

Planning Statement – Installation of Solar Photovoltaic Panels to support electric vehicle charging points at Site 22, St Martin's Island Hall

Project Background

The number of cars on the Isles of Scilly remains relatively high in relation to the tiny adopted road network of under 10 miles. In a bid to change behaviour away from car ownership and encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, the Council of the Isles of Scilly is delivering the GO-EV project as part of the Smart Islands programme (www.smartislands.org).

The project will see a network of 27 electric vehicle charging points installed across all five islands during 2020, providing a solid infrastructure of electricity grid network connections to support the transition to electric vehicles. 10 charging points will be dedicated to the car share scheme (www.ioscv.co.uk/carshare) and the remaining chargers will be for general use by those wishing to purchase their own electric vehicles.

As part of the innovation side of the project, the vehicles from the car share will also become part of the electricity network on Scilly, capable of discharging the energy from their batteries to optimise balancing of the grid. Known as vehicle-to-grid bidirectional charging or V2G for short, the project will help the rest of the UK understand how this type of technology might become part of the electricity grid of the future. The car share vehicles will also be housed under solar canopies allowing the project to test the optimisation of direct charging of electric vehicles from solar photovoltaic panels.

The project is also hoping to deliver an electric community bus and a network of electric cargo bikes for hire alongside the car share scheme. The aim is to get as many people as possible walking and cycling with the provision of a bus service as a second option and the car share providing a full complement of mobility options. The project is managed by the Council of the Isles of Scilly and is being delivered by two project partners: the Isles of Scilly Community Venture and Hitachi Europe Ltd. The GO-EV project is being funded by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership with £606,000 from the Government's Local Growth Fund and £2.4 million from European Regional Development Fund.

The UK policy context will see a ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2035 with electric cars currently providing the main alternative. The network of electric vehicle charge points on Scilly will place the islands in an excellent position to begin that transition. The provision of a car share scheme and potentially a bus on St Mary's provides a huge opportunity to reduce the number of vehicles on the islands by providing positive alternatives to private vehicle ownership. The [Destination Management Plan](#) for the Isles of Scilly highlights a car share scheme as a means to 'reduce and control the levels of traffic' which will 'reinforce the welcome and ultimately help visitors get the most from their time with us'.

The draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan and Conservation Designations

This application recognises that there are a number of designations across the Isles of Scilly that will have relevance to this application. The designations are listed below:

Constraint Type	Name	Link
Local Plan	draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015-2030	https://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning-development/local-plan-review
Historic Environment	Conservation Area	https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/ https://www.scilly.gov.uk/planning/heritage-conservation-environment#Conservation
Historic (Marine) Environment	Heritage Coast	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role
Natural Environment	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/index.php/about-aonbs/aonbs/isles-scilly
Natural (Marine) Environment	Special Area of Conservation	https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0013694

The emerging draft Isles of Scilly Local Plan 2015 – 2030 provides strong support for projects under the Smart Islands programme. Under Key Issues and Challenges the Plan recognises the challenges for infrastructure in developing capacity, resilience and sustainability and highlights Smart Islands and similar programmes as a way to address these issues. Relating to transport, the Plan goes on to support the need for ‘better access across the islands, in particular supporting sustainable and active transport solutions, by foot, bicycle or electric vehicles’.

In the vision for 2030 the Plan sees a future for Scilly where ‘Innovative systems and technologies have taken advantage of the islands’ location and environment, and provided the catalyst for achieving exemplary and innovative sustainable development, thus providing a model for how other communities around the world can function. It also sees ‘The islands’ infrastructure is a beacon of sustainability for the UK and beyond; it provides an affordable, innovative and low carbon model for managing energy, water and waste, with considerable benefits to the environment and residents’ quality of life.’ In particular the Plan supports ‘development that secures improvements to the islands’ infrastructure and utilities through a coordinated approach as part of and in step with planned sustainable growth, including innovative and low-carbon technologies, as part of the Smart Islands programme and other investment initiatives.’

The specific policies under the Plan provide the following support for the GO-EV project:

- Under Policy SS1 development will be permitted where it makes a positive contribution to the social, economic and environmental needs of the Isles of Scilly by 'locating, designing and constructing development where it makes a positive contribution to reducing the islands carbon footprint and consumption of natural resources' and 'improving accessibility and creating a network of safe and well-connected routes by integrating measures that encourage and promote walking, cycling and electric vehicles as part of any new development wherever opportunities allow'.
- Development is further encouraged where it uses sustainable and natural materials which avoid the proliferation of unacceptable or unsustainable resources.
- Policy SS5 states that development will be permitted where it makes a 'positive contribution to the sustainability of the islands'.
- Policy SS8 provides specific support for projects associated with the Smart Islands programme and projects that seek to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and help move to a carbon neutral island environment.
- Policy SS10 supports development which promotes 'the use of sustainable transport such as walking, cycling and electric vehicles'

In relation to the historic environment and natural designations, the development of charging points have been designed in such a way as to minimise their impact. In particular:

- The development uses existing areas that are already used for vehicle parking
- By the very nature of electric vehicle charging, the sites are close to areas of habitation and other buildings
- The cabling for the connection to the electricity grid will be underground to minimise spatial interference

The impact on other heritage assets close to the site is addressed in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

Description and Specification

Photovoltaic (PV)

The precise specification of the PV panels is subject to an ongoing tender exercise, the outcome of which will be clear at the end of October 2020. In their tender specification, bidders have been asked to take account of the sensitive environment of Scilly in considering their choice of products as well as considering the harsh weather and salty conditions on the islands when it comes to the longevity of products.

For the PV panels, it is intended that they will have a high quality non-reflective finish as a reflective or jarring finish will stand out and detract from the from the roofscape of the Conservation Area and other identified heritage assets as it reflects the sun. The layout of the PV panels are shown in the elevations drawings. The ground mounted solar array to the rear of the hall will be similar in design to that of the solar garden at St Mary's Airport – see photo below showing panels and ground mount system.



Electric Vehicle (EV) charger and street cabinet design

Planning permission for the electric vehicle charge point themselves fall under permitted development, it is only the solar panels to the rear of the hall that are the subject of this planning application.

The electric vehicle charge points themselves will be located to the front of the hall