Data Based Strategy

Conurbation Charging Zones

How best to apply national funding at a local level

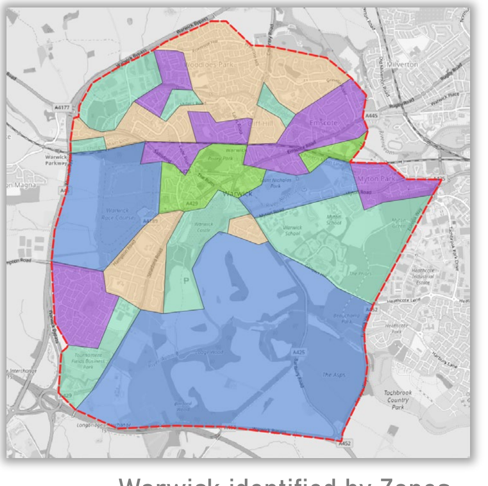
Increasing pressure from Central Government to support the transition to EVs has left authorities in the difficult position of balancing a variety of needs within limited funding opportunities; Improving access to residents who need public charging with limited profit, attracting residents and visitors to spend in city and town centre locations, and accommodating the needs of the electric business fleet. With so many boxes to tick, it only makes sense that a one-size fits all approach wouldn't work across an authority.

These aims support a view that councils should instead look to zone their area based on the needs of different groups of drivers. This focused approach helps to reduce total spend, increase local support, attract commercial investment and begins to transition the focus away from the affluent middle class to those areas of society that would benefit the most.

A zone identifies one area from another for different legal and financial approaches to charging infrastructure. The key to this form of zoning is to understand how to minimise council cost and maximise commercial investment. Our approach lead to 5 distinct zones:

1. Commercial
   Charge Point Operators (CPO) need to make a profit. Even if there is central government funding for the initial installation, the CPO needs to see a future of high utilisation in order to justify their investments. This happens today within the early adopter market, with locations where such business cases, perhaps including broader marketing needs, make sense including supermarket/retail car-parks, pub car-parks and train stations.
2. Suburban
   This zone contains residential properties with off-street parking. As these drivers transition to EVs, they will likely install home chargers and utilise them overnight. Public charging wouldn't be used in these areas, making them commercially unattractive for operators and a poor choice of investment for authorities.
3. Public Need
   There are areas within a town or city that will not be attractive to CPOs for the foreseeable future. These areas will tend to have high levels of On-Street parking and residents will want to charge frequently, locally and at a low cost. These are also often areas of greater social need. The council is likely to need to agree to a funding policy for these inherently unprofitable chargers.
4. Visitor
   A council's responsibility to its visitor is different to that of its residents. Already, many councils treat these groups differently in terms of differential parking charges. The same argument can be made for EV charging as a council looks to make profit from visitor charging sessions.
5. Minimum Need
   There remains the areas of the town or city that have minimal On-Street Households and limited commercial or social needs. These are aggregated into the Minimal Need Zone. Given restricted funds, there is a limited argument for a council to invest in these areas.

Once zones have been identified they can be published as a plan – in a similar way to a council's Local Development Plan (LDP) so that residents, CPOs and other stakeholders can understand the strategic direction and engage from an informed position. Ultimately, defining zones within an area is not solely a technical process, engaging stakeholders is as, if not more, important than the original analysis. However, we believe that this approach will take a council forward in terms of an EV charging strategy and help to justify access to funding from both the public and private sector to support their area.



Warwick identified by Zones

For further information, please click here

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