



Somerset Council
Scrutiny Committee
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Electric Vehicle Briefing Paper
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1. Summary

- 1.1. This paper is intended to serve as a briefing paper to provide an update on progress with Somerset EV Strategy, funding opportunities, 'Egully' trial, proposals for rolling out on route parking and Somerset Council fleet.
- 1.2. A greener, more sustainable Somerset.

2. Issues for Consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund supports local authorities in England to work with the chargepoint industry to improve the rollout and commercialisation of local charging infrastructure. Public chargepoints will help residents who do not have off-street parking and need to charge their electric vehicle. The funding is available to Tier 1 local authorities in England across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/2025.
- 2.2. LEVI funding is split into elements Capability and Capital.

The capability fund allocations for Somerset for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 are listed below.

2023/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
£75,420	£171,790	£171,790	£419,000

The 2022/23 payment has been received, and there is a proforma to submit by 26 May 2023 to claim the funding allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

- 2.3. It is recommended that Somerset Council applies for additional funding by participating in the three-stage (non-competitive) process starting with an expression of interest, which must also be submitted by 26 May 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following the approval of the of Somerset EV Strategy in 2020/21 the four District Councils have undertaken various projects, installing chargepoints in car parks which were prioritised within the strategy.

- 3.2.** To date there are currently 117 publicly accessible chargepoints, either installed or in the process of being installed, at 58 council locations throughout the County.
- Mendip have a concession agreement with EB Charging
 - South Somerset have a concession agreement with both Scottish & Highways England / Swarco
 - Somerset West and Taunton have a contract with Instavolt and have also installed council owned chargepoints at various car parks
 - Sedgemoor also have council owned chargepoints at a location in Bridgwater.
- 3.3. Proposal for Egully Trials in the Autumn**
The government has recognised the problem of trailing cables on public highways at properties that do not have access to off street parking. Cables will no longer be allowed to trail across the pavement unless adaptive infrastructure is provided to accommodate them safely (e.g. gullies). Anything that creates a trip hazard does not constitute adaptive infrastructure.
- 3.4.** Following a period of soft marketing testing, support body workshops and the development of the Somerset trailing cables study, we are now assigning a project manager to take this project forward so that a solution can be trialled in Somerset.
- 3.5. Objectives of the LEVI Fund**
The LEVI fund aims to deliver a step-change in the deployment of local, primarily low power (7kW and 22kW), on street charging infrastructure across England. And to accelerate the commercialisation of, and investment in the local charging infrastructure sector.
- 3.6.** The capital fund has been determined for each local authority using a data led approach (public charge points per 100,000 of population, index of deprivation, level of rurality, vehicles without off street parking) and the allocation for Somerset is £3.783m
- 3.7.** There is a three-stage (non-competitive) process to follow starting with an expression of interest (EOI), which must also be submitted by 26th May 2023.
- 3.8.** The EOI will go through a review process and be scored against an assessment criteria to confirm which tranche we will be entered in to (tranche one FY2023/24 and tranche two FY2024/25). Based on us having an approved EV strategy and experience of installing a variety of EVCPs (owned and concession) across the county, we are confident we have the skills and knowledge to go for tranche one.
- 3.9.** Once assigned a tranche we will be given access to stage two and will be asked to develop a business case and produce a draft tender document for review. The deadline for tranche one, stage two applications is 17th November 2023. Our

business case will be reviewed and once approved, 90% of the funding will be released (March 2024) and we can then open procurement for a provider. The final 10% will be delivered following stage three of the application process.

- 3.10.** Stage three is the contract review; this is where we submit our draft EV infrastructure contract for review and approval. The contract will be assessed to determine whether the commercial arrangement meets the fund criteria. Once the criteria have been met, we will receive approval to sign contracts and the final 10% funding will be paid.
- 3.11.** There is no hard deadline for the funds to be spent, however, project delivery plans will be assessed through the process, and we are expected to provide detailed, realistic timelines which will be monitored.
- 3.12. Progress to Date**
LEVI forms part of the EV Infrastructure Programme and we have a project team who are currently working with procurement colleagues to establish our approach to procurement, which has included soft market testing with various charge point operators.
- 3.13.** To date we have installed a variety of charge points across the county, however there are still commercially viable locations within Somerset that will be of interest to a chargepoint operator. These prime locations will provide leverage to promote private investment in those areas which are likely to suffer from market failure and deemed less commercially viable.
- 3.14.** Our ambition is to expand our existing charging network across Somerset, by procuring a single chargepoint operator for this next phase. The network will incorporate car parks and on-street locations, as well as addressing the charging needs of our more rural communities, tourist destinations, and the 27% of Somerset properties without access to off-street parking.
- 3.15.** We will be submitting our EOI and requesting to be entered into tranche one.
- 3.16. Update on EV Strategy** - the Somerset Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy was developed by Somerset County Council in partnership with the District Councils and was formally approved in 2020/2021. The strategy provided an assessment of the current infrastructure and uptake in Somerset and, using WSP's EV Ready Tool, provided an indication of future demand for electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI). The Strategy takes into consideration the unique characteristics of Somerset and its population and clearly states Somerset's aspirations and vision for EVCI. The Strategy also reiterates the importance of EV uptake in delivering Somerset's climate emergency mandate and sets out a clear delivery approach through 24 recommendations.
- 3.17.** The recommendations covered the following themes:
- **Lead by example:** fleet review, installation of charging points at Council

depots and offices, lobby government for central change

- **Home charging:** facilitating the uptake in EV through improved parking and design standards, promotion of schemes, trailing cable resolutions and providing on street residential charging points where needed
- **Workplace charging:** promotion of workplace schemes and parking standard improvements;
- **Destination charging:** development of mobility hubs with EV infrastructure, installation of EV infrastructure in public owned car parks, collaborations with other key destinations
- **On route charging:** engage with private sector suppliers to deliver rapid charging points.

3.18. Following its adoption, a series of additional publications have been developed including a Somerset Electric Vehicle Strategy Implementation Support document and a Trailing Cables Review. An addendum that focuses on new developments and the highways impacts of EV infrastructure for adopted highways is due to be published later this spring.

3.19. Since the original EV charging strategy, the Department for Transport (DfT) has stipulated that all local transport authorities are required to update their Local Transport Plans (LTP) by Autumn 2024 to reflect their changed approach to transport planning which is focussing carbon reduction, levelling up and an improved travel experience. An EV charging strategy has been stated as one of the supporting documents that are required for the LTP (along with a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), Carbon Quantification and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The full guidance for the LTP development is expected in Summer 2024, however Taking Charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy was published in March 2022 and this clearly sets out the governments ambitions and the role that local government has in enabling a move to electric vehicles.

Although progress has been made against the recommendations of the initial Somerset EV strategy, we now recognise that things have moved on and there are a few gaps and variances compared to the Taking Charge guidance and the intentions of the LTP. The most prominent of these is the increased priority of home charging provision and clarity against the use of trailing cables across footpaths. With this in mind, we plan to update and renew our EV charging strategy for expected adoption in Summer 2024 to tie in with the LTP schedule. In the meantime, to ensure that opportunities (such as the LEVI fund) can still be progressed before the new strategy is fully developed an interim policy position statement is currently being developed (expected in the Spring 2023).

3.20. Update on Fleet Strategy - we have embarked on a progressive de-carbonisation of our fleet replacing internal combustion engine vehicles (cars and

small vans under 3.5 tonnes) with annual mileages over 8,000 miles. We are also intending to redeploy the fleet to users to optimise the use of EVs for the highest mileage users.

- 3.21.** We have also required added requirements for transport de-carbonisation from the supply chain in new procurements, with the first of these being tested in the re-procurement of our Highways Maintenance Contracts. It is intended that these requirements will then be developed into a Somerset Council Fleet Strategy to allow roll out elsewhere.
- 3.22.**
- WSP have been procured to provide technical advice on premises charging facilities to address any fire safety and insurance issues which the underground parking location may present, with a specific task to provide an indicative design for County Hall.
 - We aim to have a standard specification for chargers which we will adopt as the standard for the Council.
 - EV vehicles (cars and small vans under 3.5 tonnes) are being procured to the fleet to replace internal combustion engine vehicles.
 - Looking at options for EV charging data and billing systems – possible standalone procurement spring/summer 2023.
 - A position paper to go to Somerset Council that formally adopts the policy of all vehicles under 3.5 tonnes to be EV with exemptions by exception.
 - Notice is being given to Milestone that the Fleet Maintenance Contract will not be renewed, staff will be TUPE'd into the Council's in-house teams from April 2024.
 - New capital funding for continuing the replacement of the Council Fleet in 2023/24.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. None.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** This paper highlights the actions that are required to ensure Somerset Council is able to progress the 2020/21 Somerset EV Strategy and produce a full EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy in 2024.
- 5.2.** Actions are required to address some gaps and variances between Somerset's local strategy and the Government's 'Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy'.