REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM – 14th January 2011

Plugged in Places

Report by:
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Purpose of Report:
To update the Regional Transport Forum on progress with EValu8, the East of England’s ‘Plugged in Places’ bid.

Recommendations:
RTF members are asked to:
1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Ask their officers, via the STSG group, to work with EValu8 Transport Innovations Ltd to install plug-in recharging posts in their areas; and
3. To promote the take-up and use of electric vehicles through, for example, policy support in their Local Transport Plans.

1. Overview of progress

1.1 ‘Plugged in Places’ is a Government-led initiative to promote the installation of publicly accessible electric recharging points for electric vehicles in cities and regions in the UK. The initiative provides up to 50% match-funding from Government for the installation of recharging infrastructure.

1.2 On behalf of the region, EEDA has worked in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, and with technical support from Future Transport Systems, to develop EValu8 – the East of England’s bid to become a ‘Plugged in Place.’

1.3 An expression of interest (EOI) was submitted on behalf of the region to the Government’s Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) on 1st June 2010. OLEV subsequently shortlisted EValu8 requesting a full submission by 29th October 2010.

1.4 At the September meeting of the RTF, members received a presentation from Mike Salter (EEDA) and Ian McDonald (Future Transport Systems) on the ‘plugged in places’ initiative, and the proposals for the East of England, which included a number of recommendations endorsed by members.

1.5 The bid team are grateful for the support and assistance subsequently provided by all 11 of the region’s local transport authorities, which contributed to a really strong final East of England submission on 29th October. The final bid was delivered to Government by Vicky Ford MEP and Simon Wright MP (Norwich South).

1.6 On 15th December, Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond, announced that EValu8 had won up to £2.9 million of funding from OLEV. Competing against stiff competition from other regions and cities, EValu8 will now install a major network of 1,200 smart recharging points (600 double headed recharging posts) across the region. Projects in the Midlands, Greater Manchester, Scotland and Northern Ireland were also given the go-ahead by Government.
1.7 With over £7 million in place from partners including EEDA, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and other private and public sector organisations committed to match-funding plug-in points, work on installing the EValu8 network is scheduled to start in Spring 2011.

1.8 With the impending abolition of EEDA, Evalu8 Transport Innovation Ltd is the not for profit company established by the University of Hertfordshire to lead delivery of the EValu8 project.

2. Overview of the East of England Proposals

2.1 In headline terms, the East of England’s EValu8 project:

- sets out detailed plans to install 600 plug-in posts across the eight key clusters broadly centred on Bedford (75 posts), Cambridge (84 posts), Ipswich (63 posts), Norwich (84 posts), Peterborough (75 posts), Luton and Hertfordshire (105 posts), and Thames Gateway South Essex (114 posts);
- includes £3 million committed funding from OLEV, with a further £4 million+ committed by public and private sector partners and through a successful bid for additional European funding through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – the total value of the project is therefore over £7 million;
- when implemented, no local business or resident in the East of England will be further than 25 miles away from their nearest charging post, making the whole of the region easily navigable by electric vehicles;
- has received widespread support from a large number of organisations wishing to install public plug-in posts, including the East of England’s 11 local transport authorities. Big industry names backing the project include UK Power Networks, Vauxhall Motors, Ford, Lotus, BT, BAE Systems, Marshall Group and Millbrook Proving Ground.

2.2 A key element of the project is the early installation of 4 EEDA-funded recharging posts in each of the East of England’s 11 local transport authorities. EEDA is pleased to confirm that funding for these double headed recharging posts has now also been confirmed. This is an important milestone to provide the project with early momentum, providing highly visible and publicly accessible recharging points across the East of England by Spring 2011.

2.3 EValu8 Transport Innovations Ltd will purchase the 44 recharging posts this financial year and will be in direct contact with all 11 transport authorities in the very near future to agree details of preferred locations and to ensure early installation of the posts. The first step in this process will be further discussions with the STSG officer group today, following RTF.

3. Next Steps

3.1 The EValu8 Transport Innovations Ltd team will work closely with private and public sector partners across the East of England to deliver EValu8. This will include liaising with officers in the local transport authorities to install the EEDA-funded recharging posts as noted in the paragraph above.

3.2 The EValu8 project team would be pleased to be invited to attend the 11 March 2011 RTF meeting to provide a presentation and a more detailed update on the installation phase of the project.