



Subject:	EV charging points: an update on the FASTER Project
Date:	8 June 2023
Reporting Officer:	Richard McLernon, Climate Programme Manager City
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the FASTER project, which will increase Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note that the sites previously agreed by Committee on 13th October 2022, Girdwood Hub, Brook Leisure Centre, and Ballysillan Leisure Centre are now included as primary sites within the live procurement exercise which will appoint a Charge Point

	<p>Operator to manage Design, Installation and Operation of the Northern Ireland chargepoints.</p> <p>II. Note that a process of assessing EV charger capacity at a range of Belfast Leisure Centre locations has taken place, whereby Ulster University who are technical lead in the project, have worked with NIE to assess sites and have made recommendations on inclusion or omission accordingly.</p> <p>III. Note that one previously agreed site, Belvoir Activity Centre, has been omitted due to constraints in the energy capacity on site.</p> <p>IV. Note that Shankill Leisure Centre and Ozone Complex were assessed and deemed to have insufficient energy capacity at present for EV chargers.</p> <p>V. Note that Olympia Leisure Centre was considered for inclusion however had to be omitted due to time constraints relating to the procurement process and the fact that Olympia Leisure Centre's energy is managed by the IFA through Windsor Park.</p> <p>VI. Approve Avoniel Leisure Centre being included on the list of primary locations within Belfast, as a replacement for Belvoir Activity Centre.</p> <p>VII. Approve an additional three locations which have been included as reserve sites, should they be required. These are Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Grove Wellbeing Centre, and Whiterock Leisure Centre.</p>
3.0	Main report
3.1	Background
3.2	The FASTER Project is a joint cross border project across Scotland, the border Counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems and to demonstrate how each of the three jurisdictions can provide early systems learning in relation to the electrification of transport.
3.3	The FASTER Project aims to ensure that the availability of public charging stations is not a major obstacle to Electric Vehicle (EV) market penetration.
3.4	Further information about the FASTER Project can be found at www.fasterevcharge.com
3.5	

	<p>The FASTER Project has been awarded funding for the Project's costs from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).</p>
3.6	<p>The partnership will implement the physical rollout of 73 rapid charging stations in the programme area. The Project aims to ensure that the availability of charging stations is not a major obstacle to Electric Vehicle (EV) market penetration with the proposal to carry out the design, analysis, procurement, installation, and operation of 73 Rapid Chargers across the three programme jurisdictions. There must be cross compatibility between the three jurisdictions which may be achieved using contactless card payments or other methods.</p>
3.7	<p>The FASTER Project is led by East Border Region Ltd. There are a total of seven project partners and 16 associate partners from across the three jurisdictions.</p>
3.8	<p>The following Project Partners will be directly involved in the planning and delivery of the overall Project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. East Border Region Ltd (EBR) (Lead partner) 2. Louth County Council (Procurement lead in R.O.I) 3. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) 4. Ulster University (Procurement lead in N.I.) 5. South West College 6. Highlands & Islands Transport Partnership (HiTRANS) 7. University of Strathclyde
3.9	<p>Other Associate Partners essential to the delivery of the overall project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monaghan County Council 2. Cavan County Council 3. Leitrim County Council 4. Sligo County Council 5. Donegal County Council 6. Meath County Council 7. Sustainable Authority of Ireland (SEAI) 8. IT Sligo 9. Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council 10. Ards and North Down Borough Council 11. Newry Mourne and Down District Council

	<p>12. Mid-Ulster Council</p> <p>13. Fermanagh and Omagh Council</p> <p>14. Derry and Strabane Council</p> <p>15. Belfast City Council</p> <p>16. Mid & East Antrim</p>
3.10	<p>In Northern Ireland it is anticipated that up to 22 EV RAPID chargers will be installed through the FASTER project. RAPID chargers are 55kw chargers, capable of fully charging a vehicle in approximately 30 minutes.</p>
3.11	<p>Belfast City Council is in the final stages of developing a Belfast EV Strategy, which will set out the city's requirements and recommended approach to be implemented through a partnership approach, aligned to the regional EV Infrastructure Action Plan https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/ev-infrastructure-action-plan-2022.pdf. However, Council has been involved in two funding proposals which will increase publicly available EV chargers in Belfast by utilising the Council estate. These are the FASTER project, and through the ORCS (On Street Residential Charge Point Scheme). FASTER is focused on Leisure Centres, ORCS is focused on publicly available car parks.</p>
3.12	<p>Belfast City Council made an initial submission of sites based on criteria provided by East Border Region (the coordinating body) which were that sites had to be publicly accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This ruled out many of the Belfast Leisure Centres as they are subject to restricted access, leaving Girdwood Hub, Ballysillan Leisure Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre and Brook Leisure Centre.</p>
3.13	<p>Of these sites Girdwood Hub, Ballysillan Leisure Centre and Brook Leisure Centre had sufficient energy capacity for the installation of EV chargers. Belvoir Leisure Centre was omitted due to lack of capacity.</p>
3.14	<p>Girdwood Hub was deemed to have capacity for a single charger, Ballysillan Leisure Centre was deemed to have capacity for a single charger and Brook Leisure Centre was deemed to have capacity for a double charger.</p>
3.15	<p>Subsequently, SEUPB has varied the criteria so that sites which are publicly accessible on a restricted basis can be included, on the proviso that timings are signposted and available</p>

	<p>through information sources on EV charger availability such as Zapmap https://www.zapmap.com/. This variance resulted in the assessment of additional sites as set out below:</p>
3.16	<p>Avoniel Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger Grove Wellbeing Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger Ozone Leisure Centre – insufficient capacity Shankill Leisure Centre – insufficient capacity Whiterock Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger</p>
3.17	<p>Following liaison with the Belfast City Council Energy and CO2 Manager officers recommended the inclusion of Avoniel Leisure Centre as one of the four primary sites, subject to approval from Elected Members.</p>
3.18	<p>The remaining sites, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Grove Wellbeing Centre and Whiterock Leisure Centre have been placed on a reserve list, should an opportunity arise due to another site not proceeding. This is subject to approval from Elected Members.</p>
3.19	<p>One additional site was considered as a potential reserve; however, Olympia Leisure Centre was unable to be included at this stage due to the FASTER project timeframe for procurement which did not allow additional assessment of capacity and, the fact that Olympia Leisure Centre’s energy is managed via Windsor Park under IFA management and would have required further engagement with the IFA, which was not possible in the time available to officers. However, Olympia Leisure Centre will be included in any future plans for use of EV on the Council estate.</p>
3.20	<p>Further updates will be provided to Committee on the FASTER Project as the project progresses, the ORCS funding application which has previously been agreed by Council, and on the development of Belfast EV Strategy and next steps.</p>
4.0	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
4.1	The FASTER project is fully funded by SEUPB.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
5.1	

	Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging programme of work.
6.0	Appendix 1
6.1	None