

**Report to:** Place Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 27 November 2025

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** East Sussex On-Street Electric Vehicle Charging Network

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the proposed roll out and management of public electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints across East Sussex.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the procurement process and consider and comment on the approach to the roll out of on-street public electric vehicle chargepoints.**

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## **1. Background Information**

1.1 In October 2019, the County Council declared a climate emergency, setting a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050. In June 2020 Cabinet adopted a climate emergency action plan and in November 2020 the Place Scrutiny Committee completed a review of the County Council Becoming a Carbon Neutral Council.

1.2 One of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations was that 'Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are installed at the main office buildings, or at least County Hall'. In March 2021 Cabinet agreed for the Council to explore options for procuring EV charge points on the corporate estate as well as the highway network.

1.3 The UK government initially announced plans to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040. This target date was brought forward to 2035 and again to 2030 in November 2020. This target date was delayed to 2035 in September 2023, but brought forward again to 2030 in April 2025.

1.4 In February 2023, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) announced that Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding would be pre-allocated to all local authorities, and that this would be made available in 2024/25 (Tranche 1), or 2025/26 (Tranche 2). The LEVI Fund had two main objectives:

- to support local authorities to deliver a step-change in the deployment of local, on-street public charging infrastructure where residents cannot park off street as well as help to provide an equitable distribution of chargepoints across the county, and
- to accelerate the commercialisation of, and private investment in local public charging infrastructure.

1.5 The receipt of the LEVI funding was subject to the submission of an initial business case by the County Council demonstrating that the scope of the project aligns with the funding requirements, value, and approach to procurement. Following submission of our LEVI business case to OZEV in October 2023, the County Council was notified in January 2024 that our initial application had been successful. As a consequence, we were awarded the £4.441m capital grant allocation in March 2024 and received 90% upfront with the remaining 10% held back by OZEV until procurement and contract award made.

1.6 The project details were agreed by Cabinet in June 2024 and the County Council agreed to proceed with the procurement of a chargepoint operator to support delivery. This was based on taking forward the delivery of the project as a concession model. Whilst the concession model showed a lower revenue projection compared to a joint venture with a potential operator, the benefits of running it as a concession mean that the project would be contained financially and reputationally and would require no monetary or additional operational resources from the local authority, thereby offering a lower risk approach to the County Council.

1.7 Overall, the roll out of on-street public electric vehicle chargepoints in the County will strongly support the Council's priorities for decarbonisation and net zero targets, as set out in our Climate Change Strategy and, from an equalities perspective, provide fairer access to on street public chargepoint facilities.

1.8 It also aligns with national transport policy, as well as the local objectives and policies around tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions as set out in the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4, which was adopted by the County Council in October 2024. Furthermore, it will support the County's East Sussex Prosperity Strategy (2024-2050) which identifies that economic prosperity over this period will be determined in part by the process of climate change, and the extent to which local areas (and people, communities and businesses) are able to mitigate its consequences and adapt accordingly.

## **2 Supporting Information**

### Procurement process

2.1 Following the Cabinet approval to proceed with the procurement process, we were informed by the Department for Transport (DfT) at the end of January 2025 that our final LEVI Capital Fund application met the required conditions of the fund, the tender documents had been approved and that we could proceed to tender.

2.2 The procurement is being undertaken using the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Solutions (VCIS). This framework has been used by Cambridgeshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Transport for London to successfully procure chargepoint operators.

2.3 The tender process was undertaken between mid-April and end June 2025. Four compliant bids were received, and each exceeding the requirement to deliver at least 2,000 chargepoints at across 300 locations in the county. All bids also provided for the delivery of fast and rapid chargepoints as well as a mixed provision of fast and rapid chargers at County Hall.

2.4 Following a tender evaluation process, a preferred bidder has been identified. The procurement and contract documentation was formally approved by OZEV and DfT in early November 2025, after which the decision to award the contract will be made by the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport in November 2025, who was given delegated powers to award the contract by Cabinet at its meeting in June 2024.

2.5 The preferred bidder will design, install, and operate the new chargepoints under a 15-year concession agreement. They will contribute their own investment (estimated to be in excess of £27.5m) alongside the East Sussex LEVI funding and take full responsibility for operation, maintenance, and customer service.

2.6 Their proposal will deliver more than 2,400 sockets at around 500 locations across the county, including a substantial quantity of high-powered rapid chargers, as well as chargepoints at County Hall. The bidder has agreed to deliver all of the priority sites identified during the planning process. One of the challenges with the expanding number of rapid chargers as part of the proposal is that this may add delivery complexity, and will require careful placement of chargepoints and planning.

2.7 Other key features of the preferred bidder's proposal include:

- Flexible and future-proofed technology, with kW fast and kW Ultra Rapid chargers.
- A commitment to direct spending for the supply of goods and services towards East Sussex businesses and contractors.
- Contactless and app-free payment options.
- 100% renewable energy powering all chargepoints.
- Clear and robust KPI's to manage safety, operations and performance.
- A social value plan which includes initiatives working with schools, local businesses, communities and developing local employment & skills opportunities.

2.8 The proposed programme for the roll out of the public chargepoints will be over a 30-month period with early phases focused on residential areas with limited off-street parking. It is expected that roll out will commence in the early part of 2026 following contract mobilisation. As part of the roll out, the preferred operator will need to work closely with District and Borough Councils where required on planning approvals, alongside contractors and other agencies to manage and co-ordinate Distribution Network Operations (DNO) electrical connections with UK Power Networks, as well as ensuring civils and site works are undertaken efficiently.

#### Identification of proposed sites

2.9 During the pre-contract tender process, the Council worked closely with the LEVI Support Body and the Energy Saving Trust (EST) to identify a long list of potential sites across the county. These were reviewed with the district and borough councils to confirm whether these were local priorities as well as assessing the technical and planning feasibility of each location.

2.10 The preferred bidder has confirmed that site selection will continue to follow a clear, evidence-based process led by the County Council in partnership with district and borough councils. Each location has and will continue to be assessed against factors such as:

- local demand,
- electric grid capacity,
- accessibility for disabled drivers to ensure locations comply with PAS 1899 standards and meet national standards on inclusive design, and
- proximity to residential areas without off-street parking.

2.11 This transparent approach ensures that new public chargepoints are delivered where they are most needed and where they will bring the greatest benefit to residents and visitors across East Sussex. Where identified sites are not practical for various reasons, such as grid capacity and/or difficulty achieving adequate power supply, they will be required to identify alternative locations as near as possible and in discussion/agreement with the County Council.

2.12 Using the ChargePoint Navigator tool provided by UK Power Networks (UKPN), the proposal has been modelled and identifies the following outputs:

- 60% of all properties without off street parking can access a public chargepoint within a 5 min walk;
- 93% of properties without a driveway can access a public chargepoint within a 5 min drive; and
- 70% of properties without a driveway can access Ultra Rapid public chargepoints within a 5 min drive.

#### Commercial

2.13 The commercial structure provides strong value and minimal risk for the County Council. The concession model transfers operational and financial risk to the bidder. For the duration of the contract, the operator will pay an annual concession fee to the County Council of which will be adjusted in line with the Customer Price Index (CPI). This has been calculated in line with OZEV recommendations to support the costs that are likely to be ongoing for the Council for the duration of the contract

2.14 The operator will pay the County Council a further proportion of the gross margin. In the context of the contract, gross margin means all income exclusive of Value Added Tax to the Concessionaire derived from energy sold to chargepoint users per kwh, and advertising on the chargepoints and/or the site, minus the price per kwh paid by the Concessionaire for such energy (including any standing charges, levies and taxes) generated by the network.

2.15 The tariffs that will be charged to users will remain within the lowest 10% regionally, and open-book accounting will ensure transparency. This will be subject to benchmarking as well as price capping recommendations as detailed in the OZEV - LEVI Heads of Terms recommendations.

2.16 All assets - both above and below ground - will transfer into the ownership of the council at the end of the 15 year contract at no cost to the County Council. This gives the Council the opportunity to consider ownership and management of the assets directly, or to re-procure an operator that will take responsibility for operations on behalf of the Council for a further contract period.

### Contract Management

2.17 The contract will be managed by the Infrastructure Planning and Place team, through the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project Manager, and additional resources that will be brought in to support using LEVI capacity funding that the County Council has been allocated.

2.18 In line with OZEV's LEVI Heads of Terms, a full set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be agreed with the preferred bidder to monitor delivery, performance, safety, customer service, and social value outcomes throughout the 15 year concession. These KPIs will form part of a robust contract management framework, supported by quarterly governance meetings chaired by the County Council to review progress, risks, and continuous improvement actions. The contract will operate on an open book accounting basis, giving the Council full visibility of revenue, costs, usage data, and asset performance to ensure transparency, value for money, and alignment with LEVI funding and OZEV reporting requirements.

## **3. Conclusions and Recommendations**

3.1 Following the allocation of £4.441m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding towards on street and publicly available electric vehicle chargepoints, and a tender exercise undertaken in Spring 2025, a preferred provider has been identified to run a 15-year concession contract on behalf of the County Council. The decision to award the contract will be made by the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport, who was given delegated powers to award by Cabinet at their June 2024 meeting, in November 2025.

3.2 The provider will contribute their own investment alongside the LEVI funding, and take full responsibility for operation, maintenance, and customer service. The contract will deliver around 2,400 sockets at around 500 locations across the county, as well as a substantial quantity of high-powered rapid chargers, and chargepoint provision at County Hall.

3.3 The identification of proposed on-street chargepoint sites has, and will continue to follow a clear, evidence-based process with each location assessed against factors such as local demand, grid capacity, accessibility and proximity to residential areas without off-street parking.

3.4 The Committee is asked to note the procurement process that has been undertaken and the proposed award of the contract to deliver on-street electric vehicle chargepoints in the county with roll out from early 2026 onwards, and consider and comment on the evidence led approach that has, and will continue to be implemented, to determine appropriate locations for on street electric vehicle chargepoints across the county.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Ian Glover  
Tel. No. 01273 336389  
Email: [ian.glover@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.glover@eastsussex.gov.uk)

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None