Agenda Item No: 5

# Procurement of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 2 December 2025

From: Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director of Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2025/078

Executive Summary:

This paper provides an update on the countywide project to support the transition to electric vehicles by improving the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This project is funded by the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund, particularly for residents without access to off-street parking.

It provides an overview of the work undertaken to date and seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to award and execute a contract for the design and installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Recommendation: The committee is recommended to:

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to award and execute a fifteen-year contract for the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure starting in 2026 and extension periods.

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# 1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

1.1 Ambition 1: Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes:
Transport is the largest contributor to Cambridgeshire’s carbon footprint. The phasing out of internal combustion engine vehicles will reduce this source of carbon emissions significantly over time.

1.2 Ambition 2: Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable:
Transport is the largest contributor to Cambridgeshire’s carbon footprint. The transition to electric vehicles will reduce this source of carbon emissions significantly over time.

1.3 Ambition 3: Health inequalities are reduced:
The transition to electric vehicles will reduce the amount of harmful emissions from internal combustion engine vehicles and help improve air quality

1.4 Ambition 4: People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs:
In the long term, it is people with mobility challenges who are most likely to still require private cars and therefore need appropriate means to decarbonise those vehicles. Through ensuring that accessible public Electric Vehicle (EV) chargepoints are specified and meet the standards set out in national guidance, the infrastructure can be used by all EV users.

# 2. Background

2.1 The government is intending to ban the sale of new internal combustion engine cars and vans from 2030, in a bid to accelerate the rollout of zero emission vehicles and increase uptake of new, green technologies. To support this, the volume and distribution of public EV charging infrastructure will need to be considerably increased.

2.2 To support the delivery of EV charging infrastructure, the government established the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. The two key objectives of the fund are:

- To accelerate deployment of public on-street chargepoints to support residents without off-street parking, specifically by delivering local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure across England;
- To accelerate private sector investment into local charging infrastructure.

2.3 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has been allocated £5.4m grant funding from the fund.

2.4 This is one of several projects concerning the delivery of EV charging infrastructure that the Council is involved with. The CPCA adopted an EV infrastructure strategy in 2024. Figure 1 sets out the context of the work that is being undertaken in relation to electric vehicles, showing the CPCA as the owner of the overarching strategy, and more specific work that the Council is doing to support delivery of this strategy.

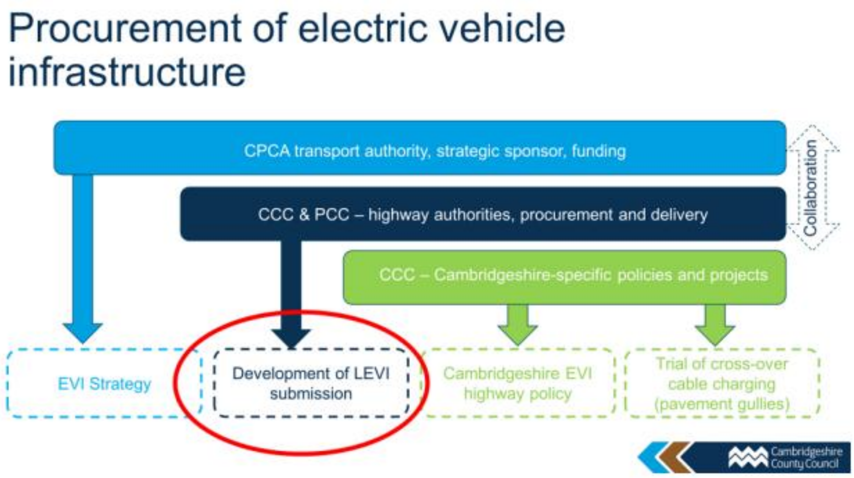


Figure 1 – Procurement of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

2.5 A paper providing details on the LEVI fund, the preferred procurement approach, route to market and proposed commercial model was considered by this committee on 23 July 2024.

2.6 This paper provides a progress update since the previous paper to Committee and seeks delegated authority for the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to award and execute a contract for the design and installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This is based on additional project development and assurance since the last report and will enable a more streamlined timeline for the award of the contract, while retaining officer and senior member oversight.

# 3. Main Issues

## Work to date

3.1 At its meeting on 23 July 2024, the Committee delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability to commence procurement of the project. Since then, considerable work has been undertaken to draw up tender documents and ensure that there are high levels of assurance around the principles of the commercial model. Relevant teams across the Council have been engaged, while experiences and lessons learned from other local authorities have also been taken into consideration.

3.2 The tender package has been assessed and challenged by external consultants on behalf of the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), which is the funding body. This has been a mandatory step in the funding process to ensure that it meets the conditions of the LEVI fund and is likely to form an attractive offer to the market. As a result of feedback from this process, two rounds of market engagement have been undertaken to check principles and seek further assurance that the tender is likely to be favourably received by the market and result in quality tenders.

3.3 At the time of writing, the tender documents are awaiting sign off from the funding body's Programme Board to enable the procurement process to start. A twelve-week tender period is planned as it is anticipated that there may be a high volume of clarifications needed, given the emerging market and based on experience from other authorities. A verbal update will be given to the committee on the timetable.

## Procurement

3.4 The procurement arrangements and route to market remain largely as set out in the previous paper. The CPCA has been allocated £5.4m capital funding from OZEV, which will be split across the County Council and Peterborough City Council (PCC). Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs) are being drawn up to enable the capital funding to be transferred to the two highway authorities. PCC is leading the joint procurement exercise on behalf of the partners, which will result in separate fifteen-year concession contracts for each highway authority. It is only the County Council's concession contract for which authority is sought from the committee to award. An Open Tender is being used to ensure compliance with current legislation.

3.5 Tenders will be evaluated on:

- The scale of the solution that can be provided for the subsidy.
- The approach to delivering the solution.
- The operational approach.
- The appropriateness and sustainability of the proposed commercial model.
- The wider social value which will be delivered through the contracts.

3.6 It is recognised that the fifteen-year proposed term of this contract extends beyond April 2028 and therefore beyond the timetable for Local Government Re-organisation. Officers have considered this and determine this to be necessary because market engagement and procurement planning has shown that a longer-term contract will secure best value for money both now and in the future and will support the resilience of the market. Successor councils will novate this contract thereby securing stability and continuity of service.

## Commercial model

3.7 In order to ensure that a more equitable spread of charging infrastructure is secured across the county, the £5.4m grant will be used to subsidise around 930 chargepoints across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Broad areas of search have been identified to ensure that 80% of residential properties without off-street parking will have a public chargepoint within a five-minute walk, thus meeting a key objective set out in the CPCA's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. Exact locations for the chargepoints will be agreed once the successful service provider has carried out site surveys and feasibility work.

3.8 To leverage private investment in local charging infrastructure, the successful service provider will be invited to propose its own list of locations to be agreed with the Council and to be delivered alongside its own list. These locations will be led by demand and are likely to be more commercially viable and thus attractive to the private sector.

3.9 It is anticipated that chargepoints in locations identified by the Council will be delivered during the first three years of the contract.

3.10 In accordance with the guidance from OZEV, the tenders will be evaluated on the basis of the best charging offer, meaning the number of chargepoints overall that will be provided for the subsidy, rather than a financial offer.

3.11 The contract will include a fixed fee payable annually to the Council by the service provider to cover contract administration as well as allowances for resource to enable additional work during the installation phase to be absorbed as ‘business as usual’. A 30p/kWh margin cap is also included to give the service provider flexibility to respond to increases in wholesale electricity prices whilst giving some degree of protection to residents on the cost of charging. To ensure that there is a partnership approach to the project, the Council will receive 1p for every kWh of electricity used which will be paid directly by the user.

### Related non-LEVI work

3.12 To support the delivery of electric vehicle pavement channels, also referred to as ‘gullies' or cross pavement solution (XPS), the government has announced the EV Pavement Channel Grant and has allocated £317k to the CPCA.

3.13 Following the committee’s approval in March 2024, the Council has been developing a trial to test a pavement channel supplier. The announcement of the government grant has provided a new opportunity to review the best approach to the delivery of the trial to remove barriers to the delivery and encourage uptake of pavement channels. The trial project will progress following confirmation from the Department for Transport on the allocation of grant funding, which will be issued before the end of the 2025/26 financial year. It is expected to start applications for new XPS in April 2026, with installations to start shortly afterwards.

## 4. Alternative Options Considered

4.1 In reaching a proposed way forward, a do-nothing approach, as well as alternative commercial and procurement options were considered and ruled out.

4.2 Do-nothing: A ‘do-nothing’ approach was not considered appropriate. Whilst the EVI space is evolving at speed, the government has been clear that the LEVI fund will be the only substantial funding avenue aimed at residential charging at the current time. A decision not to have applied or developed a procurement and commercial package would have resulted in the loss of a substantial part of the £5.4m of grant funding for EVI, as well as considerable private sector investment in the infrastructure. Not to have taken advantage of the fund would have also meant that the delivery of EV infrastructure was left entirely to the private sector, which would have prioritised commercially viable sites, leaving large swathes of rural Cambridgeshire without provision.

4.3 Alternative Commercial models: Different commercial models were also considered, including, ‘Own and Operate’, ‘Joint Venture’ and ‘Land Lease’. Both the ‘Own and Operate’ and ‘Joint Venture’ models were considered to place too much risk with the Council, especially in a market which is new and evolving at pace. Whilst the level of control for the local authorities is high, so too is the level of risk as all the investment would be undertaken by the public sector. Conversely, for a ‘Land lease’ model, whilst the risk is low as the private sector would bear the cost of investment, the level of control is also low, as local authorities would have little leverage with which to influence the location of chargepoints. In all three cases described in this section, there would be limited scope to leverage in private sector investment, ensuring that chargepoints are equitably distributed across the area and not just installed in commercially viable locations. The preferred concession model allows allow the Council to retain some control over how chargepoints are distributed.

# 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The proposed package will bring a step change in the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure to the county and leverage in private investment. It will ensure that coverage is spread more equitably across the county and that residents who do not have off-street parking will have options for charging their vehicle. The choice of commercial model ensures that the Council retains some control over how chargepoints are distributed, that staff costs are covered for managing the contract, cost risks are minimised, and that it shares the benefit of increased utilisation as the transition to electric vehicles gathers pace.

# 6. Significant Implications

Finance Implications

6.1 Any contract will require on going management and the proposed length of the contract has been assessed to ensure this is acceptable to the Council. Staff costs will be highest during the first three years of the contract as sites are agreed and installation is taking place. Capability grant funding will be used whilst it is available and once the contract is in place the annual fixed fee will cover ongoing contract management. As utilisation increases, the Council will receive 1p for every kWh of electricity used, potentially providing income to the Council.

Legal Implications

6.2 A GFA is in place to allow the CPCA to transfer LEVI funding to the Council. A Memorandum of Understanding regulates the working relationship between the Council and PCC.

6.3 Legal advice has been sought throughout the process of drawing up the contract.

6.4 Appropriate wording is included in the contract to enable the contract to be novated and/or disaggregated to the relevant new authority once Local Government Reorganisation has been concluded.

Risk Implications

6.5 There will be many authorities going out to tender at the same time as part of the LEVI programme. There is a risk that the specification developed by the Council and PCC is not attractive enough for chargepoint operators to respond, or that the contract is not of sufficient scale to compete with larger authorities. Soft market testing has been undertaken to mitigate this risk in so far as is possible.

6.6 The EV charging market is still in its infancy, with technology and uptake evolving at pace. Whilst considerable market research has been undertaken to inform the commercial model, there is a risk that the market changes in ways that haven't currently been considered, or assumptions used in modelling predictions change, meaning that uptake is faster or slower than anticipated and the contract doesn't work in the way it was anticipated. Appropriate legal and procurement advice has been sought to ensure that the wording of any contract mitigates this risk, and other financial risks to the authority insofar as possible.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6.7 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for this work is attached at Appendix 1. Mitigations for the potential equality impacts identified are detailed within the assessment. A concession arrangement has been chosen in part because it allows the Council to have more control over some of the impacts identified in the EqIA, particularly around the equitable distribution of chargepoints around the county.

Climate Change and Environment Implications

6.8 Transport is the largest source of carbon emissions in the county, with the significant majority of these emissions from road transport. The transition to electric vehicles will significantly reduce the impacts from this source. Providing public infrastructure to enable convenient, affordable charging options ahead of demand will help increase confidence in the charging network and accelerate that transition to electric vehicles and towards net zero. Evaluation of tenders includes questioning potential service providers around their approach to environmental issues and carbon reduction in their project delivery. Contract management will ensure any commitments made are adhered to. The successful supplier will also be required to sign up to the Council's Carbon Charter.

Procurement implications

6.9 Advice has been sought from the procurement team throughout the process to ensure that the tender is compliant with the relevant procurement regulations in place at the time. Delays to the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 and the need to follow an open tender process because there were no suitable frameworks available has meant that the lead in time to going out to tender has extended.

## 7. Source Documents

7.1 Agenda Item 6 (Procurement of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) – Committee meeting on 23 July 2024

7.2 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy