

COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2021
MEMBER QUESTIONS

TO COUNCILLOR ANDERSON FROM COUNCILLOR STRUTTON

What actions are you and officers taking to address the following issues with SBC EV Chargers and loss of potential income revenue from these and the parking spaces.

In particularly those located in the lower ground floor of Herschel Car park which have not been used or available for over a year (entrance through both rear parking of our HQ and from main entrance in Herschel St)? And the Rapid Charger located in Brunel Way with an un controlled Car parkin which should have like other authorities say an hours stay whilst charging enforced!

To many including myself this just highlights poor management and a willingness to waste of public funds and very needed facilities that could both deliver an income and benefits to the environment just going down the toilet something given SBC's current financial situation in can not afford to do!

Response

With respect to the status of the Electric Vehicle rapid chargepoint at Brunel Way, Councillor Strutton raised a question on this subject in October 2021 and a response to you was issued on 22 October.

At Herschel Car Park there are public electric vehicle charge points on the Council's network, hosted by the BP Pulse operator network, and those recently installed under the Fleet Challenge programme to serve an expanded pool car fleet (on the PodPoint network). The public charge points were initially impacted by the closure of the car park from refurbishment works, planned for a period of 15 weeks from August 2020. The top floor of the car park (where the oldest chargepoint is located) was then closed for an extended period even after the rest of the car park reopened. Further, the location of the contractor's storage cabins blocked access to the charge points in the lower levels for a much longer period until Summer 2021. The public chargepoints have been available to the public since removal of the contractor's plant. As at all public charge points on the Council's network, car parking charges apply at the prevailing rates on all EV charge bays in addition to relevant fees for charging.

PodPoint installed the additional chargepoints for Council fleet vehicles at Observatory House (in the adjacent surface car park and basement of Herschel Car Park) in 2020. However, outside of the Council's control, SSE were unable to connect these charge point devices to a new electricity supply until June 2021. These chargepoints were never intended for use by staff for private vehicles or the public but to replace fleet car charge points previously available at St Martin's Place and facilitate expansion of the numbers of electric pool cars in the fleet. Prior to COVID-19 the Council had 6 electric pool cars and it was proposed to increase this to up to 20 vehicles to reduce costs and carbon emissions from grey fleet mileage. Expansion of the Council's pool of electric pool vehicles has though currently been paused due to the impacts of COVID-19 and many staff still being home based. In total there are 13 EV charge points with dual socket (26 electric bays) in the basement car park and one dual socket charger and one rapid charger at the surface car park adjacent Observatory House. Car park charges are not currently being levied for Council staff parking at Herschel Car Park. An officer has been tasked with looking into the opportunity of shifting the workplace chargers to public accessible tariff chargers – so all users have to pay to use the chargers. These details about the fleet chargepoints was also provided to you in the response referenced above.