

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL/CROSS RIVER PARTNERSHIP PRESS RELEASE

**Embargoed 00.01hrs 23/2/10
BOOST TO ELECTRIC CARS**

London's bid to become one of the leading centres for electric car travel has been given a major boost through URBACT II, a European exchange and learning programme that enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges which will see the capital share expertise with other European cities, in a major new project starting today (Tues 23 Feb).

Representatives from ten cities, including Stockholm, Frankfurt and Madrid, will launch a new partnership at a conference in central London today, aimed at finding ways to encourage more motorists to ditch their petrol and diesel in favour of cleaner, greener alternatives.

Westminster City Council pioneered the use of free on-street charging points in central London in 2006 with the backing of Transport for London and the Energy Saving Trust, and has more than any other part of the country. It currently has 16 on-street points, with an additional 48 (check) in its car parks.

Cllr Brian Connell, Westminster's cabinet member for economic development, said: "We need to make electric cars, vans and motorbikes an easy choice. If we're to really achieve a revolution in green travel and meet the Mayor of London's own target of 25,000 charging points by 2015, we need to find ways to make installing them faster, cheaper and simpler.

"By sharing knowledge and best practice with other major European cities we can ensure we are at the forefront of technological developments so that we offer a clean, green and economical alternative to petrol and diesel."

The Mayor of London has stated that he wants to have 100,000 electric vehicles on the capital's streets, with 25,000 charging spaces by 2015.

The conference, organised by the Cross River Partnership which secured EU funding for the scheme EVUE (Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe), is being held in Westminster and also includes delegates from Zografou (GK), Lisbon, Krakow, Oslo, Beja (PT) & Suceava (RO)

The Cross River Partnership is made up of public and private organisations across four local authorities on both sides of the river - Westminster, City of London, Southwark and Lambeth.

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Notes to Editors:

About the Cross River Partnership

Cross River Partnership, an alliance of 14 partners, created to make the link between wealth and prosperity in central London and deprived areas and to make the river less of a physical and social barrier. It offers those living in less prosperous areas access to the jobs and opportunities offered by a world-class city and supports the geographical and economic expansion of the capital south of the river.

Formed in 1995, it brings together key players on both sides of the river, including public and private organisations and the four central London local authorities - to the north Westminster City Council and City of London and, to the south, the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth.