



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 6 JUNE 2024**

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (EVCS), and to seek comments on the draft Strategy and the approach to its development prior to consideration by the Cabinet in September 2024.
2. A draft version of the EVCS is attached for comment, as Appendix A, to this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. In March 2011, the Council adopted its Local Transport Plan 2011-26 (LTP3). The Plan noted that significant Government and industry interventions would be needed to stimulate both supply and demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) and that the lack of distribution and re-fuelling infrastructure was also a major obstacle to the market development of alternative fuel powered vehicles. These technologies are needed to achieve a significant shift away from non-renewable fuelled vehicles with their attendant air quality issues.
4. The County Council declared a climate emergency on 15 May 2019 with unanimous cross-party support. The declaration committed the Council to achieving carbon neutrality for its own emissions by 2030 and to working with others to urge the Government to support delivery of this commitment.
5. In May 2022, the County Council approved its updated Strategic Plan (2022-26), which sets out the Council's long-term vision and priorities. The Plan highlighted Leicestershire's below average rates of EV ownership and outlined actions, including working with partners, to enable and encourage EV usage, such as by expanding chargepoint infrastructure. Success is to be measured by the rate of EV ownership.
6. In December 2022, the County Council approved the Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan. This outlines the Council's approach to achieving net zero as an organisation by 2030 and across Leicestershire by 2045. It

describes the pathway to net zero as challenging but feasible, requiring a full roll out of EVs and a reduction in vehicle mileage across the County. The plan aims to support the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles, including electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles. The Net Zero Action Plan includes:

- a) Developing a strategy for increasing the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles;
 - b) Developing and adopting a policy to support the uptake of EVs and highway planning policy to promote the deployment of charging infrastructure.
7. In November 2023, the Cabinet considered the Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2023. It highlighted that EV ownership in Leicestershire had increased by 61% since 2021/22 and advised that following a successful joint bid with Midlands Connect, the Council would work with four other local authorities to deliver 349 EV charging sockets across the Midlands, including up to 100 charging sockets across Leicestershire.
 8. In February 2024, the Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the Council's proposed 2024/25 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In light of the Council's financial position, the proposal to revise the Council's net zero targets for its own operations, from 2030 to 2035, and for the wider County, from 2045 to 2050, was approved.
 9. In March 2024, the Cabinet considered the Environment and Transport 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme. The Cabinet was advised that this included work on the development of an EV strategy for Leicestershire.

Background

10. With the sales of new petrol and diesel cars set to end in the UK from 2035, the uptake of EVs is forecast to rapidly increase over the next decade.
11. As of the end of 2023, there are now approximately a million fully electric cars on UK roads and a further 600,000 plug-in hybrids. This compares with just over 10 years ago when there were around 5,000 electric vehicles registered.
12. Modelling suggests that in Leicestershire up to one in four registered cars in 2030 could be electric, and a minimum of 3,200 public chargepoints will be required. Currently, there are 470 (as of March 2024, as shown on Zapmap's national chargepoint map (<https://www.zap-map.com/live/>)).
13. At present, most of the UK's charging demand is met through home charging (on private driveways/garages or allocated off-street spaces), however, publicly accessible charging infrastructure is now becoming increasingly necessary to enable wider EV uptake, particularly for those where home charging is not possible.

14. Whilst the delivery of EV infrastructure is not a statutory duty for local authorities, the Government expects upper tier local authorities to play an important role in addressing the gaps in provision currently being provided by the private sector. This includes adapting public assets, such as the highway, to deploy public chargepoints, ensuring that a network of public chargers is available for residents, commuters, visitors, businesses and fleet operators in its area.
15. The Government is, therefore, strongly encouraging all upper tier local authorities to develop local EV chargepoint strategies by the end of 2024/25, to underpin the roll out of public chargepoints and their ongoing management.
16. Securing Government funding will be essential and having a strategy in place will be a key requirement to access and secure current and future Government EV funding streams.
17. Having a strategy in place will also support delivery of the Council's wider plans, policies, and actions. The Net Zero Leicestershire Action Plan for example contains several actions around supporting low-carbon alternatives to petrol/diesel engines. It will also be a key requirement for the Council's emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

Funding

18. In March 2022, the Government published a national EV Infrastructure Strategy and announced a new £396m Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.
19. The LEVI fund is aimed at:
 - a) Supporting local authorities in England to work with the chargepoint industry to deliver large scale public EV chargepoint infrastructure projects.
 - b) Deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street, overnight charging infrastructure across England (which will have less strain on the grid and attract relatively cheaper user tariffs than rapid/ultrarapid chargers).
 - c) Mainly residents who have limited or no off-street parking and need to charge their EV.
20. The funding is being managed by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and is available to all upper tier local authorities in England. It consists of two funding streams:
 - a) Capital funding (£353m) for public EV charging infrastructure; and
 - b) Capability (revenue) funding (£43m) for officer resource towards project delivery and development of EV infrastructure strategies.

LEVI Capital Funding - Pilot Project

21. The LEVI capital funding was initially launched as a £10m 'Pilot' through a competitive bidding process.

22. In August 2022, the Council, working with Midlands Connect and four other local authorities (Lincolnshire County Council, Herefordshire County Council, Rutland Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council), successfully secured £1m of LEVI Pilot funding towards the delivery of an initial 350 chargepoints across the Midlands.
23. Of the funding secured, the Council has been allocated approximately £220,000 towards up to 100 public chargepoints for Leicestershire. Chargepoints will consist of a mix of standard and rapid chargepoints.
24. Whilst specific chargepoint locations have yet to be determined, the focus will be on the larger most populated settlements in Leicestershire. This will centre on residential streets where there are high proportions of housing with limited or no access to private off-street parking. Chargepoints will consist of a mix of standard and rapid chargers.
25. The Council is currently in the process of procuring a chargepoint operator (CPO), who will provide the chargepoints and assist with funding, design, consultation, maintenance and operation, on the behalf of the Authority.
26. All Pilot chargepoints will be subject to grid capacity checks with Electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and engagement with local communities during summer 2024, with delivery planned to start in autumn 2024.
27. The Pilot Project is an important first step in understanding the work the Authority will need to do to deliver public EV charging infrastructure on a large scale. Ideally, lessons learnt from the Pilot Project delivery would help to inform the content of the EVCS. Unfortunately, due to Government timescales for strategy development, both will need to be delivered concurrently, this financial year. However, the Authority will seek to review and refresh the EVCS following delivery of the Pilot Project.

LEVI Capital Funding - Full Project

28. In April 2023, the Council was provisionally allocated a further £3.151m of capital funding to deliver a large full scale chargepoint project.
29. The Council is again working with Midlands Connect, but with a different consortium of local authorities (Worcestershire County Council, Rutland Council, Warwickshire County Council and Shropshire County Council) to submit the necessary business case to OZEV by December 2024 to secure the funding the Authority has been provisionally allocated.
30. With additional private investment from CPOs, the Full Project will allow the Council to build on the Pilot Project and expand the number of public EV chargepoints across the County.

31. The Council will seek to publish local chargepoint delivery plans for the Full Project in the Autumn 2024 and aim to start delivery in during 2025/26.

LEVI Capability Funding

32. On 30 March 2023, following a successful proforma submission to OZEV, the Council was allocated a total of £530,000 capability funding towards officer resource for the development of the EVCS and the delivery of both LEVI Projects.

The Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

Overview

33. The EVCS provides the strategic framework for the Council's approach to public EV charging provision and its practical ongoing delivery.
34. It will firstly outline five proposed key long-term goals, which will underpin the Council's overarching vision for transport in Leicestershire, set out in the Council's new Local Transport Plan. The key goals outline the aspirations for the EVCS and the broad outcomes that the Council aims to achieve in the long-term beyond 2030. The five key goals are as follows:
- i. **Social Equity**
To deliver an equitable EV charging network that supports economic prosperity and meets local ambitions, through an accessible, inclusively designed and well distributed network for all communities.
 - ii. **Healthy Environment**
To deliver a healthy environment for all by helping decarbonise the transport system, reducing vehicle exhaust emissions from transport and improving air quality.
 - iii. **Creating Better Places**
To create better places using infrastructure that is inclusive, sensitively placed, designed to complement public spaces and deliver improved facilities for communities.
 - iv. **Connected Network Meeting Demand**
To support economic activity and keep people and places connected, especially in a rural county such as Leicestershire, by providing the right charging solution in the right place and encouraging the uptake of EVs.
 - v. **Resilient and Safe Network**
To guide and promote a resilient and safe transport network with infrastructure that is reliable, accessible, safe, compatible, easy to use and represents good value for money at installation and use during its life.

35. Alongside the long-term goals, a series of six core objectives have been identified, that the Council will seek to achieve, in the short-term up to 2030. The six objectives are as follows:
- i. To continue to develop an evidence base of Leicestershire's current and future charging needs.
 - ii. To install EV chargepoint assets and expand the existing public charging network.
 - iii. To work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders on the provision and delivery of EV chargepoints across Leicestershire.
 - iv. To carefully consider how EV chargepoint assets are integrated into the public highway.
 - v. To seek to facilitate further funding opportunities to deliver EV chargepoint infrastructure.
 - vi. To ensure the long-term sustainability of chargepoints across Leicestershire.
36. To create a comprehensive public charging network in Leicestershire, a collaborative approach between organisations, partners and stakeholders across various sectors will be required. The EVCS will, therefore, set out and describe the Council's role in the provision and delivery of public EV chargepoints, in the wider context of the roles and responsibilities of other organisations, partners and stakeholders such as the Government, CPOs, and DNOs.

Scope

37. The scope of EVCS primarily covers EV chargepoint infrastructure delivered by the Council (that will become a Council asset, maintained and operated by local CPO partner(s)).
38. The EVCS is aimed at the provision and delivery of charging infrastructure for the following user groups across Leicestershire:
- a) Residents,
 - b) Local businesses and their employees,
 - c) Van-based logistics operators,
 - d) Visitors,
 - e) Shoppers.
39. It will focus on charging infrastructure deployed equably across the County, driven by demand, land availability, commercial considerations of local CPO partners, grid capacity and the availability of funding.
40. In doing so, the Council will focus on providing charging infrastructure that:

- a) Serves cars and vans.
- b) Is publicly available (serving a wider public interest), 24 hours a day, to serve vehicles parked within the public highway, i.e. residential streets, estates, high streets, and main roads. Suitable Council-owned sites will also be considered, i.e. Country Parks and libraries, subject to the availability of funding.
- c) Consists of mainly lower powered on-street, 'standard' (7kW) chargers suited for overnight charging. Lamppost chargers (3kW) and a small number of 'rapid' (50kW+) chargers will also be considered across the County where appropriate.
- d) Is located:
 - i. In areas where there is evidence of residential parking demand, where home charging is not possible (i.e. off-street parking availability is limited or unavailable).
 - ii. Geographically across the entire County, in both commercially attractive high density urban sites and less commercially attractive lower density rural sites. Acknowledging that more charge points will be needed in urban, more populated areas.
 - iii. In locations identified by residents, i.e. from the Countywide survey map (in locations that align with EVCS scope).
- e) Is planned and delivered in accordance with Government EV funding criteria to maximise the Council's chance of success, i.e. LEVI funding.

41. The EVCS does not, at this point, cover EV charging infrastructure for:

- a) E-bikes, electric motorbikes, buses or large goods and service vehicles.
- b) Off-street car parks, except for suitable Council owned sites, subject to funding.
- c) Private business – i.e. destination, workplace and depot charging (including the Council's fleet operations).
- d) Private individuals or sole use.
- e) Addressing trailing footway EV charging cables, i.e. gully channel solutions. The Department for Transport's Plan for Drivers, published in October 2023, noted that the Government would be seeking to provide guidance on the use of safe cross-pavement solutions to local authorities. The Council welcomes the Government's stated intention to provide guidance and urges this to be published as soon as possible.
- f) En-route charging, i.e. in laybys on or near main road network.

42. The EV market is rapidly evolving and, therefore, it is likely that the scope of the Strategy will need to be reviewed and refreshed after two years in light of the outcomes from the Authority's LEVI Pilot Project and to ensure the Strategy responds to any emerging Government guidance, the future development and progression of EVs and associated infrastructure and funding availability.

Engagement

43. A Countywide public engagement exercise was carried out for a seven-week period, between 16 October and 30 November 2023.
44. The engagement exercise included an online questionnaire which allowed current EV drivers to provide feedback about their charging habits and prospective EV drivers about their potential concerns.
45. It also featured an interactive ‘social pinpoint’ map, which allowed residents to place a marker on a map in locations in the County where they would like to see a chargepoint.
46. The engagement was advertised via the Council’s ‘Have Your Say’ webpage, newspaper articles in the Harborough Mail, Coalville Times, Melton Times and Loughborough Echo, social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Nextdoor and on East Midlands Today and Fosse 107.
47. Members were made aware of the engagement exercise and invited to complete the questionnaire and the interactive map.

Summary of Findings

48. A summary of the key findings from the engagement exercise is presented in the tables below. Further detailed analysis of the feedback received can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1 – Questionnaire Summary

Number of responses	540 (Note: 53% of respondents were current EV owners)
Where do respondents who own an EV currently charge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At home (private driveway or garage etc.) 2. Public and private off-street car parks 3. Motorway services
Where do respondents want to charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private home charging was the most popular location/setting for charging. • If home charging is not an option, then on-street was then the most popular option. • 60% of current owners without home charging want on-street chargepoints.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of prospective owners who do not want to charge at home, want on-street chargepoints.
What type of chargepoints do residents want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of respondents want rapid chargepoints as part of their charging solution. • 50% of respondents solely want provision in the form of rapid chargepoints.
What chargepoint features do respondents consider to be most important?	Accessibility, reliability, ease of payment and competitive pricing were identified as the most important features for public chargepoints.
Barriers to EV ownership	Vehicle cost, lack of local chargepoints and concerns about using chargepoints identified as the key barriers to owning an EV.

Table 2 – Interactive Map

Key findings from the interactive map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 548 identified potential chargepoint locations. • 55% of suggested locations were located at privately owned destinations such as supermarkets, leisure and shopping centres. • 27% of suggested locations were on-street within mainly residential areas. • 72% of suggested locations were in urban settlements, 28% in rural settlements. • Breakdown of locations by district – Charnwood (38%), Melton (14%), Harborough (13%), North West Leicestershire
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	(13%), Blaby (11%), Hinckley and Bosworth (9%) and Oadby and Wigston (2%).
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49. Feedback received from the survey has steered the development and content of the draft EVCS. In addition, locations identified by residents, businesses, parishes, and members via the interactive map are feeding into the development of chargepoint delivery plans for the LEVI Full Project.
50. Following on from the engagement exercise, it will be important to maintain an open dialogue with local communities and continue to actively seek and capture feedback through the EV section on the Council's website. Community engagement will help to understand the evolving needs and expectations of local residents, ensuring that the EV charging infrastructure installed by the Council focuses on the user and effectively addresses their requirements.

Resource Implications

51. The EVCS and associated roll out of public chargepoint infrastructure, will be mainly delivered through funding from the OZEV LEVI capital and revenue funding allocations.
52. Of this, the Council has secured at least £222,373 of capital funding towards the delivery of the Pilot Project and has been provisionally allocated an additional £3.151m towards further chargepoint delivery through the LEVI Full Project, subject to the success of the business case which needs to be submitted to OZEV by October 2024.
53. At present, there is no County Council capital funding identified for chargepoint delivery.
54. Officer resource towards the development of the EVCS and the delivery of both LEVI Projects, is being funded from £530,000 LEVI revenue funding (allocated across 2023/24 and 2024/25), supported by a contribution of £154,000 from Environment and Transport budgets through to 2027/28.
55. To date, the LEVI revenue funding has been used for officer resource to:
 - a) Prepare, publish, and analyse the EV Countywide engagement exercise.

- b) Develop a bespoke Leicestershire EV chargepoint map-based planning tool, which gathers all available EV related spatial data and helps inform future chargepoint site selection decisions.
- c) Work with Midlands Connect and the local consortium of local authorities to develop Pilot Project proposals and support CPO procurement.

56. Moving forward, the funding will be used towards resource to:

- a) Support the delivery of the Pilot Project from 2024/25 onwards, including project management, communications and engagement, design approvals and ongoing contract management and CPO liaison.
- b) Provide all the necessary data and information to support Midlands Connect to develop and submit a suitable business case to OZEV by December 2024, to secure the funding that the Authority has been provisionally allocated for the Full Project.
- c) Support the delivery of the Full Project from 2025/26 onwards, subject to the success of the business case submitted.

57. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

58. A report will be presented to the Cabinet in September 2024 seeking approval for the final EVCS and its publication. The report will also outline the feedback from the Countywide EV engagement exercise and include comments received from this Committee.

Conclusions

59. The EV market is rapidly evolving, and the Council is at the early stages of planning for EVs. Whilst the Authority is keen to support residents in switching to EVs, this is a new and very challenging area for local authorities, with very little consensus nationally on how to provide the necessary on-street charging infrastructure in a coherent and coordinated way to deal with the growing demand, particularly from residents without access to off-street parking.

60. Due to future development and progression of EVs and associated infrastructure, the Council acknowledges that the EVCS is likely to need reviewing after two years, in light of the Authority's LEVI Pilot Project, funding availability and technological advances.

61. It should be noted that on its own, the Authority, with its current allocation of LEVI funding will not be able to address all the gaps in EV chargepoint provision without further Government EV funding and significant charging provision from private and other public bodies and organisations.

62. The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and provide comments on the Council's proposed approach to EV charging provision in

Leicestershire and its practical ongoing delivery, as set out in the draft EVCS (attached at Appendix A).

Background Papers

March 2011 – County Council - Final draft Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Proposals
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MID=3057#A127879>

July 2020 – County Council – Revised Environment Strategy and Action Plan
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6040&Ver=4>

September 2021 - Midlands Connect: Supercharging the Midlands (2021)
<https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/media/i1spsr1/mc-supercharging-the-midlands-document.pdf>

March 2022 – Department for Transport - Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6245ba40e90e075f15381cf0/taking-charge-the-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-strategy.pdf>

May 2022 – County Council – Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6482&Ver=4>

December 2022 – County Council – Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/net-zero/net-zero-leicestershire-strategy-action-plan-and-reports>

March 2023 - Department for Transport – The Plan for Drivers
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers/the-plan-for-drivers#:~:text=In%20March%202023%2C%20the%20government,driers%20without%20off%2Dstreet%20parking.>

November 2023 – Cabinet – Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium 2023
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7080&Ver=4>

February 2024 – Cabinet – Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=77550>

February 2024 - County Council - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2027/28
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7305&Ver=4>

March 2024 – Cabinet - Environment and Transport 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme.
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7504&Ver=4>
 (Appendix B)

Zap Map national chargepoint map: <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

A copy of this report will be circulated to all members of the County Council.

Equality Implications

63. The Council's approach to strategy development and delivery will be carried out having regard to the public sector equality duty imposed on the Authority by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
64. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is currently being undertaken and will be presented to the Departmental Equalities Group. At this stage, it is thought that the overall impact of the EVCS is likely to be neutral. However, as further detailed work and evidence gathering needs to be completed to confirm this, the overall impact is currently classed as unknown.
65. A full assessment will be undertaken following the development of the EVCS to ensure that any potential negative impacts have been identified and opportunities for positive outcomes considered and, where appropriate, the Strategy will be updated.
66. Separate EIAs will be undertaken as part of the LEVI Pilot and the LEVI Full Rollout. Throughout the course of the LEVI Projects (Pilot and Full), impacts on protected characteristic groups will continue to be assessed and addressed should issues be identified.

Human Rights Implications

67. The Council's approach to strategy development and delivery will be carried out having regard to the Human Rights Act 1998.
68. Where appropriate, human rights implications will be assessed during the review of departmental policies and strategies or the development of measures and schemes.

Environmental Implications

69. The EVCS will make a positive contribution to decarbonising transport and contributing towards net zero ambitions for the County, as transport contributes the most carbon emissions of any sector.
70. A scoping report will be undertaken to establish the boundaries, identify any issues and to determine the range of environmental issues. A high-level Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be undertaken on the EVCS and, if required, a further SEA will be carried out.

Health Implications

71. The objectives put forward in the EVCS will support and facilitate the transition for residents from petrol and diesel vehicles to EVs, which will make a major contribution to improving air quality and reducing harmful pollutants.
72. In agreement with Public Health, a high-level Health Impact Assessment will be undertaken, and a full assessment will be undertaken following the development of the EVCS to ensure that any potential negative impacts have been identified.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

Appendix B - Countywide Electric Vehicle Engagement Analysis Report

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