertise and knowledge of the sector to install publicly available EV charge points commencing initially in the Council's own car parks. This was being actioned through a tender process;
- It was understood that a significant number of residents in Hillingdon who drove, particularly those with no access to off-street parking, would not have the amenity to charge their EV at home and would therefore be reliant on publicly available chargers;
- The Council's Domestic Vehicle Crossover Policy would possibly require updating to enable some residents purchasing an EV to charge at home;
- Other local authorities had experienced neighbourly disputes in relation to the equitable use of on-street publicly available charge points.

The Committee highlighted that there were currently very few publicly available EV charge points to cater for the projected amount of future EVs in Hillingdon and sought assurance from the Cabinet Member that the tender process currently being undertaken would be addressing this. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the moves being made by the Council would be addressing the number of publicly available charge points and highlighted that many sites in the Borough that were not operated by the Council, for example, train stations, supermarkets, petrol stations and retail parks, would also play a part in increasing charge point provision. It was acknowledged that local authorities had not previously provided petrol stations or sold fuel to the public but there was a role to be played in facilitating the transition from ICE vehicles to EVs as society moved away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy.

Members emphasised the importance of updating residents about any planned projects and the implementation of EV infrastructure in the Borough and stressed the significance of obtaining residents' views as a method of data collection informing officers of local appetite for EV charging infrastructure. It was highlighted that such information should be made available to the public on the Council's website and Members supported a method whereby residents could request potential charging locations. With regard to on-street residential charge points, the Cabinet Member noted a concern that residents had frequently complained about the quantity of street furniture on residential pavements and adding charge points on residential streets could exacerbate the issue. Whilst it was acknowledged that in some cases charge points could be integrated with existing street furniture, engagement with residents would be key in maintaining a desirable street environment. Members also noted how future charging technologies could negate the need for plug-in charge points with alternatives such as battery swapping and inductive charging.

Looking to future technologies within the EV sector, it was noted that within the next decade there would be more and more electrified public transit vehicles on the road and Transport for London were keeping an eye on the viability of these vehicles. It was noted that these vehicles would be more likely to utilise hydrogen fuel cell technologies, which were known to provide EVs with a significantly longer range than lithium-ion battery EVs but were not as common due to the nature of storing and obtaining hydrogen. However, it was noted that for larger fleets of vehicles, such as for TfL, hydrogen technologies may be favoured. Members also noted other charging technologies such as inductive wireless charging, which was limited in its current applications. The Committee noted that future developments and evolutions of battery and EV technologies were being developed at pace and it would be incredibly difficult to predict how the EVs of 2050 would function compared to the EVs of today.

Members highlighted that each meeting of the review had uncovered more questions and developments around the type of requirements needed for the transition to EVs and it was suggested that the review could be extended to allow for more information gathering. Although this was seen as a valid suggestion due to the EV sector evolving rapidly, it was understood that the Committee were under time constraints to submit their final report to Cabinet in March 2022, ahead of the local elections scheduled for May 2022.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for attending the meeting as a witness for the review and noted that a regular update on the implementation of EV infrastructure in the Borough could be of interest to the Committee going forward.

**RESOLVED That the Select Committee used the third witness session of the review to enquire as to future EV infrastructure requirements and technological advancements in the sector.**

39. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Committee noted the items listed on the Forward Plan. The Democratic Services Officer informed Members that, since the publication of the meeting agenda, a new Forward Plan had been published with two additional item listed under the Public Safety and Transport portfolio; these were the Contract for the Council's Parking Enforcement Service to be considered at the January 2022 Cabinet meeting, and the TfL Local Implementation Plan – Annual Spending Submission to be considered at the September 2022 Cabinet meeting.

**RESOLVED That the Committee noted the Forward Plan.**

40. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Committee were minded to include a progress update on the work programme with regard to the implementation of the new working practices within the Anti-Social Behaviour Service that were explained at the Committee's previous meeting. Within the requested progress update, the Committee also sought to have some information on the emergence of e-scooters and any common issues that may have arose.

**RESOLVED That the Select Committee noted the items listed on the work programme and requested a progress update on the new working practices within the Anti-Social Behaviour Service.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.14 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steve Clarke - Democratic Services on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.