

LEVI Fund & Midlands LEVI Pilot

Background

RCC are working as part of the newly formed “First Midlands Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Consortium” along with:

- Lincolnshire County Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The group’s joint bid “Midlands Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) to DfT was successful in Summer 2022, along with 9 other successful bidders out of a total of 42 applications across England.

The joint bid was built on Midlands Connects EV Infrastructure full business case work (Supercharging the Midlands EV strategy).

<https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/publications/supercharging-the-midlands/>

Lincolnshire County Council are the lead Authority taking responsibility for:

- Procurement
- legal support.
- Allocation of grant funding

Feedback from DfT on the strength of the bid included:

- The bid supported equity amongst local authorities with rural mobility challenges.
- It provided scales of economy to provide more private investment for public infrastructure in the “cost of living” crisis.
- Support of connectivity, standardisation and levelling up of EV Infrastructure across the midlands (cross boundary infrastructure planning)
- Reductions in rural emissions.

The bid for pilot funding secured £948k (based on 75% private sector contribution which would bring in £2.8 million worth of private investment) bringing the overall project value to £3.8 million across the five local authorities.

The project aims to install approximately 322 standard and 27 rapid public EV charging sockets in areas where commercial sector public EV charge point roll-out remains very low to-date.

This project is unique as it brings partners, with different geographies, together to tackle different rural challenges on EV uptake /EV infrastructure and will support urban and on street solutions.

The pilot project could encourage charge point operators (CPOs) to support the EV Infrastructure acceleration needed across the Midlands by providing seed funding to make less profitable sites attractive to the commercial sector.

Local Authorities will benefit from the support of Midlands Connect with future planning and performance management in this relatively new area of work. Help to improve customer experience for EV Infrastructure now can be planned for 2030 and beyond.

The project aims to procure a CPO to install and maintain EV points across the 5 LA areas with the grant funding being used to bridge the gap of start-up costs. There will be no on-going costs to RCC for the charge points and no additional top-up funding required along the way. Participation of Local Authorities in the project will be cost neutral other than contribution of staff time.

Overview of Charge point sockets, bid allocation and funding

As part of the LEVI bid, indicative allocation of charge point sockets (for example, one dual headed charge point would be two charge point sockets) were provided as part of a breakdown of 2030

Authority	Total existing public Charge point sockets (Q2 2021)	2030 Total charge point socket forecast requirement	Indicative* allocation of charge point sockets in LEVI pilot bid	Proportional increase in charge point sockets
Rutland	22	187	30	136%

*Charge point sockets numbers will be finalised as part of the negotiation with LA's and appointed Charge point Operator (CPO).

To balance the request from CPOs for flexibility to support commercial viability, and our desire for equitable coverage, our siting portfolio will be categorised ahead of procurement as set out below;

- A minimum number of chargepoints allocated to each LA, based on population size/vehicle parc and land availability.
- Approximately 25% of chargepoints not allocated to an authority, providing the supplier with flexibility to select sites based on demand and costs.
- A minority of locations categorised as “high priority”, due to the strategic importance of the location, resident requests, or to ensure equitable provision.
- A long-list of ‘optional’ locations will be provided, all with high on-street parking reliance.

Therefore a minimum of 75% of indicative sockets will be allocated and – 25% flexible approach across the Midlands LEVI pilot partnership (86 chargepoint sockets) as per below:

75% of the total sites from the LA Longlist of potential sites are allocated – high priority sites mutually identified	25% of the total sites are unallocated – supplier flexibility
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Project timeline

December 2022 – February 2023

In December 2022 the First Midlands EV Infrastructure Consortium agreed a re-assessment of the site selections from the original bid, with specialist support from the external consultants, WSP, appointed by MC to support the project.

Local Authorities were asked to:

- Review the lists of sites to provide insights into local area that the EV tool may not take into account – ASB, on street issues (parking on the kerb), parking restrictions, trees, shopping areas, footpath widths, streetlighting positions etc
- To prioritise sites to help provide a number of high priority sites and lower priority sites
- Assess if there were opportunities for sites for the future once capacity for additional sites is available, as back up suggestions or to be re-visited in LEVI tranche 1 or 2 LEVI funding.

Transport, parking and highways teams worked on the proposed charge-point sites list identified. Suitable sites were difficult to identify, even on a small scale such as this, due to restrictions such as pavement width, safety concerns, loss of existing parking spaces and potential obstruction issues.

Project progress 2023

January 2023 – to-date

Midlands Connect recruited an EV infrastructure programme manager, to programme manage and support the delivery of the LEVI pilot.

All LTA's approved and signed an MoU to participate in the project.

LTA's suggested potential on-street and off-street sites for inclusion in procurement specification documents.

The consortium meeting fortnightly to update on the project.

Midlands Connect meet individually with each LTA each week for 1-2-1 support.

Soft Market testing took place and outcomes fed into procurement planning.

Programme next steps and outputs

- Procurement via Oxfordshire framework July 2023

Finances

LEVI Pilot - The grant funding has been issued to Lincolnshire County Council as the lead authority. Following successful procurement, the grant will be transferred to the CPO. The LEVI pilot grant funding will not be allocated to RCC's budget.

LEVI – Tranche 1 & 2 Funding

In addition to the LEVI pilot project, further LEVI funding has been announced for which all LA's submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to claim in May 2023. RCC have requested, and have DfT approval, to be placed in tranche 2 which will see funding for projects in 2024/25. This has been requested to enable us to build on lessons learned following the LEVI pilot project implementation and build on any successes identified. The indicative allocation to RCC is £257k capital LEVI funding.

In addition to the capital funding, RCC have requested to claim £280k capability funding available. The funding must be used to employ and/or train staffing resource dedicated to EV workstreams. RCC are working with Lincolnshire County Council to pool capability funding to create a joint EV team with a cross boundary approach to increasing EV infrastructure across the 2 counties. Rutland is geographically too small to attract the interest of EV charge point companies, and so joint working with Lincolnshire County Council will help us to maximise effective use of LEVI funding.