

EV Owners Survey 2018

In October 2018 we conducted a survey of local EV owners, to hear about their experiences with the existing charging infrastructure.

To maintain a high quality of feedback, we chose not to publicise the survey. Instead, we selected 45 people on our mailing list who've indicated that they own an EV in the city, and we also shared the survey with a private Facebook group of verified local EV owners, *Sussex EVs*.

We received a total of 31 responses, with most people spending around 9 minutes on average completing the survey. All responses were anonymous. For reference, as of Q2 2018, Brighton has around 294 owners of plug-in vehicles.

The survey was broken up in to three main areas of feedback on current infrastructure: On-street chargers, chargers at Council-run car parks and rapid chargers (of which there is one, Withdean Leisure Centre).

Each main area had the same questions covering: *reliability, pricing and availability*; with opportunity for specific written feedback.

Additionally, at the end of the survey we invited feedback on where owners think new chargers may benefit the city, what measures owners think may increase adoption, plus space left for any remaining comments.

Survey results are provided in this document including all written responses.

Summary of results

The majority of EV owners in the city have used public charge points at some time. The most popular chargers are the on-street ones, with 74% of EV owners telling us they've used them.

Overall, scores appear low. Feedback was generally tainted with negativity based on poor experiences. Despite these mixed opinions from owners on each of the three main types of infrastructure, an average of 65% of owners claimed they would recommend the city's car chargers.

Reliability

Feedback around the reliability across all chargers averaged at 4.8/10. Scores were all very similar but the Rapid Charger at Withdean scored the lowest and car-park chargers received the highest score.

Most people in their written feedback have mentioned some sort of frustration with faulty equipment taking time to be repaired. Most people who charge at on-street chargers had something to say about their poor reliability.

Pricing

Owners' thoughts on pricing appeared to show the most commonly shared view, with the overall average score at 4.3/10 - appearing on the survey just below the label "fair". The on-street chargers are thought of as offering the best value and the Withdean Rapid Charger once again performed poorly, receiving the lowest average score of 2.9/10.

The Withdean Rapid Charger received the most written feedback about pricing.

Availability

Unsurprisingly owners generally found the car-park chargers to be the most available, with an average score of 6.5/10. On-street chargers were the lowest scoring.

Practically all survey participants have asked for more chargers to ensure more availability.

Most people provided written feedback airing frustrations with “ICE-ing” or overstaying vehicles preventing them from charging. Some people commented on lack of parking enforcement and signage to aid availability.

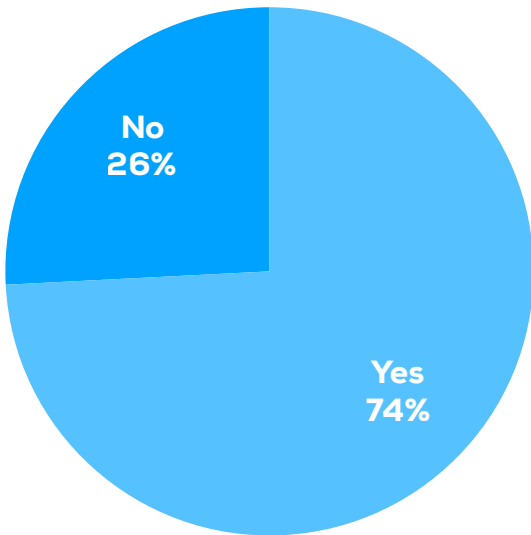
Other feedback

Most people felt compelled to suggest places they thought would be best suited to have new car chargers installed. Commonly these suggestions included residential areas, the town centre and car parks. Some people were very enthusiastic for rapid chargers and rapid hubs.

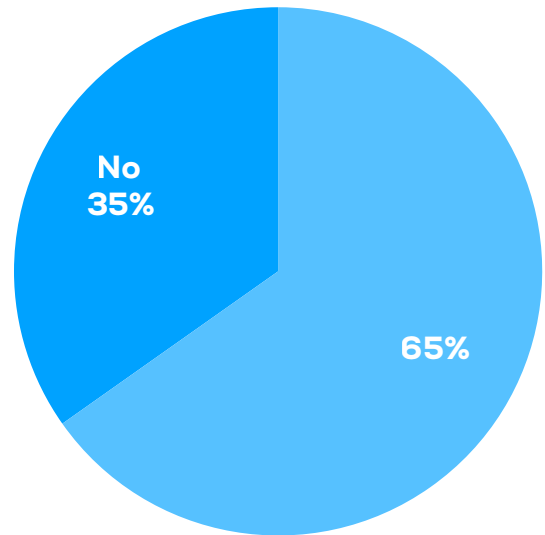
EV owners have plenty of suggestions for how to boost EV adoption in the city, with once again, a loud message of “more chargers”, alongside calls from some for more parking-based benefits.

On-street Chargers

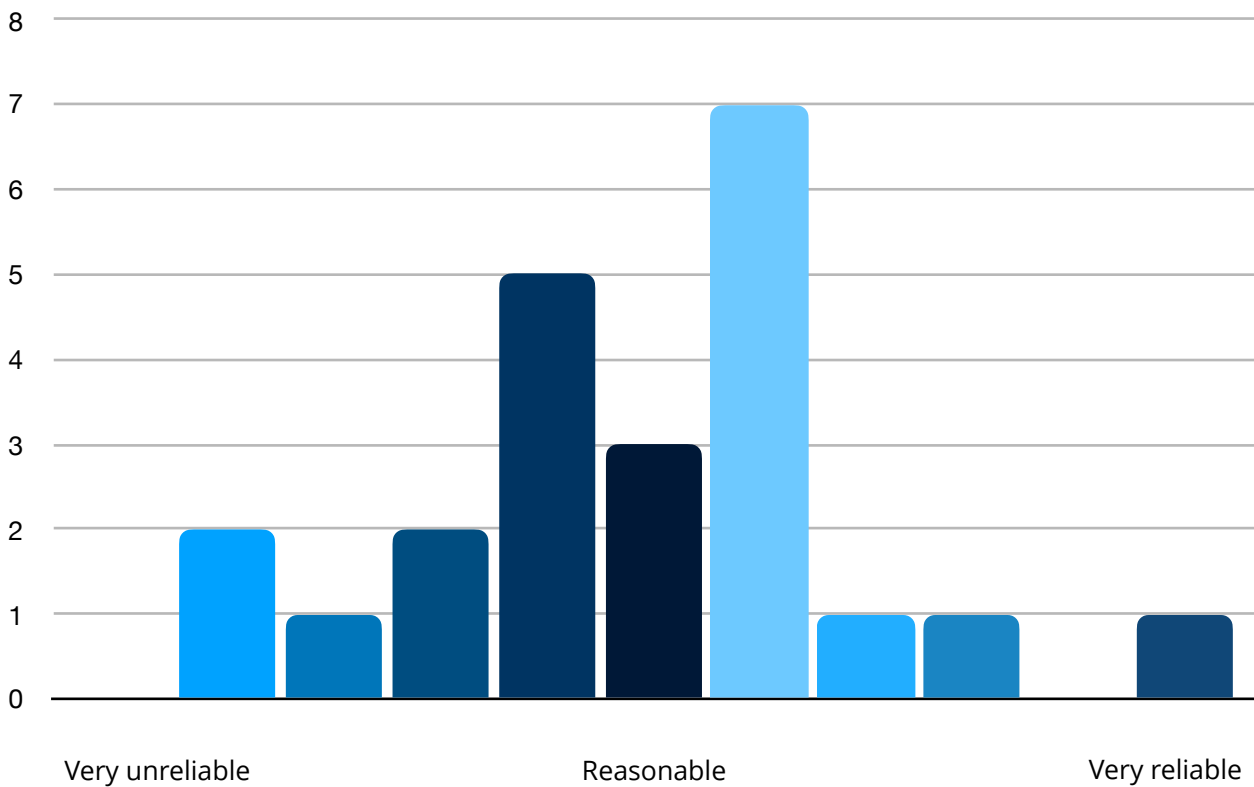
Have you ever used Brighton's on-street chargers?



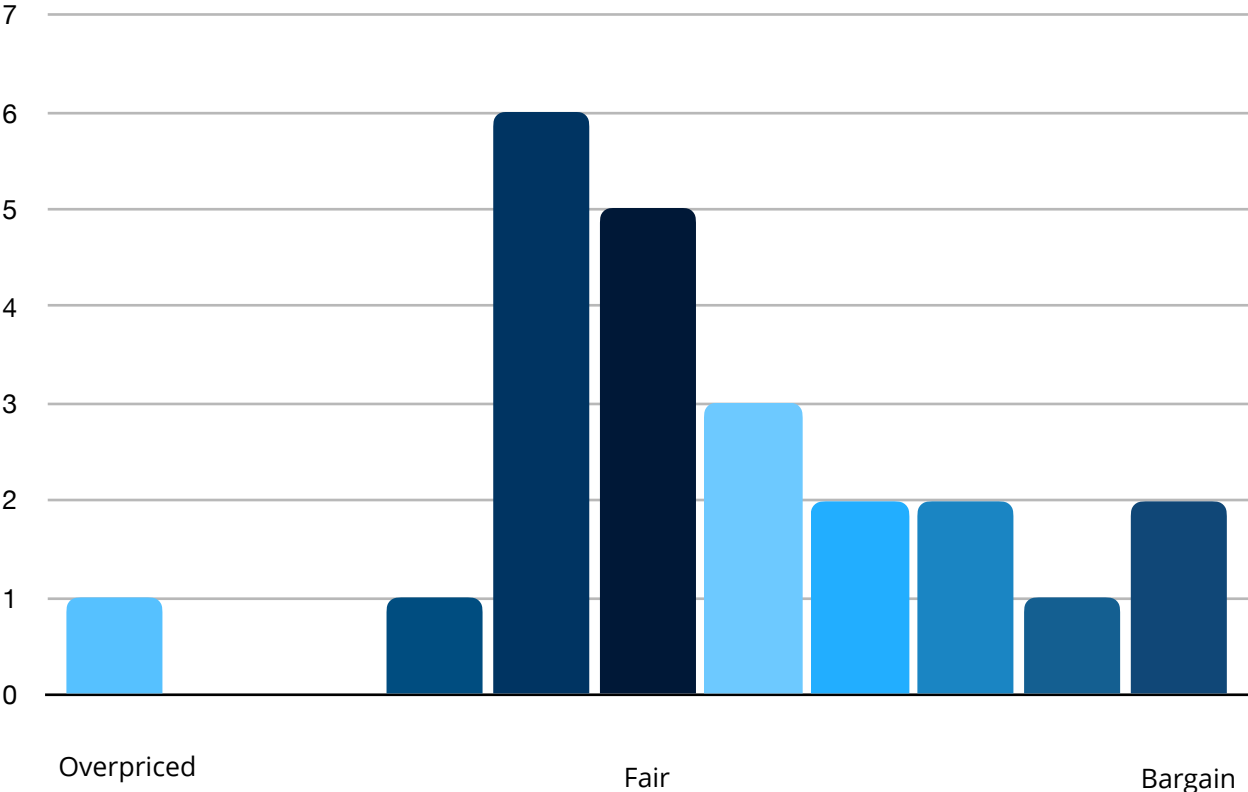
Would you recommend the on-street chargers?



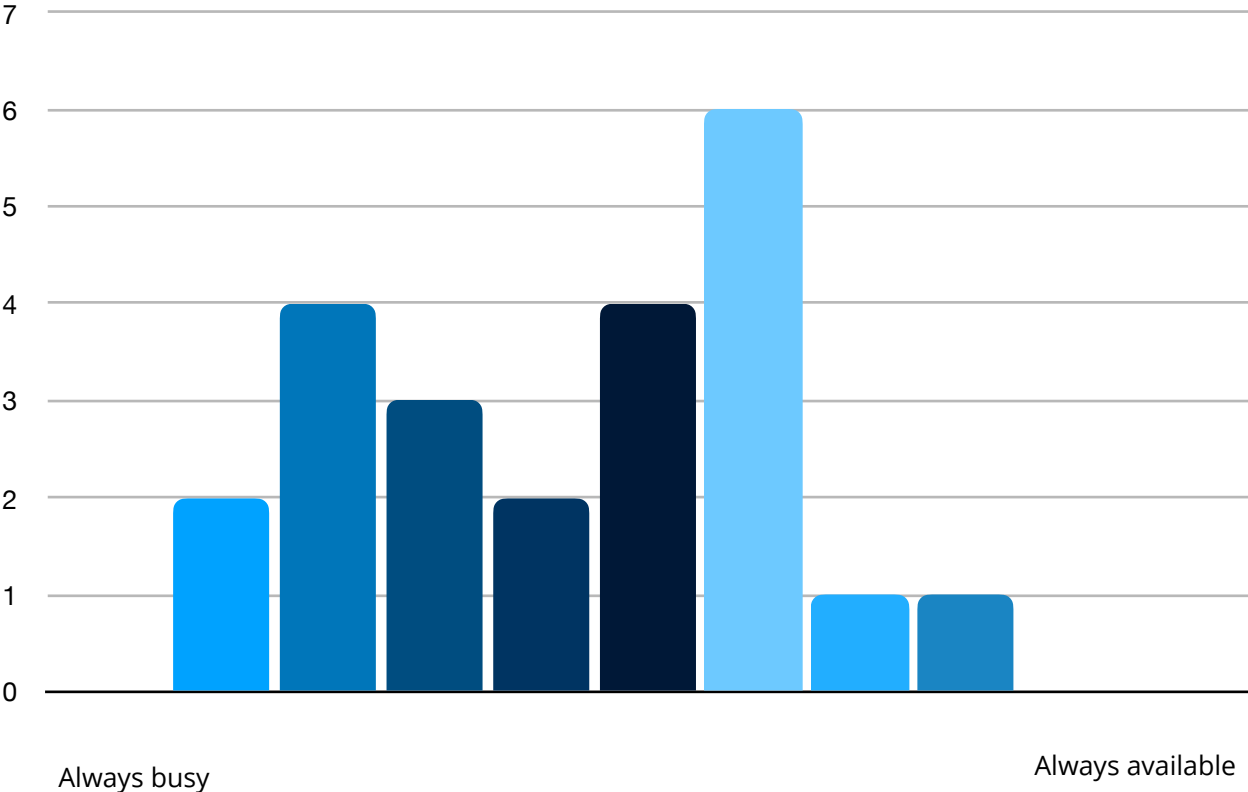
How reliable have you found the on-street chargers to be?



What do you think of the pricing for using the on-street chargers?



How often are the on-street chargers available to use?



Written feedback:

On-street Chargers

"Vehicles overstaying is a huge problem along with bays being blocked by ICE. The new chargers in Bernard place and Islingword Rd need up to date signage."

"My car uses the 13amp domestic plug and so I can no longer use the chargers. The cost to upgrade my cable is prohibitively expensive."

"You can't rely on the charges in Brighton to either be free or working. You feel very lucky if you manage to get the Bartholomews square location. There needs to be more locations!"

"On street chargers are fine for short stays, but there needs to be more available in the area as i've seen drivers waiting around for owners to return to their vehicles to charge their car (this example is in the Lanes by the Town Hall) ."

"Always busy. Often with cars that are plugged in and not charging."

"There often not working at the sea front (Madeira Drive) and not at all at the pavilion car park at B&Q or occupied by electric vehicles which only use them for free parking and its very difficult to speak with someone from the council with all issues concerning charging. Sorry to have to say this as the staff are very nice when you can get hold of them."

"The charge units in town are OK, and I think the free parking is a great incentive. However because there are so few charge units it doesn't take long for them to all be busy at peak times. Because of this I think there should be more chargers in town, there just need to be more of them. There have also been frequent problems which take ages to resolve. The lamp post chargers are good, but we need new 7kW chargers for better charging over shorter periods. If I use a 3kW lamp post charger then I need to be there for 4 or more hours for any significant amount of charge. Not a problem for people who can charge at home but not everyone can."

Written feedback: On-street Chargers cont.

"More please."

"The chargers, most notably the one at the pier and the one at Bartholomews are both unreliable with Renault Zoes, this has been the case for a long, long time. If I use them they do not charge and they do not release the cable, such that I need to phone the provider to get them to release my car remotely. The charger at the foot of Ditching Road is often iced. I have not used the other cars. I would like to move away from membership schemes and monthly tariffs and just be able to use any charger and am prepared to pay a fair commercial rate."

"I used to use them when we had an electronic key. Since they have changed ownership I have not bothered as there are too many different companies with different schemes. Lets just change to card payment."

"I usually use the one next to the pier but it is often busy and when you finish charging it is very slow to disconnect from the car."

"On street chargers are great as they come with free 3 hours parking. Although there aren't enough for Brighton and nothing in Hove at all. There also seems to be the occasional outage which seems to be dealt with eventually but can take quite some time."

"There are not enough of them. I live in Victoria Rd BN1 and there are none close to my house."

"Feels like a primitive setup. Very unreliable, often not working."

"One specific issue with charger at Withdean woods, whilst charging it narrows the road. Would be ideal to have restricted parking opposite three bays where vans are left for several weeks nor used. Council say they cannot afford to place yellow lines whereas it is making visibility dangerous."

Written feedback: On-street Chargers cont.

"It is frustrating when the charger drops its power output by half when there are 2 cars charging. Also, both the chargers that I regularly use in Brighton (the level and Bartholomews) have been broken for a couple of weeks at a time in the past making it hard for me to charge. Either one or both of the charging points has been broken."

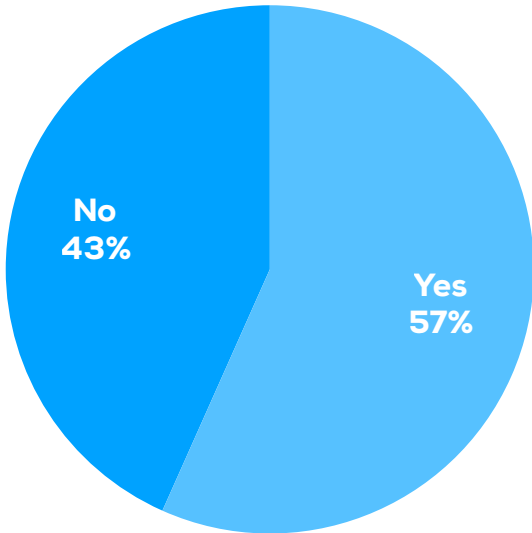
"Parking is already very difficult in Brighton and if you cannot park and charge then electric cars are not viable for Brighton as an eco destination. Much better to have a couple of locations with lots of rapid chargers. Then people will charge up and then park anywhere in the city that has parking. This will be easier to service than distributed infrastructure. You can also do this at very little cost and just offer the land to multiple suppliers who will compete and offer their equipment and maintain for free. Eg chargemaster, instavolt etc.. "

"On street are fantastic when they work and available. Not enough in total. Also there is not enough rapid charging."

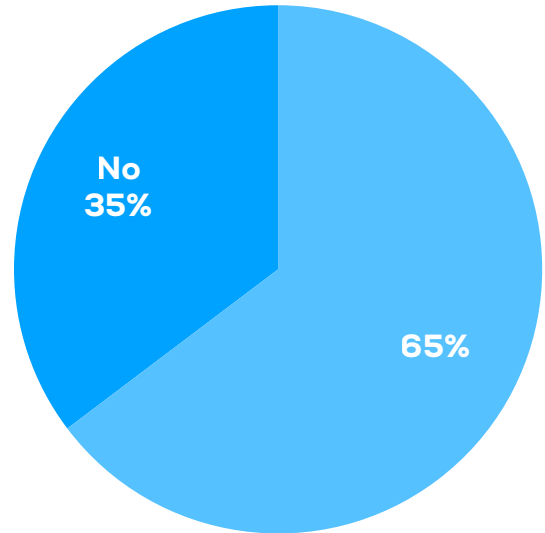
"Paying to park makes it too expensive so I don't use those. Others are often in use. It's hard to get a full charge in 3 hrs. More are needed in my area."

Council Car Park Chargers

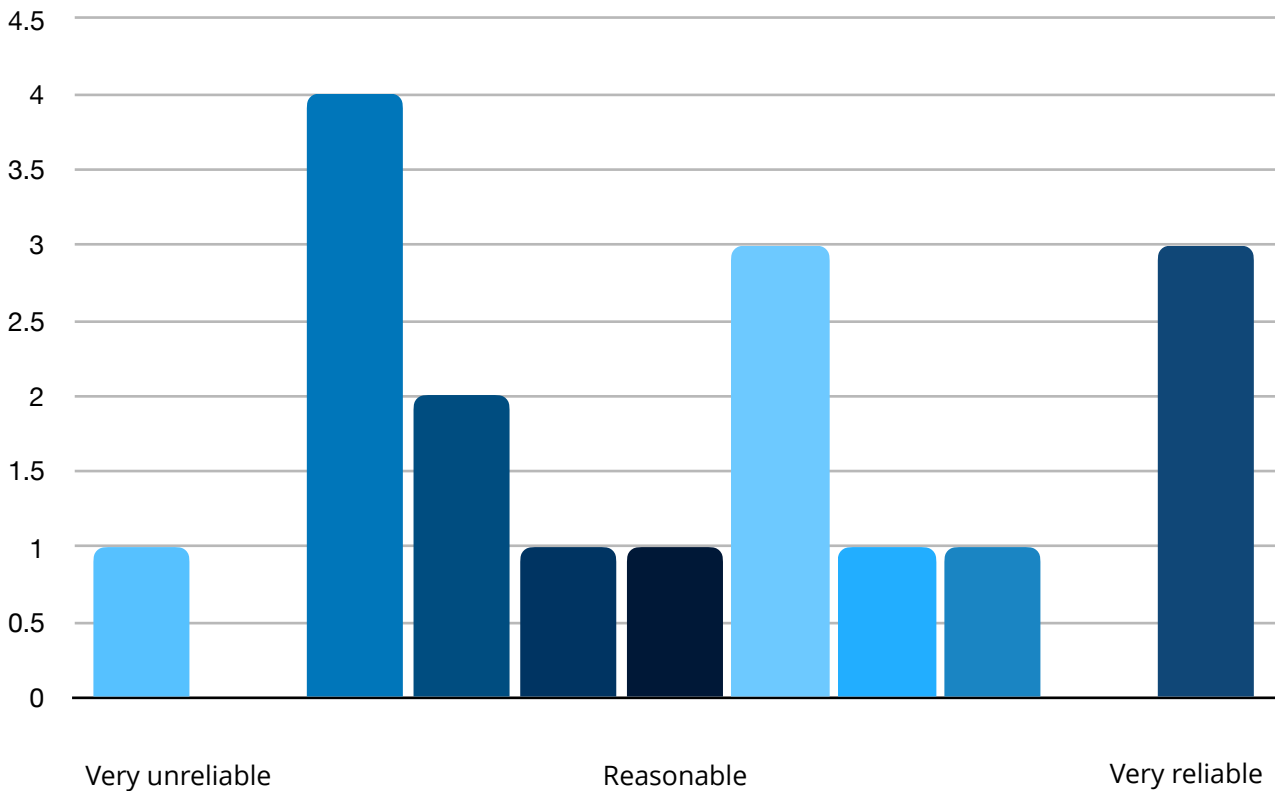
Have you ever used chargers at Brighton's Council-run car parks?



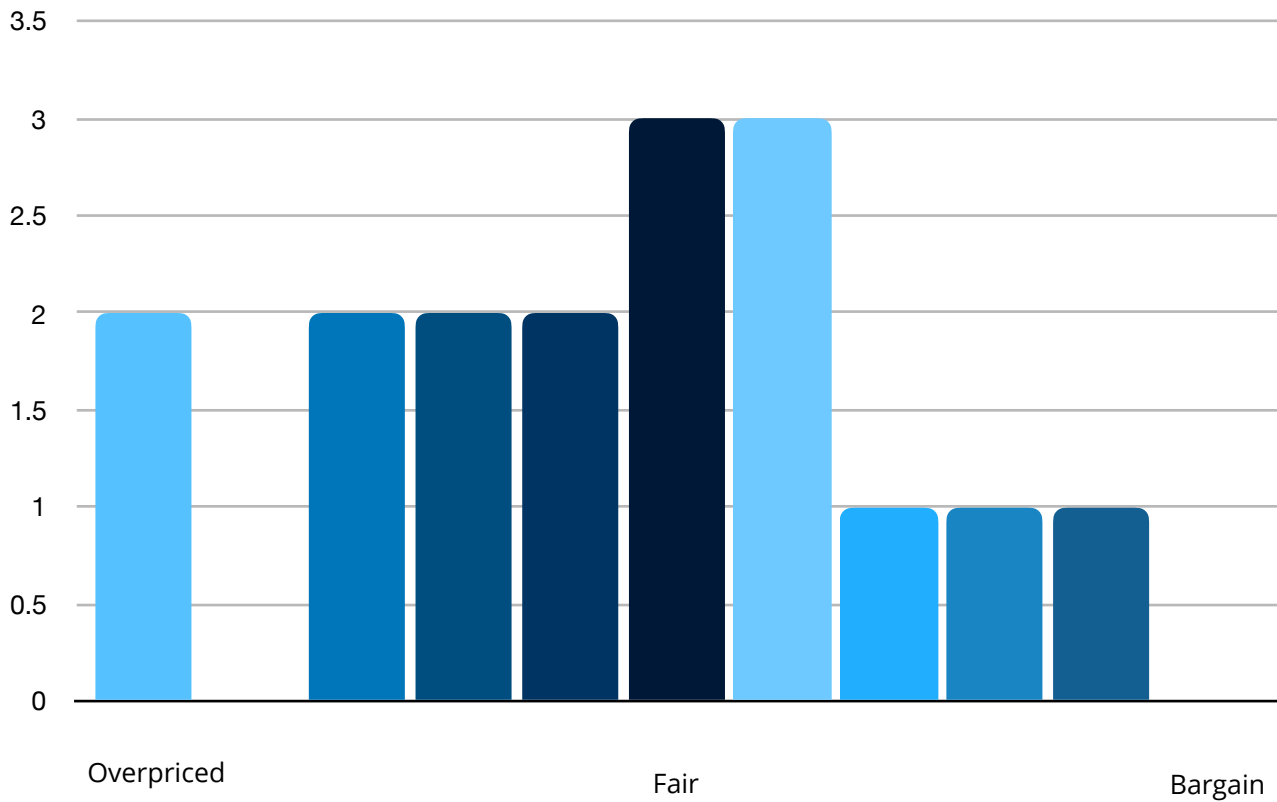
Would you recommend the chargers at Brighton's Council-run car parks?



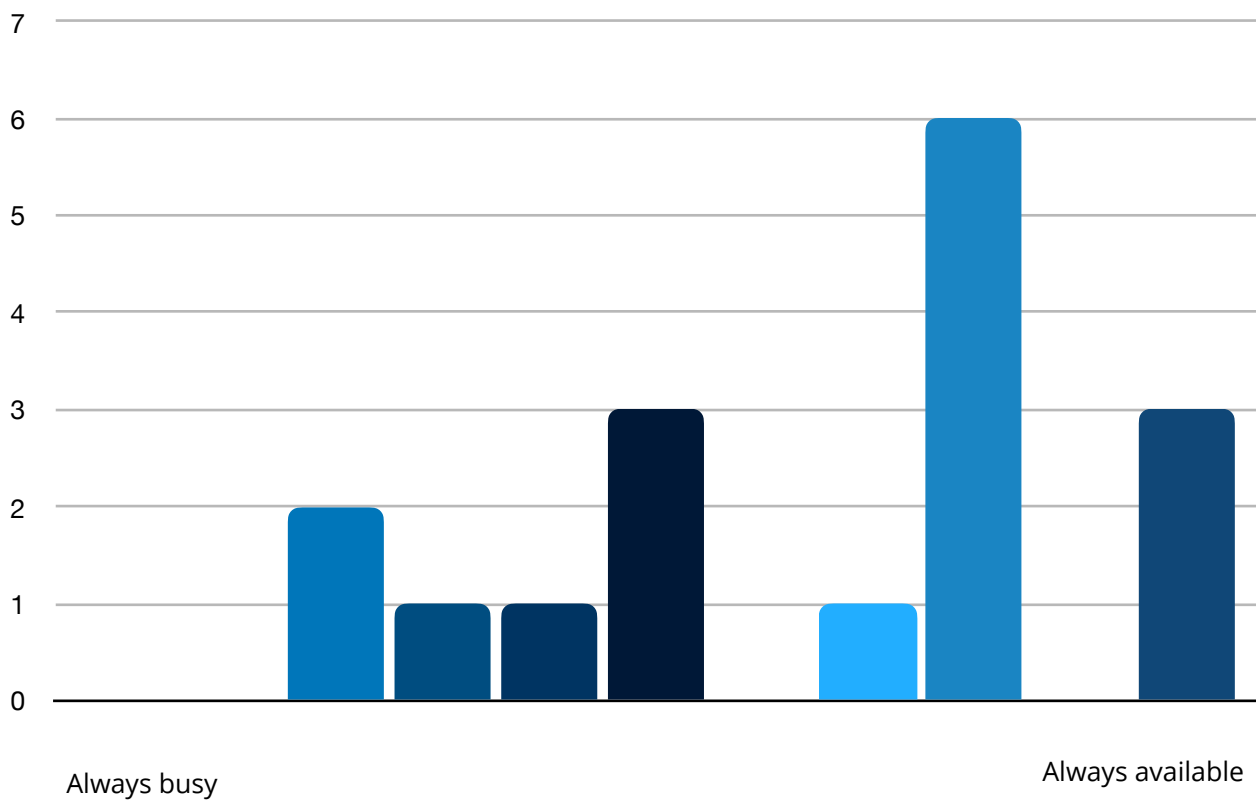
How reliable have you found the chargers in the car parks to be?



What do you think of the pricing for using the car park chargers?



How often are the car park chargers available to use?



Written feedback:

Council Car Park Chargers

"Need LOADS more. 4/4 in use most week days proves it's not enough. Shows how many people drive into Brighton from outside and need chargers."

"There have been occasions when the chargers aren't working. This is annoying as you have already paid for the parking but don't get the charge!"

"London road car park chargers were out of service recently, but the ZapMap app said they were available. It made for a very awkward encounter where I had very little electric left and had to drive extremely carefully to Falmer to use the rapid charger."

"The London road Car park in Brighton has a great set of chargers that would be perfect for commuters but they have not worked since sometime in July. CYC tell me they are still trying to get access to sort them out from the council but have not been able to get in to fix them."

"It was difficult to find the North Street ones and whilst their location makes it harder for them to be iced there was no signage to say it was for charging only. You have to remember that Icers have very few brain cells so need lots of help."

"Security of my car is a concern in many locations. I purposely avoid a number of the locations for this concern only. "

"I've given a C for reliability as they used to be really reliable but have recently gone downhill. Hardly any of the CYC/Polar charge points are working anymore. Also I don't mind paying for the parking but a little discount for low emission vehicles would be nice although possibly tricky to implement."

"They are always ICED so most of the time we can't park there. And nothing gets done about it!"

Written feedback: Council Car Park Chargers cont.

"Insufficient signage for location of charging bays. Ramps and entrances poorly designed and unsuited for larger EV like Tesla. Real danger of curbed wheels. "

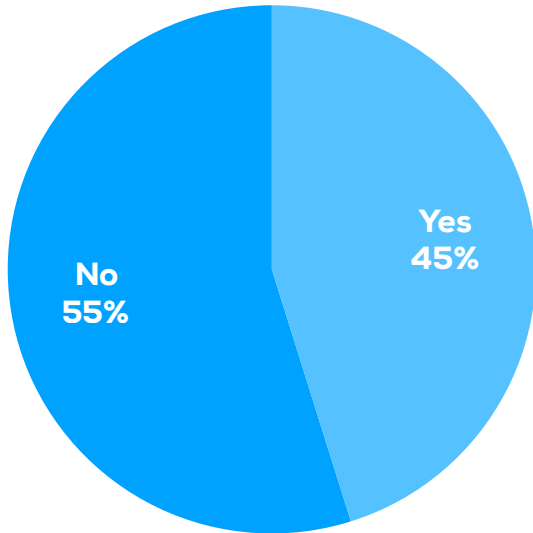
"The chargers on London Road car park don't have a good internet connection so (often in poor weather) they can't always connect online to authenticate via the app or RFID card - which means sometimes they don't work. But you never know this until you drive in the car park and spend minutes faffing with the app, after which point you have to pay for parking. Charging has sometimes been the only reason I've gone there, when Ditchling Rd is out. I've always found this strange because the car park has a credit/debit card payment engine, which means there is a stable internet connection for the car park ticket machine but not for the chargers. The Trafalgar St car park chargers are very often ICE'd which is always frustrating. Generally the car park chargers are more available so I'd love to see some discount for parking EVs - this would offer a small incentive whilst helping to ensure the infrastructure is used more. Would be good to nudge NCP and others to install more chargers. Churchill Sq car park definitely needs chargers! Many need better signage."

"The charge points in the car parks are always available. However, it is SO EXPENSIVE to park in the car parks (especially the NCP ones) that I would only recommend people use them if they are desperate to charge."

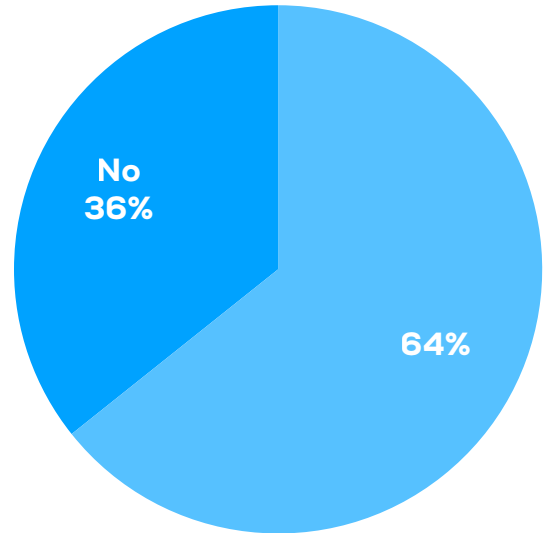
"I only used one once, as a resident the parking cost is prohibitive. Cheaper parking for charging EVs would be a good idea. Not hybrids as they tend to use the space for free parking"

Withdean Rapid Charger

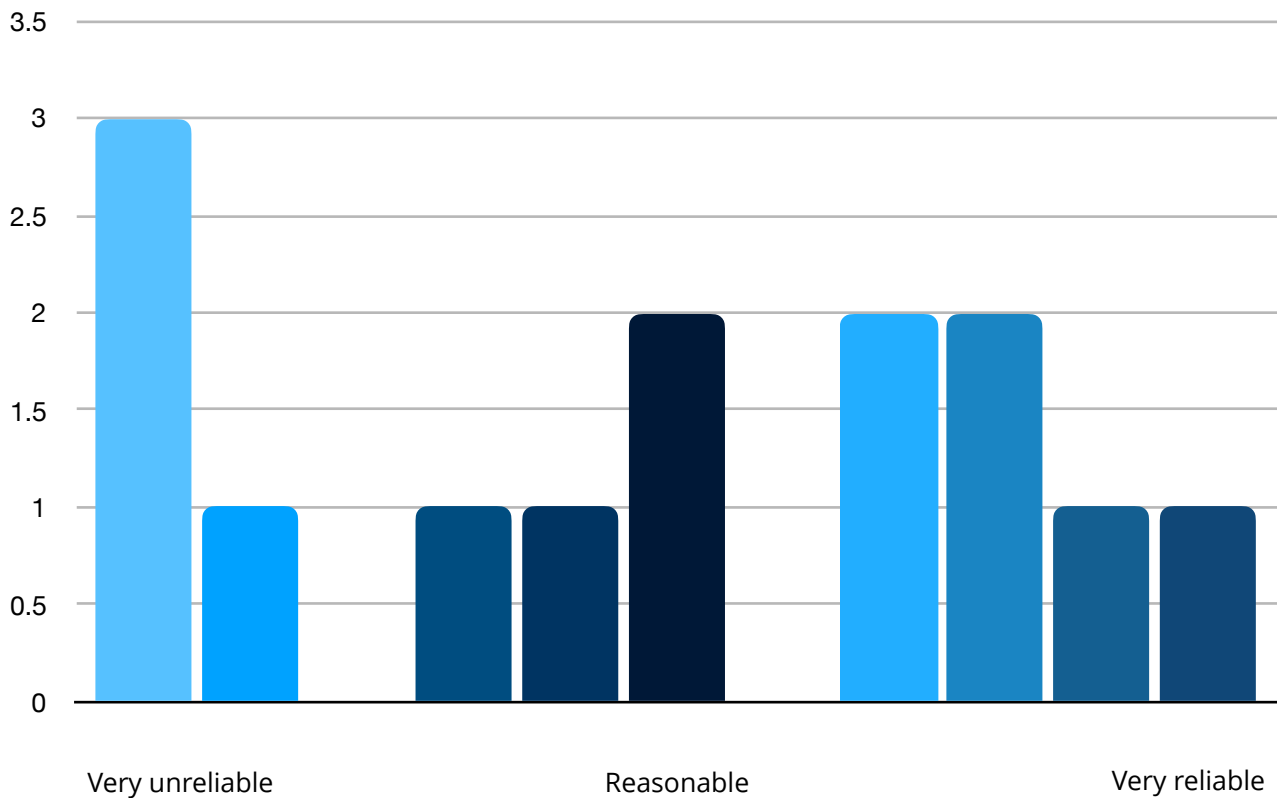
Have you ever used the Rapid Charger at Withdean Leisure Centre?



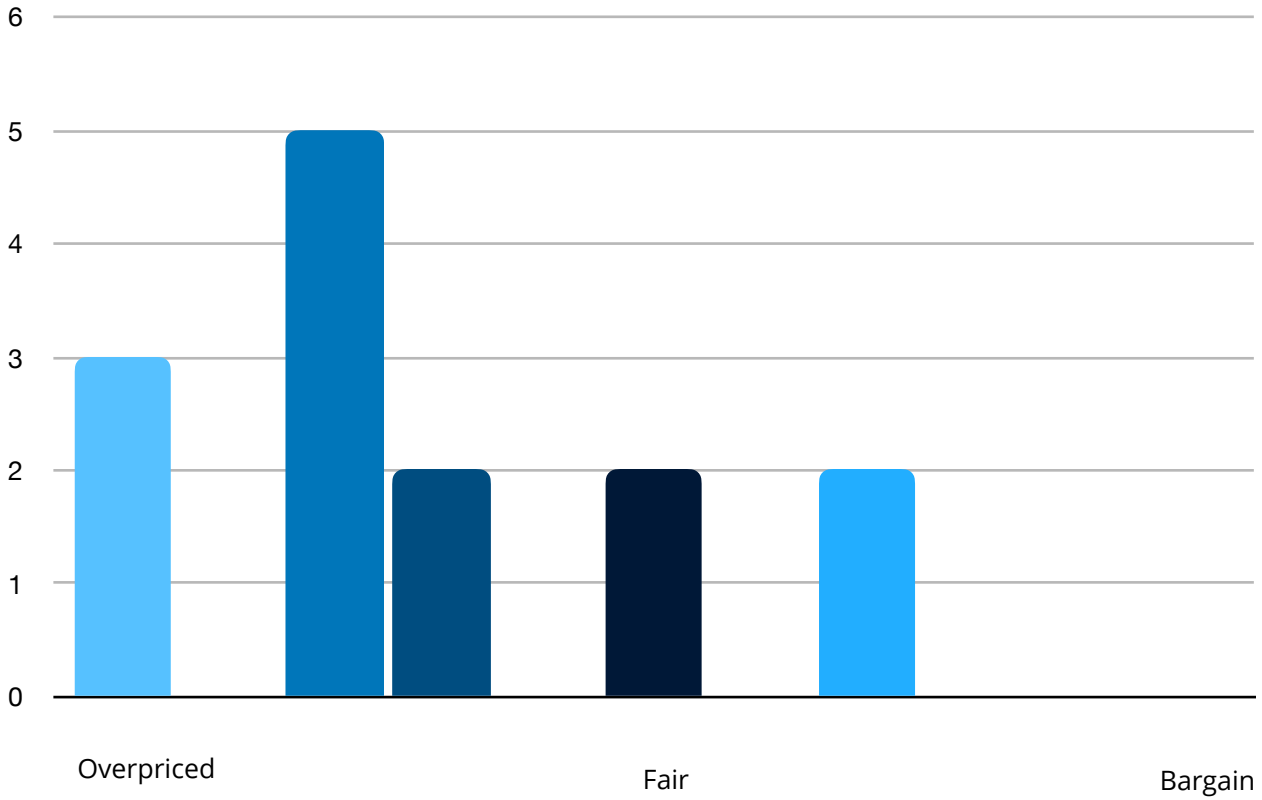
Would you recommend the Rapid Charger at Withdean Leisure Centre?



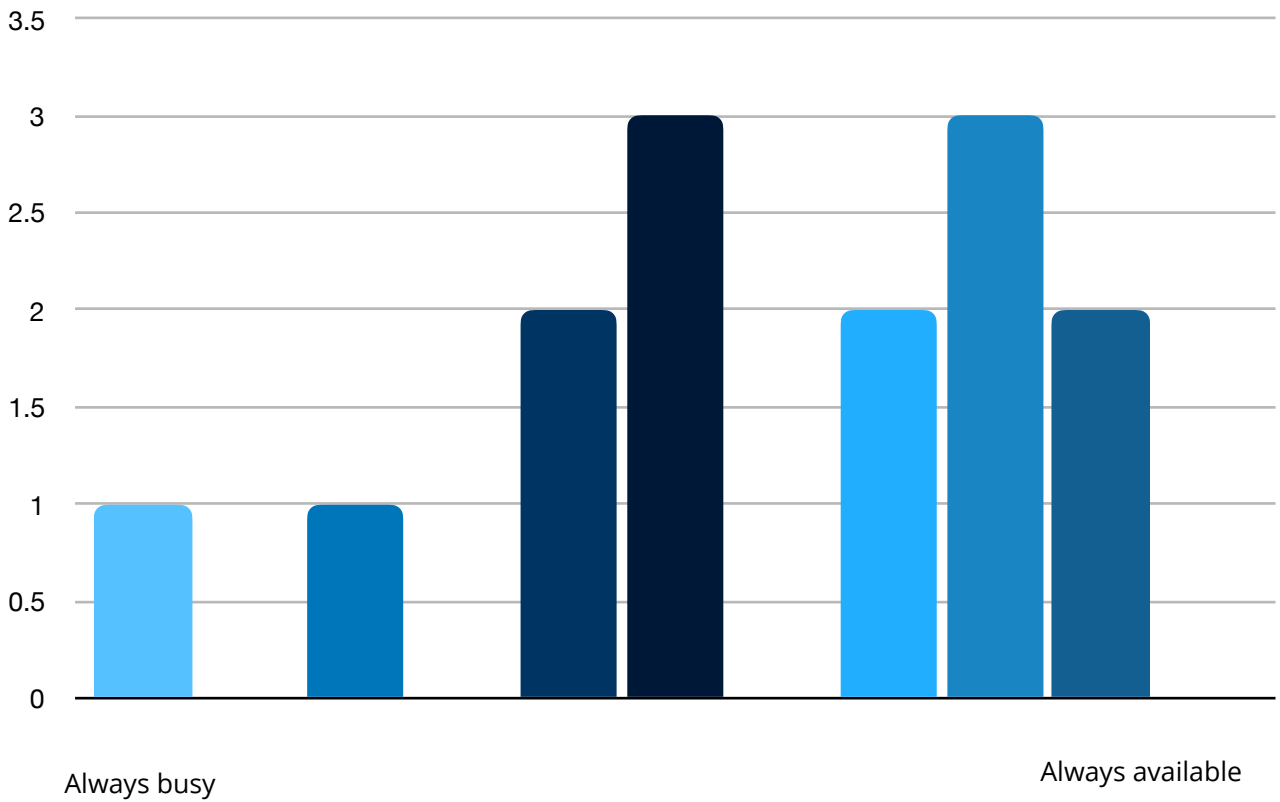
How reliable have you found the rapid charger to be?



What do you think of the pricing for using the rapid charger?



How often is the rapid charger available to use?



Written feedback:

Withdean Rapid Charger

"Cars left plugged in [after session had expired] for long periods."

"There is only one charger, so if you are there at the same time someone is charging its very annoying. There needs to be more rapid chargers."

"Brighton needs a lot more rapid chargers available and within the town centre."

"The pricing was recently reviewed and is much better than what it was previously. However it has been offline for long periods in the past. This is enraging as it is the only rapid in the city and as an expensive piece of kit, it's criminal to have it sat there awaiting repair for weeks on end. The location is OK but I'd prefer to have one in town."

"Not a great location, also only a single bay."

"Too expensive."

"We definitely need more rapid chargers around Brighton and hove and they need to be cheaper this one is very over priced."

"We've only tried to use it once and it was out of order. They suggested we go to the next nearest one in Hastings which wasn't very helpful! But it is a good location when it works."

"Only one rapid for the city is embarrassing for a city our size and its supposed eco credentials. The single bay also attracts people charging slowly all day as its close to the centre entrance. Should remove the AC adapter from being able to slow charge to prevent hogging and limit stay to 1 hour max."

"Usually broken. Too bloody expensive. When I enquired about who was responsible for setting pricing I was met with evasiveness from multiple departments."

Written feedback: Withdean Rapid Charger cont.

"Great charging point. Mostly available and there it's an easy place to entertain the family whilst waiting for the charge to complete."

"The charge points in the car parks are always available. However, it is SO EXPENSIVE to park in the car parks (especially the NCP ones) that I would only recommend people use them if they are desperate to charge."

"Often not working and as it's the only rapid you're screwed if you want a quick charge if it's not working."

Written feedback:

Where would you like to see more chargers installed in Brighton & Hove?

"Every sub district of Brighton and Hove should have at least one fast 7kw charger."

"POLAR fastcharge units at intervals along the seafront for accessibility. Ultracharge unit at central location near shops for short duration rapid charging."

"In the car parks, I believe EV cars should get priority parking similar to family parking bays and disabled bays."

"More in car parks and dotted around the central city for visitors. Need more rapid chargers. Look at Bournemouth for inspiration."

"Local streets. In the Netherlands every residential area has chargers installed. For example, I have noticed increasing numbers of hybrid cars in Coldean, my neighbourhood. The centre of Brighton should have more charging points and Hove is very poorly served."

"Hanover [top of the hill please]."

"Brighton Marina as you are more likely to spend longer there."

"There are no charging facilities in Hove. We desperately need some charging facilities here."

"All car parks (RCP, Churchill Square, NCP). The parking also needs to be free or reduced as you are paying for the energy on top of parking costs (which are all expensive!), which is a counter incentive for people to use EV vehicles in the city. A good example is Worthing High St. multi story car park. Parking is free if you charge your car and there is no time limit for the bays."

Where would you like to see more chargers installed in Brighton & Hove?

"More chargers with dedicated spaces on the sea front. Need to show cars charging as a normal thing and the foot traffic past those spaces would be great."

"At convenient locations near electrical substations - not in expensive car parks or expensive Rapid Charger at Withdean!"

"Anywhere there's free parking and something to do - so, ideally - supermarkets. Also, council properties with parking available should set an example. Rapid hubs in town and on coastal roads in to Brighton. Near Saltdean Lido would be excellent, for example."

"As a resident with my own charger I do not need to charge in Brighton. I charge in other towns. When I charge in other towns a place where one can have a snack and a drink, or can wander around, such as a park or a shopping centre are preferable."

"More rapid chargers, and a Tesla supercharger location would really help! "

"Saltdean."

"Central Brighton but they MUST be DC fast chargers."

"All along the sea front from Rottingdean to Shoreham would be nice."

"Larger car parks with free parking."

"Hove, around church street, Brighton north lanes."

"Hove area, near train station, supermarket car parks, South Downs car parks, along the seafront and other tourist attractions."

Where would you like to see more chargers installed in Brighton & Hove?

"Victoria Road, BN1 and Seven Dials as there are none around here."

"I have just been to the new lamppost chargers and they are ALL iced and no signpost saying they can't park here. What is the point?"

"Supermarkets - so I can charge when shopping. On street so more people can go electric - although I normally charge at home. Also more in the council cars parks, such as the Churchill Square one."

"Preston Park, lots of chargers at a Park and ride. Clusters of rapids sourced for free from competing firms maybe at Withdean and other locations like Shoreham Airport and maybe the marina."

"Around Upper part of Dyke Rd area as Withdean chargers fairly busy."

"Anywhere half central."

"The centre of Hanover and Albion Hill area, Queens Park, 5 ways, Portland Road, Hove Lawns, Brighton hospital, Madeira Drive near Yellow Wave cafe. I think it'd be useful to have chargers in all these areas as they are frequented by lots of families. They have cafes and play parks located nearby which are essential for entertaining children whilst charging."

"Around parks. Residential areas. Industrial estates."

Written feedback:

What do you think would help ensure more people adopt electric vehicles in Brighton & Hove?

"Access to more chargers, free parking in all residential areas, car parks, and all pay and display bays."

*"Simplicity of use (no permits required). Greater number of chargepoints."
"Priority parking bays."*

"More charging points that are also reliable."

"More charging bays/lamp post chargers."

"Making more availability of charge points for visitors."

"More charging bays but they must be clearly marked and penalties for non EV parking."

"More charging points. Facilities to charge on your own street. Each parking zone needs a charging facility with designated parking bay at the very minimum."

"Free or cheap(er) parking while charging your car."

"Lamp post chargers on every road and multiple charge points in multi stories. Dedicated rapid charging stations that are clearly marked for rapid charging."

"Very strict rules and assistance to stop icing or abuse by EV drivers, parking without charging."

"More chargers."

What do you think would help ensure more people adopt electric vehicles in Brighton & Hove?

"We need more incentives whilst numbers are growing: free parking for evs in council car parks (that have chargers). A congestion charge would help the city and in that case, ev exemption would be a good incentive. Free permits for zero emissions vehicles (I don't understand how a small petrol car receives the same discount as a zero emissions vehicle for parking permits. The pricing is outdated). More promotion of the incentives. Higher charges for most polluting vehicles."

"More chargers preferably 22KW but no less than 7KW and free (or at least for the forceable future)to encourage people to spend a lot more money to buy electric cars and everyone wants cleaner cars and other vehicles (its in everyones best interests)."

"Marketing that reassures them about range anxiety and making them believe that recharging is accessible and easy."

"More chargers, like, literally everywhere!"

"More charging infrastructure, use of bus lanes."

"More DC fast chargers. Simpler way to use EVSEs (card payment). Use of Bus lanes."

"A congestion charge."

"Time limits and special points for taxis."

"More chargers, especially in residential areas as not many people have off street parking."

"Many more onstreet, reliable and affordable charge points as the majority of households don't have access to their own off street parking."

"More charging points and dedicated spaces and street light charging as well."

What do you think would help ensure more people adopt electric vehicles in Brighton & Hove?

"Make sure they are not iced and put them everywhere! Definitely on wish road hove as there is so many EVs and PHEVS alone here because of the park."

"On street chargers and maybe a rapid hub (possibly at Withdean) like they are putting in at Dundee and Milton Keynes. Just more information to make sure people know how easy it is to own one and how great they are to drive."

"Rapids away from congested areas I believe is the key rather than trailing cables all over the city."

"Increased lamppost charging."

"Showing that it's a practical option by a supportive charging network."

"The location of the chargers need to be near to places that people can spend a substantial amount of time in whilst they wait for a charge. Super markets, play parks, cafes, soft plays etc."

"More charge points. Schemes for people without off-street parking."

Written feedback:

Anything else you'd like to add?

"At least one more rapid charger. Ideally the polar ultra chargers (which as part of the chargemaster group shouldn't pose a problem). Polar ultracharge offers the cheapest (9p a unit for members) most reliable and quickest charge."

"Make sure that visitors can use all charge points. They should all support contactless payment."

"Education for people and enforcement of charging spaces will go a long way to improving and accelerating the uptake of EVs."

"Encourage private companies to do more, for example 5 chargers at Asda in the Marina but most of the time lced. Asda say they cannot police them."

"Bring in some one who will be able to be contacted easily that can answer all the questions relating to the issues of charging."

"Please please add proper sign posts saying not to park here because there will be no point of having them!"

"Great to see a group like this. Thanks for all your work!"

"We should be assisting Tesla find a suitable location. If we don't then they may well find another council in the south more willing to help and Brighton will lost our stamp on the eco map!"

"Forum of EV users with council. This to be promoted away from Facebook."

"Power should be renewable. More solar car charging schemes could be built in car parks, supermarkets and industrial estates."

Anything else you'd like to add?

"Things are gradually getting better. We've been electric for 2 years now and have witnessed the changes with much gratitude. However, to get more pessimistic people to adopt electric cars it HAS to be easier to charge. More chargers are needed in more areas. There should be a minimum of 4 in each location. If there are only 2 they will never be free and it will put people off."

Survey results data

The survey was conducted online using survey tool TypeForm and the raw data can be downloaded at (CSV format):

<https://electricbrighton.com/assets/images/general/docs/2018-EV-Owners-Survey.csv>

An online version of the graphics in this report are available at Typeform:

<https://electricbrighton.typeform.com/report/MudpoV/GpiH1RaEq13gdy5>