

A Regional approach to EV Strategies: Discussion Paper

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 To propose to Chief Officers that SEStran coordinates the commissioning of a joint baseline and scoping report that:
- Assesses the potential for efficiencies from taking a regional approach to implementing common functions relating to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategies, and
 - Provides recommendations on future shared activities relating to EV development in the region.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2023/24, each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities will receive a flat rate allocation of £80,000 from Scottish Futures Trust's towards the further development and implementation of a local EV Strategy. This follows allocations of £60,000 per authority in 2022/23, for the development of local strategies.

One of the key aspects of Transport Scotland's recently published [draft Vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network](#) is the need for users to have a seamless experience, and in a regional context there is a chance to ensure at least a coherent, if not seamless experience.

- 2.2 SEStran's new RTS Regional Mobility Theme "Decarbonising Transport" includes policies and action areas that would support appropriate development of EV within a national policy framework. These are summarised in Appendix 1. SEStran's new RTS identifies that there is significant car based intra-regional movement and that all eight local authority areas have highly mobile populations. SEStran's new RTS actively supports the national target for an overall 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 but also recognises the need to decarbonise essential transport journeys and within that, there are benefits of supporting EV use across the regional fleet.
- 2.3 It is felt by officers in the majority of partner local authorities that a regional EV strategy, or a joint approach to some aspects of EV development, would help deliver coherence and cost savings or efficiencies on a wider geographic basis than individual Council areas; some partners feel that ultimately a national scale may be needed in Scotland. Without prejudicing a future national approach, however, the immediate challenge is to ensure that the region doesn't create a post-code lottery for public EV supply and standards.
- 2.4 Most LAs in SEStran region have now finalised a local EV strategy, with some already reported to transport committees for approval.

2.5 Several sub-regional joint approaches to EV strategies are also already well established. The proposals in this paper, therefore, deal with the question of understanding the potential of a wider collaborative approach – which might include some or all SEStran partner Councils, should that be shown to deliver efficiencies. For example, a shared services project management approach to the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF).

3. Main report - Options / Scope

3.1 Since the RTS was published, some (not all) partner councils have suggested there may be benefit and efficiency gained from coordinating a number of activity areas. Suggestions from various partner Councils include:-

Operational:

- Regionally consistent public access methods or standardised card issues
- A consistent response to equalities considerations raised by public access scheme(s) in the region
- Joint procurement of charging units to attract better market rates for all participating local authorities. Although there is a Scotland Excel framework for public procurement of EV charging infrastructure, the purchasing power of individual authorities can be limited
- Shared awareness of tariff policies and tariffs set by each LA, noting some or all LAs may ultimately prefer to set tariffs locally
- Arrangements for private charging in locations without off street parking - power supply cables under footways etc
- Shared back-office functions if required, or shared procurement and management of back-office functions, such as those functions provided by Charge Place Scotland

Strategic:

- Common supplementary guidance or planning policy relating to new build standards / levels of provision for home charging. Some Councils are clarifying or have set out requirements for EV charging in new developments, however a regional policy stance may be worth exploring
- A common approach to local authority provision of land and electricity supply for profit share / lease arrangements with charger providers
- Supporting freight – there are clearly opportunities to achieve beneficial air quality effects on the strategic and local networks by targeting freight traffic through the use of different vehicle types¹ – charging infrastructure developed for commuter traffic could be provided alongside chargers for freight use where possible e.g. at park and ride sites.
- Long term infrastructure improvements and innovation like in road charging (stationary and dynamic) should be examined for inclusion in long term road investment programs – maximising cross boundary links.

¹ <https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2022-SEStran-Forth-Freight-Case-For-Change-Final.pdf>

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that Chief Officers discuss and agree a common approach to further activity on regional aspects of EV strategy implementation in support of RTS delivery.

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Appendix 1: SEStran RTS – Decarbonising Transport Theme Priorities and Actions

Policy Implications	Proposals fit with the new (draft) SEStran RTS Regional Mobility Theme “Decarbonising Transport”
Financial Implications	The proposal to develop a scoping study will require financial contributions from SEStran and partner Councils.
Equalities Implications	None arise directly from this proposed joint piece of work.
Climate Change Implications	The environmental impacts of wide use of Electric Vehicles are yet to be fully understood but a policy to support their use should contribute to reduced levels of NOx, presence of black carbon and smaller particulates associated with combustion.

Appendix 1.

SEStran RTS – Decarbonising Transport Theme Priorities and Actions

The new RTS’s Regional Mobility Theme “Decarbonising Transport” includes policies and action areas that would support appropriate development of EV within a national policy framework. These are summarised in Appendix 1. :

Policies:

- “a) implementation of measures which facilitate the decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet including cars, buses, vans, trains, ships and aircraft in line with national requirements.
- b) recognise the risks associated with lower car running costs and supports measures (subject to equality impacts) to prevent renewed growth in private car travel, and to encourage the use of alternative modes in line with the NTS 2 sustainable travel hierarchy and national car kilometre reduction targets.
- c) support suitable taxation measures for ICEs, EVs and other alternative fuelled vehicles that ensure their usage is managed in line with the NTS 2’s Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and ‘polluter pays’ principles.

d) roll out of EV charging infrastructure for all to support decarbonisation of car-based travel and support development in areas which may be commercially unviable for private sector investment

e) implement infrastructure (including covered parking at residential and employment facilities) which supports the wider uptake of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes.

Actions:

- Engage with Scottish Government for effective national strategy / guidance / specifications on fleet decarbonisation and rollout of appropriate and future-proofed supporting infrastructure. This should include legislation to manage on-street charging provision and provision of chargers in new developments.
- Work with the private sector and partners to develop a regional electric vehicle (and e-bike) investment and charging strategy, with associated technical guidance, including a spatial strategy across the area for long journey rapid charging facilities and for local area hub / community charging
- Develop and coordinate a regional information strategy including messaging around the need to ensure EVs are not regarded as a green light to increased car use and the range of issues associated with this. Strategy includes highlighting the potential of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes as viable modes of passenger and freight transport.
- SEStran and its partners will seek to engage with national governments around suitable taxation measures for ICEs, EVs and alternative fuelled vehicles and how they could potentially be applied as demand management measures
- Collate data / knowledge around green hydrogen / fuel cell technology, EV charging technology (e.g. on street / at home / workplace / forecourt) and regularly monitor both emerging technology and trends
- Facilitate pilot projects to encourage transition to alternative fuels for all modes
- Support alternative fuels for modes such as commercial vehicles and buses by actively engaging in and funding pilot projects across the region