Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2019

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles – Overview and progress

Report of Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1 Firstly, to provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of what has been happening with regard to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).

2 Secondly, to make members aware of the setting up, the function of, and the workstreams relating to the Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles Working Group (ULEV WG).

3 Thirdly, Members are asked to note the number of workstreams that have been created due to the significant growth and interest in work relating to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs). The work streams include:

A. Regional Low Carbon Strategy - Growth of ULEVs
B. DCC reducing emissions and declaring climate emergency
C. Existing DCC owned EV infrastructure and condition
D. Identifying sites for EV filling stations in County Durham
E. Community based funding project for Rural/Low Income Areas
F. Reviewing our Working and Pool Fleet
G. External funding (Transforming Cities/ERDF) for Park & Ride and EV infrastructure
H. Ultra-Low Emission Taxi infrastructure funds
I. Durham University (Erasmus) Project
J. ULEV Strategy development

4 Finally, members are asked to give their views on where DCC should be heading as an authority on this subject.

Executive summary

5 Members will recall that in December 2018 the committee received a report and presentation which provided an overview of transport services at DCC. One slide was dedicated to work on Electric Vehicles which felt proportionate at that time.

6 Low emission transport has increasingly been on the political agenda as issues of air quality and the climate emergency have gained prominence. The council's Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Working Group (ULEV WG) has been meeting every three weeks since January 2019 to develop and progress work relating to the ultra-low emission transport work area and respond to opportunities for funding and enquiries about new ULEV infrastructure.

7 A number of workstreams have been created since the ULEV WG was established, including consideration of local and regional policy, the council's ULEV infrastructure and fleet, funding bids for ULEV infrastructure, opportunities to install EV filling stations at specific sites, and research into ULEV uptake and options to increase availability of charging infrastructure moving forward.

Recommendations

8 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended to:

(i) Consider and comment on the information provided in the report and presentation.

(ii) endorse and note the progression of all the workstreams set out in this report;

(iii) note the significant potential of the SOSCI project to fund EV charge points in rural and low-income areas (see workstream E);

(iv) support the development of a ULEV strategy in early 2020 (see workstream J).

(v) receive a further report and presentation at a future meeting of the committee detailing further progress made.

Background

9 The International Panel on Climate Change's 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C' set out that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, and local communities. In response to this, the council declared a climate emergency on Wed 20th February 2019.

10 The UK Road to Zero strategy (2018) sets out the government's ambition to end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040. Since this was published, the latest 'UK-Net Zero' report, the Committee on Climate Change have advised Government that all new cars and vans should be electric (or use a low carbon alternative such as hydrogen) by 2035. An earlier switch over (e.g. 2030) would be desirable.

11 Road transport is estimated to contribute 3.0 Mt (37%) of the LA7 region's annual CO_2 emissions. The availability of ULEVs provides a significant opportunity for sustainable transport to play its part in large-scale emissions reduction across County Durham. The council have been developing formal and informal partnerships with public, private and voluntary sector partners to understand how best to deliver ULEV infrastructure.

Governance of ULEV Working Group

12 To deal with the fundamental shift in national policy, workstreams and funding opportunities relating to ULEVs, the ULEV WG has been meeting every 3 weeks since the beginning of 2019. The working group includes officers from across the council with Spatial Policy, Transport, Low Carbon Team, Corporate Property and Land, Legal, Procurement, Funding and Programmes and Fleet.

13 The purpose of the group is so that DCC officers work in a joined-up manner when developing work linked to this agenda. The ULEV WG meets every three weeks. Outside this standing meeting, individual work areas meet as required to ensure progression of a specific workstream.

14 At a programme level, a highlight report is prepared for the Head of Transport and Contract Services following each meeting to provide an update on each of the workstreams. The highlight report will also note whether any further workstreams commence. This will also confirm reporting at a project level including the identification of relevant Heads of Service, funding updates and budgeting arrangements.

Workstreams of the ULEV Working Group

A - The Regional Low Carbon Strategy (LCS) - Growth of ULEVs

15 According to the Regional Low Carbon Strategy, there are only 2,500 ULEVs in the LA7 area, accounting for 0.3% of the region's car stock. Future uptake based on the UK Road to Zero policy until 2030 is modelled in the LCS. Exponential growth is predicted that has significant outcomes for planning EV infrastructure.

16 The LCS 'High Ambition Growth Scenario' predicts that there will be 219,000 EV cars in 2030 compared with 2,517 currently. Even with a 'Low Ambition Growth Scenario', it is predicted that there will be 85,000 ULEVs in the region in 2030 compared with 2,500 today. In the more rural areas including Durham, the LCS is predicting at least 20-40% of cars to be ULEVs.

17 The LCS advises that focusing exclusively on one charging option is not recommended; a diverse mix of charging solutions are expected to be necessary to cater to a range of needs (e.g. rapid charging hubs, on-street charging, destination charging and work charging) and should take account of local grid constraints, availability of space and dedicated parking bays, trip patterns etc. The LCS is nearly completed having been circulated to Economic Directors in early August 2019 for comments.

B - DCC reducing emissions and declaring climate emergency

18 In 2010, the council and the County Durham Partnership agreed a target to reduce carbon emissions across County Durham by 40% by 2020 (based upon 1990 levels). This includes emissions from the domestic, business, commercial and transport sectors. The 40% target exceeds the Government target set in the Climate Change Act of a 37% reduction by 2020. By 2017, County Durham had achieved a total emissions reduction of 52% from 1990 levels. County Durham is currently on course to meet a 55% reduction by 2020, exceeding the national performance in 2017 by 9%.

19 The council have continued to lead the way. A climate emergency was declared on the 20th February 2019 and a climate emergency update report went to full council on July 17th, 2019. The Council now pledge to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2050. This report is likely to clarify that the Full Council see the electrification of transport as one of the key ways the council can respond to the climate emergency.

C - Existing DCC owned EV charging infrastructure and condition

20 The council currently own 27 EV charge points (33 outlets) around the County and have an ongoing maintenance contract with ‘Charge Your Car’ to maintain the EV charge posts. Surveying of posts has demonstrated that around 50% of posts are not working correctly. Charge Your Car maintain our current posts but only at a premium call out cost. The ULEV WG believe there is an opportunity via procurement to organise a more cost-effective contract so that a new company will maintain, install and provide back office support for our current and future stock.

21 The ULEV WG are collecting baseline information on the existing stock but are also working towards an audit of EV infrastructure being delivered by the private sector. A spatial understanding of all charging opportunities is essential to best understand where to locate new facilities.

22 The emerging County Durham Plan proposed Policy 22 ‘Delivering Sustainable Transport’ highlights the need to plan for adoption of alternative fuel vehicles and refers to the County Durham Parking and Accessibility Standards (2019), which require a higher provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points at employment, residential, supermarket and other retail developments.

D - Identifying sites for new EV filling stations in the county

23 Following the EV roadshow that DCC hosted in November 2018, contact was made with a company that provides EV filling stations from 100% renewable electricity. They opened their first fast EV charging station in the UK in Sunderland in April 2019 and there is potential to provide these EV fuel charging stations in County Durham adjacent to roads with high traffic flows. The concept and the business model of these facilities provides a commercial opportunity for the council to create ongoing revenue.

24 The Corporate Property and Land Service have identified two potential sites owned by DCC or with partners (Forrest Park) that have high potential for a successful EV filling station in County Durham. The sites identified include land located at:

- Belmont Park and Ride
- Forrest Park

25 The ULEV WG are in discussions with procurement regarding the best procurement model for the EV filling station sites and existing DCC infrastructure. The ULEV WG have already wrote to local members to inform about the proposals at Belmont Park and Ride.

E - Scaling on Street Charging Infrastructure (SOSCI) for Rural/Low Income Areas

26 Innovate UK is a non-departmental public body, funded by the UK government. Innovate UK are funding projects that promote investment in on-street infrastructure. DCC are working in partnership with public and private companies on a £4m project that has the potential to deliver 100 new EV charging posts in Durham. The Scaling on Street Charging Infrastructure (SOSCI) fund could be a game changer for the roll out of EV infrastructure in County Durham. The rationale for the funding bid focuses on underserved areas where there is a shortage of off-street parking.

27 Cybermoor are leading on the bid with several partners from public, private and voluntary sectors. 100% of DCC involvement will be funded through the project so DCC's input into the bid has been provided with officer time to date. Cybermoor will co-ordinate community capital and interest to help finance charge posts but are asking that posts can be located in community car parks, some of which may be owned by DCC. The ULEV WG will be requesting more details from Cybermoor on a funding partnership as the inception meetings begin in October 2019. Members are asked to note the potential of the SOSCI project to fund EV charge points in rural and low-income areas.

F - Reviewing our Working and Pool Fleet

28 Proposals are being considered by the fleet manager as to how the DCC fleet can contribute towards electric mobility in the county. Specifically, consideration is being given to how smaller vans can go electric. The key barrier is the lack of EV charging infrastructure across the county and how this may prevent the roll out of electric fleet cars. The ULEV WG have had a figure quoted (approx. 60k) to install 31 EV charging posts at all council fleet depots.

29 Likewise, opportunities to make the pool car fleet electric are also being explored. This is part of a wider review being undertaken by Energy Savings Trust (EST) that will review fleet mileage, pool car mileage and also the number of private mileage (grey fleet miles) being used by staff. Officers have met with the EST to discuss the scope of this project. At present, the use of pool cars accounts for approximately 3% of the council's total mileage. The outcomes of this review will set out how the council can be more efficient in terms of cost savings and reducing their carbon footprint.

G - External funding (Transforming Cities/ERDF) for Park & Ride and EV infrastructure

30 External funding options are in development to help implement a cleaner, greener low carbon transport system for Durham City with its Park & Ride sites. There is potential for solar car ports to supply zero carbon electricity to run the bus service for the Park and Ride operations.

H - Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Funds

31 NECA have received £504k funding for 10 ULEV taxi chargers across the region. As part of the bid, it is proposed that a rapid charging post be installed at the OnePointHub in Chester-le-Street.

I - Durham University (Erasmus) Project – ULEVS in Durham City

32 Durham University students formed part of an Erasmus project dedicated to understanding the needs of EV users in Durham City. They were invited to County Hall to disseminate their findings. The student's findings have already been used to support a multimillion-pound SOSCI funding bid to further install an electric vehicle network across rural County Durham in off street locations (see workstream E).

33 During the dissemination event, we invited key partners and stakeholders to learn first-hand from the students. This strengthened our relationships with commercial companies in the electric vehicle field. This project has further highlighted the benefits of taking a customer centred approach to problem solving.

J - ULEV Strategy development

34 The council's approach to dealing with the growth of ULEVs has been guided by the ULEV WG which has reacted to external funding, learning and commercial opportunities. At present, there is no formal strategy on how to take this issue forward although the ULEV WG have developed a list of strategic themes that should be considered as part of a future strategy. It is proposed to commence the development of a County Durham ULEV Strategy in winter 2019.

Main implications

35 The key message for members to note are:

- Rapid change is happening with policy, legislation and funding relating to ULEVs
- There are many challenges and opportunities around the uptake of ULEVs
- The Officers ULEV WG is already involved in many areas of work relating to the uptake of ULEVs

- Not providing public charging could be a major barrier for many residents
- The council have capitalised on funding opportunities to enable infrastructure delivery
- DCC are making good progress quickly but there are examples of other councils leading the way

Conclusion

36 Members of the Economy and Enterprise OSC and the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC will be aware of the work being undertaken in relation to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) including the setting up, the function of and the various workstreams established.

Background papers

- See Presentation, Appendix 2.

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable