

Local authority EV forum

Discussion summary

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Innovation Showcase
with Innovate UK and Innovate UK KTN

13 October 2022



Local Government Support Programme

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1. Introduction

The Energy Saving Trust hosts local authority (LA) electric vehicle (EV) forums, in partnership with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV, which is part of DfT and BEIS). The aim of the forums is to help local authority officers to find answers to their questions and share their experience with others working on public chargepoint delivery.

2021/22 quarterly meetings		2022/23 quarterly meetings	
Q2 5 Oct 2021	EV chargepoint procurement and funding	Q1 20 May 2022	Exploring EV Strategies
Q3 3 Dec 2021	Implementing EV infrastructure plans	Q2 15 Jul 2022	Local journey to electrification
Q4 11 Feb 2022	Exploring EV Infrastructure	Q3 13 Oct 2022	EV Charging Innovation
		Q4 8 Dec 2022	Reflecting back on 2022

Officers are invited to join a MS Teams group to continue the discussion (to join please email lgsp@est.org.uk). Officers are also invited to sign up to our 'Authority Alert' newsletter here: <https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/c2n2609-6b3y2e5b>

Previous LA forum reports can be found here: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/service/resources-for-local-authorities-on-electric-vehicle-chargepoints/>

Our sixth LA EV Forum

For this forum in which we partnered with [Innovate UK](#) and [Innovate UK KTN](#) as part of their [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Charging Innovation Showcase](#) held in Sheffield on the 13th October 2022.

From our last forum feedback, we decided on a hybrid event to enable officers who wanted to be part of the event to discuss key topics that linked in with Innovate UK's Showcase agenda.

Our forum was held during the lunch slot. Officers had a safe place to talk, away from the main event. Innovate UK shared an overview of their mission, with their continued support on Low Emission and Zero Emission vehicles as part of Innovate UK's UK Transport Vision 2050 and upcoming funding that local authorities can take part in with 100% funding.

We planned three breakout groups, but Innovate UK Showcase morning session overran, so only 10-15 minutes remained for officers to talk in the Forum. Topics discussed were: Chargepoint Operator (CPO) performance and management; Council partnerships and fleet electrification.

Who are Innovate UK and Innovate UK KTN?

Innovate UK

This is the UK's innovation agency, supporting business-led innovation in all sectors, technologies and UK regions and are a key delivery body of the Government's Innovation Strategy.

- Please find a copy of the UK's Transport Vision for 2050 here:
<https://www.ukri.org/publications/uk-transport-vision-2050>

Their mission is to help UK businesses to grow through the development and commercialisation of new products, processes, and services, supported by an outstanding innovation ecosystem that is agile, inclusive, and easy to navigate.

To date they have invested £720 million into Low Emission and Zero Emission Vehicle innovations, providing £450 million in grant funding, delivering over 700 projects with over 2,000 partners.

Innovate UK KTN

Innovate UK's **Knowledge Transfer Network** is funded by Innovate UK to connect ideas, people and communities to respond to these challenges and drive positive change through innovation. They coordinated and supported the delivery of the EV Innovation Showcase to help local authorities on decarbonising transport (further details: <https://ktn-uk.org/transport/>). KTN also manages **KTN-iX**, an Innovation Exchange programme. It is a cross-sector programme supporting innovation transfer by matching industry challenges to innovative companies from other sectors. Local authorities can also tap into KTN-iX. Energy Saving Trust works closely with Innovate UK KTN on the LEVI scheme and the Local Government Support Programme.

2.Polls and presentations

At our previous forums we found out about EV Infrastructure progress, and understanding the challenges for officers to shape future forums. Over the last year we identified the following top challenges, and we summarise what we did to support officers overcome those challenges:

Top challenges	Actions taken/ insights noted
High DNO costs	Western Power Distribution (now National Grid) shared significant code changes coming into place from 1 April 2023
Lack of internal resource and knowledge	We shared numerous councils' journeys regarding how they tackled this by joint working internally and with neighbouring authorities
Funding	Our forums are supported by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open Q&As with OZEV • sharing webinars • sharing Sub National Transport Bodies' work on EV support • connecting officers and hearing from councils implementing Clean Air Zones with additional funding for EVs
Enforcement of chargepoints	Coventry shared their journey with neighbourhood zones, Traffic Regulation Orders and EV technology
Council fleet electrification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EST's fleet team shared infrastructure steps to electrify fleet • Durham County Council explained their trial project • Nottingham City Council's shared a business case to electrify fleet
Electrifying the taxi trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement is the first step • baseline surveys follow • all of which helps to create a commercial case for EV infrastructure
EV Strategies, procurement and responsibilities	Dorset Council explained their journey to developing their strategy. West Sussex explained their EV infrastructure framework
On-street EV charging solutions	We held two webinars about on-street solutions, including Oxford Council, taking the lead on key innovations for tackling on-street charging
Councillor EV engagement and Parish Councils	We held two webinars for councillors on understanding EV infrastructure and how Parish Councils have applied for On-street Residential charging Scheme to install chargepoints

To find more about these outcomes and discussions, please find previous forums below:

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/service/resources-for-local-authorities-on-electric-vehicle-chargepoints/>

This forum was partnered with Innovate UK, as their event was specifically focused on Local Authority officers. The all-day event saw presentations from DfT, OZEV, BEIS on the LEVI scheme, smart charging and flex programme, including numerous 3-minute pitches from innovators, CPOs and industry experts. The five key areas of focus for the event were:

1. New charging technology
2. Chargepoint planning and business models
3. Improving user experience
4. Fleet charging
5. Energy solutions

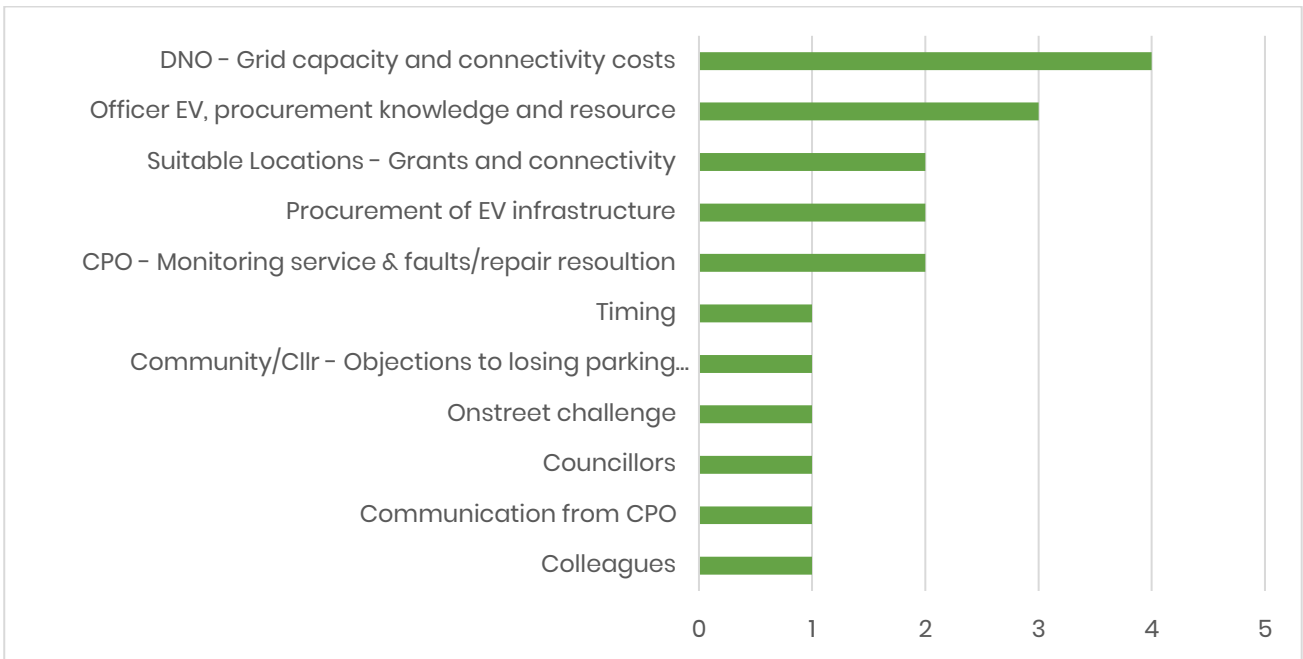
Whilst the Innovate UK KTN event itself was recorded (available for local authorities on request), it was not available live online on the day. The Energy Saving Trust hosted the forum online, noting the session did not tie up with the in-person forum as the main session overran. This said, Innovate UK were able to present to all officers later in the session. We want to thank all officers for their time to take part in this hybrid event.

Poll findings

Whilst 52 officers accessed the Slido polls during the hybrid forum, approximately 50% of officers engaged in responses to the polls (representing 28 officers out of 60 attendees). We asked officers what their biggest concern they are finding when installing EV infrastructure. The top issues identified were:

1. Distribution Network Operator with Grid capacity issues and connectivity costs
2. Officer resources including general EV and infrastructure knowledge, procurement knowledge, and the resources to manage EV projects
3. Having suitable locations for EV infrastructure for funding and 5G connectivity
4. Procurement of EV infrastructure
5. Chargepoint Point Operator performance including monitoring of operational service levels and resolving/ repairing faults

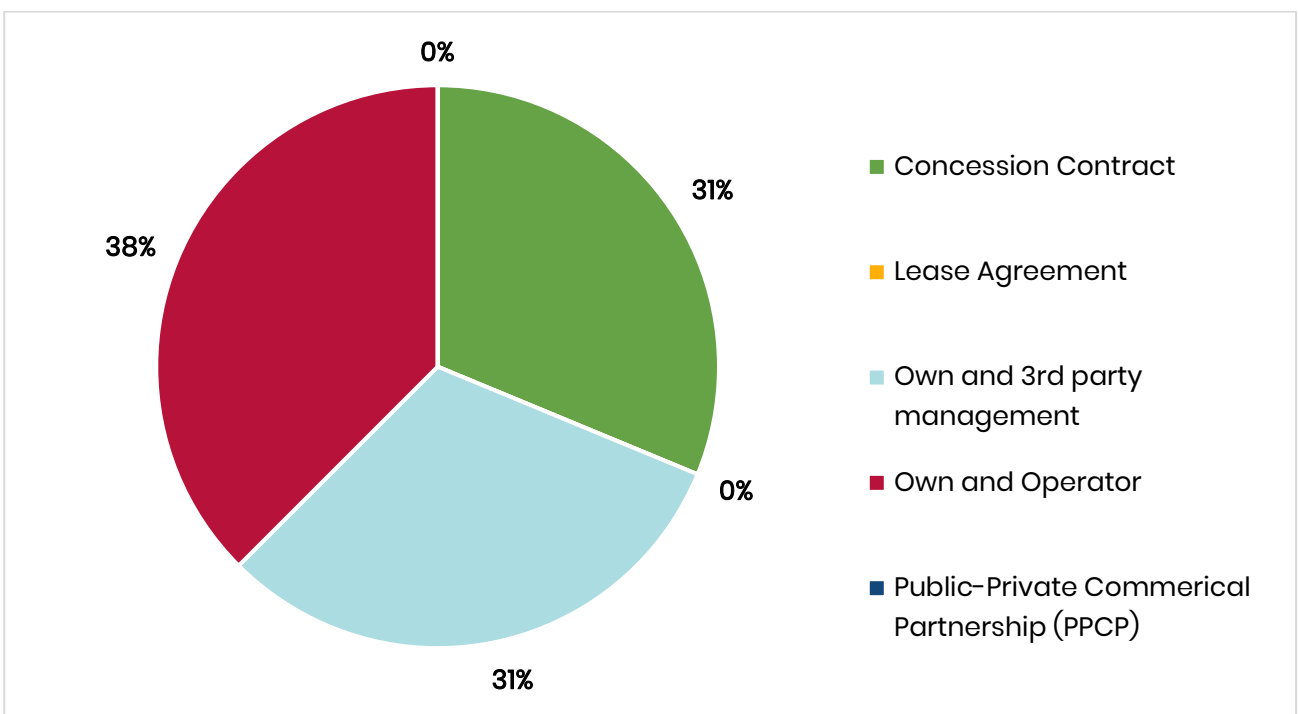
Figure 1 – At the moment what would you say is the biggest concern you are finding in



Learning about Chargepoint Operators (CPOs)

We asked officers about the framework setup of EV infrastructure, main chargepoint operators councils have set up (see figure 2). There was an equal 3-way split between Concession contract, own and operate to own and 3rd party management from 16 responses.

Figure 2 - Q. In your council, what framework do you have on your current public EV infrastructure? (16 responses)

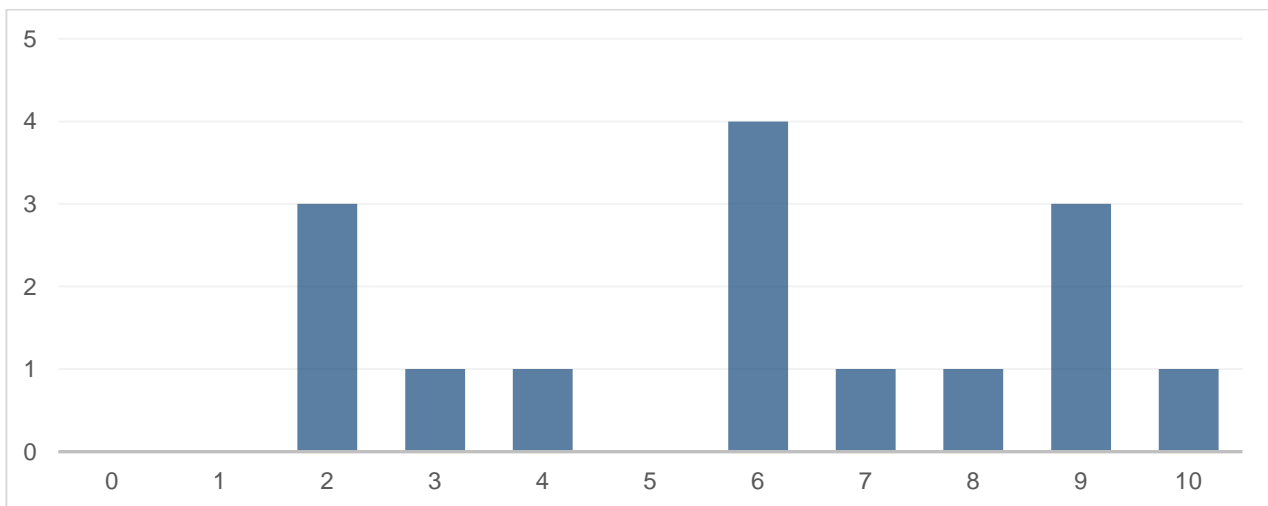


We explored the main CPO that councils are working with to deliver internal and public EV infrastructure and then looked at how council’s are finding CPO performance with their contracts. Which we found that of the 15 responses (see Fig. 3) their CPO is:

- 36% performing well (scoring 8-10)
- 36% performing neither well nor poorly (scoring 5-7)
- 32% performing poorly (scoring 1-4)

We are going to explore this more at the next local authority forum.

Figure 3 - Are you happy with the performance of your CPO on a scale of 1 – 10?
(1 being very poor, 5 being okay and 10 being excellent) (15 responses)



To delve into the reasons for poor performance currently, or in the past, we asked “What is the top issue you have with your CPO? Or top issue you have had?”. We found the top issues to be:

1. Poor CPO responsiveness to faults and maintenance/ repairs
2. Unreliability of the chargepoints installed
3. Slow CPO response to council queries and poor access to CPO’s own back-office systems
4. Contractual problems regarding reimbursement for revenue from CPOs to the council
5. Lack of support from councillors and/or senior management to build internal EV support/resources
6. Reluctance to support sites with high DNO costs

However it was great to see that two officers have not experienced any issue with their CPO.

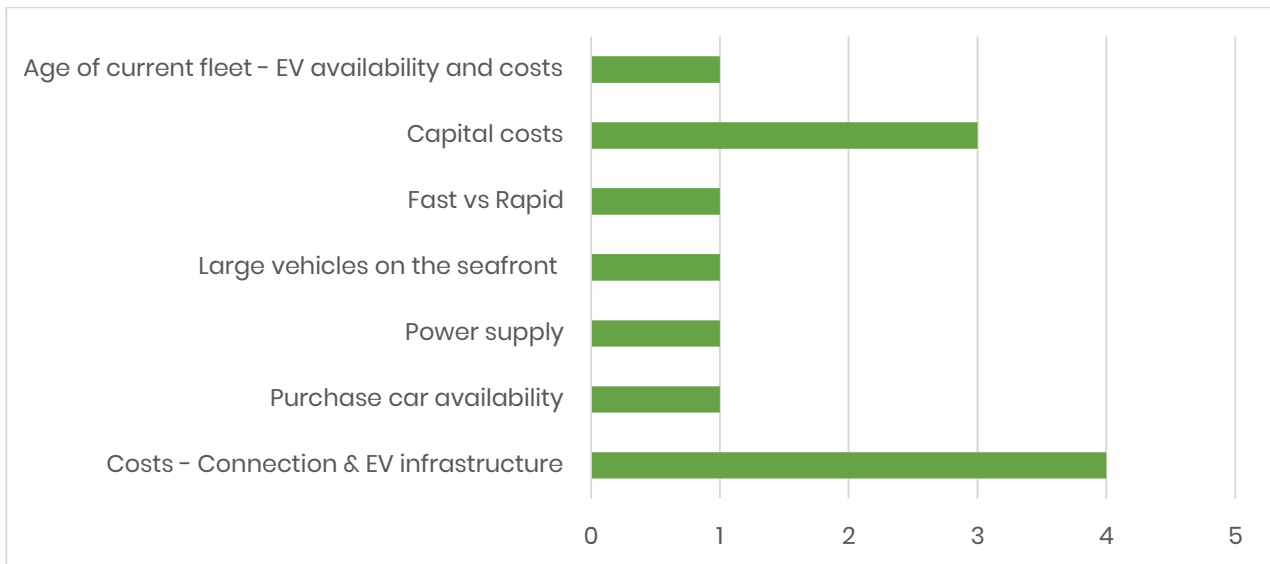
To understand how councils have overcome poor CPO performance we asked “If you have had an issue with your CPO how have you overcome this issue?” and the top answers were:

1. Establishing one point of contact with CPO and council
2. Better communication with CPO to share learning and regular contact
3. Clear stipulation in contracts and threat of legal action
4. Providing internal funding to have an officer managing EV infrastructure

Fleet electrification by 2030/2040

We explored the challenges of fleet electrification. Capital costs and EV infrastructure clearly came out as top issues.

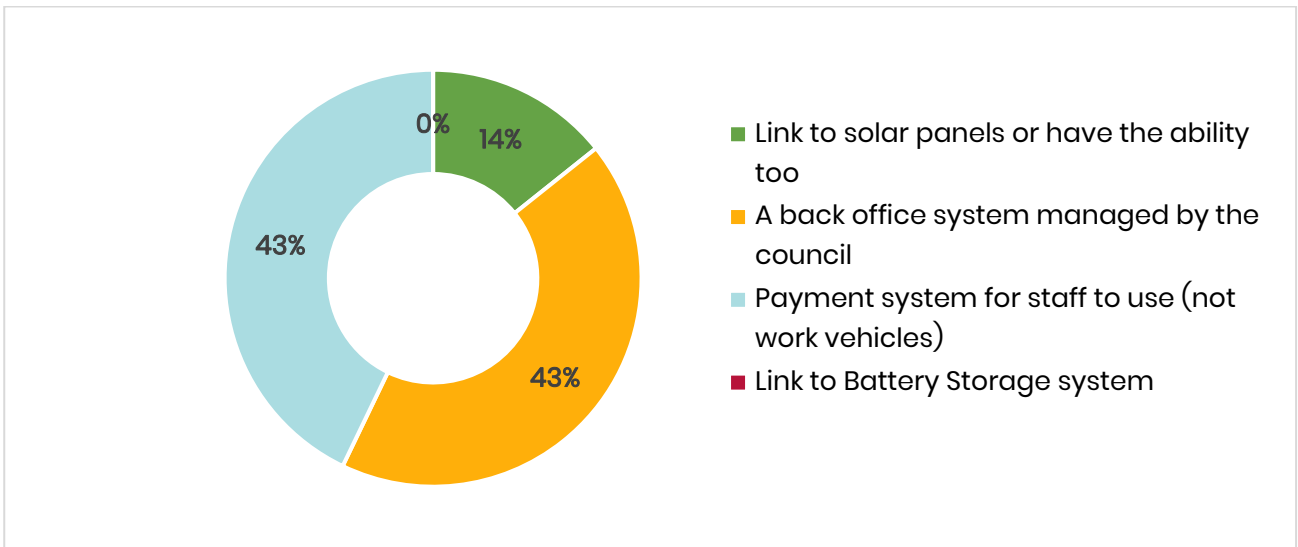
Figure 4 - What would you say is your key challenge to electrification? (12 responses)



We explored the chargepoints depots have used for current EV infrastructure and the ownership/contract model used. Of these EV chargepoints, we wanted to know more about the capacity of the chargepoints. It was great to see:

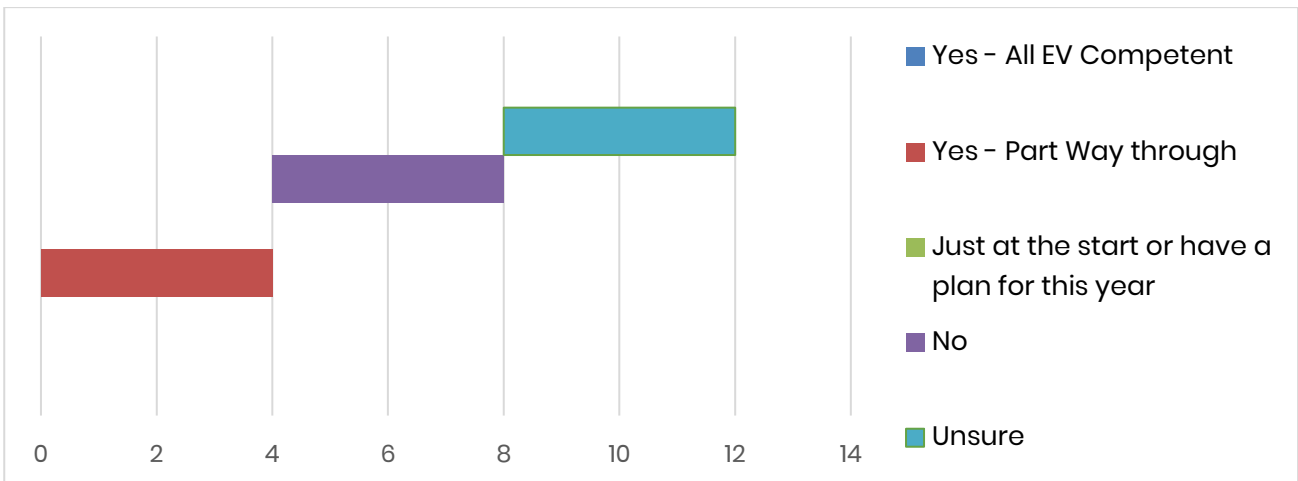
- payment systems are available for staff to charge their own EV at the depot when the chargepoints are not in use by fleet vehicles
- solar panel links
- back-office system management

Figure 5 - If you have installed any chargepoints at your depot, do they? (6 responses)



At the last forum, Nottingham City Council explored training of maintenance teams for the future of Electric Vehicles in the fleet. So we asked officers, in which a 1/3 have train their maintenance team to be 100% competent in electric vehicles and 1/3 are part way through training maintenance teams on Electrification of vehicles.

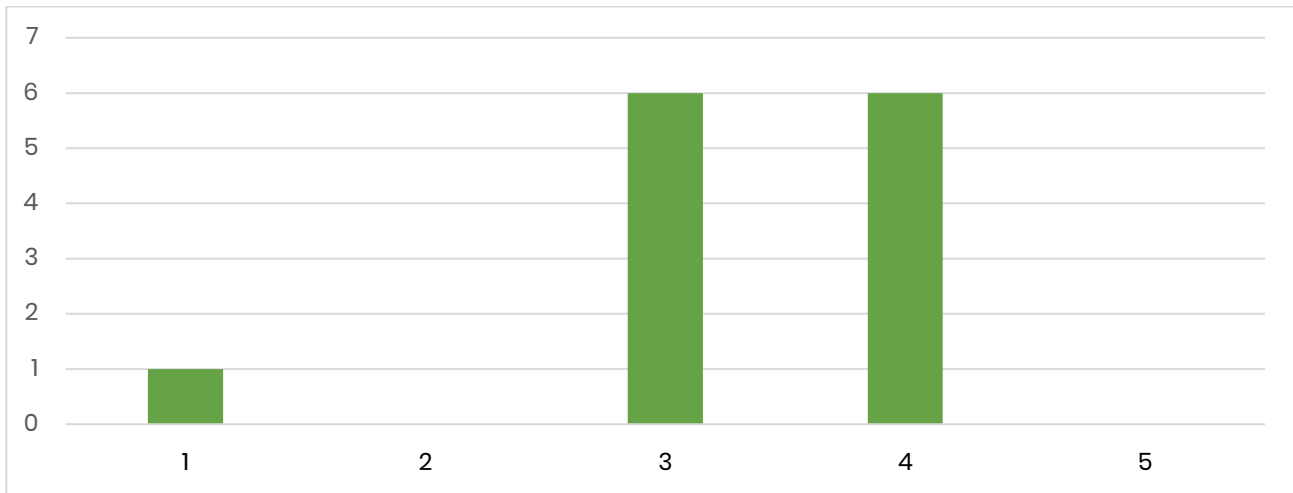
Figure 6 - Have you started to upskill your maintenance team to support electric vehicles? (12 responses)



Council Partnerships

This breakout session was the highest subscribed session, which shows in the discussions held at this forum. We asked councils how their relationship with other councils. Most councils felt the engagement is okay to good.

Figure 7 - How are you finding engagement on EV across between your local district, city and county on EV infrastructure discussions (1 being very poor, 5 being excellent)? (13 responses)



When we asked which areas were going well or not so well, communication was a clear area of concern.

Figure 8 – Table of results from Partnership work

What is going well with your partnerships? Discussions, Sharing, Action, partnership working etc	What is not going well? Or engagement or areas you are struggling with?
1. Sharing	1. Collaboration
2. Establishing joint working groups	2. Communication
3. Talking to each other - Working together	3. Differing aims – For example: a. Districts are heavily dependent on car parking - we need to reduce the overall use of private cars in our towns b. Not open to innovative solutions
4. Dialogue, information sharing, discovering commonality of issues, collaboration to try to resolve problems.	4. Resources - challenge of two-tier system. different methods, agendas and ongoing projects.

3. Breakout sessions

We held three breakout rooms, in which each session focused on a topic introduced by the presentations.

3.1. Chargepoint Operator Performance and Management

CPO approaching them about LEVI

Discussions around consortium bids, frameworks set up by Swale council may not match what the County Council have decided is their preferred CPO. It is unclear how councils will access this funding source if they are only a small borough council if ORCS funding were to be removed.

Also issues emerging around monopolies of chargepoint operators. When looking at two different CPOs under a contract, they do not wish to have interoperable systems or openness to work with each other for ease of accessibility and similar tariff costs.

Long contracts

Mixed discussions on whether long term or short-term contracts are the best, as some feel long term means there is better relationship as it is long term and others finding issues with maintenance timeframes with longer contracts, looking for shorter contracts for new chargepoints so that the end of the contract comes up at the same time, so they can set up a new contract or manage themselves in future (if they own the underground infrastructure).

3.2. Council Partnerships

Keeping up to date with councils

One of the key challenges for Hertfordshire's ten district council is keeping up to date with what Hertfordshire County Council are doing regarding strategy and procurement. It is noted that this is a common challenge as this is a fast-moving area, and the person in charge in EV infrastructure holds different roles within different teams across all the councils. Energy Saving Trust provided a case study in which West Sussex County Council brought together 6/7 districts, unfortunately one district did not join a internal working group to help set up their own regional EV infrastructure framework using the counties procurement team. Please find case study here: [West Sussex Chargepoint Network - Energy Saving Trust](#)

Navigating different councils' EV strategies and actual delivery

With new EV officer roles coming into post in County Councils, some of the challenges for a new person is not only how to navigate the district and boroughs with their own EV strategies and

agendas, but the differences in levels of progression. The aim is how the county can rationalise and find a common point of how to work together, and find out what stage each district council is at. The aim is to get them all to the same stage of development, or is it to work from where they are currently and reach a sufficiently similar stage of development, from a countywide perspective.

The challenges of council partnerships raised its head, that whilst Norfolk County Council had started the process the LEVI pilot came out with short timeframes not allowing time for an application as it was too early in their engagement to have a formalised plan. A way forward has been parish council engagement, where county can focus on this support, whereas boroughs have only been focusing on council land EV opportunities.

Partnership working – Sustainability, climate change and EV infrastructure

Hertfordshire have formed a Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership across the councils, in which there are 150 actions ranging from sustainability to climate change, and including EV infrastructure and taxi licencing. The key concern expressed, is adding EV infrastructure to climate or sustainability groups it is such a big piece of work encompassing a wide range of stakeholders it adds another complexity to an already overstretched sustainability group that they cannot effectively deliver the UK EV Infrastructure Strategy ambition. EV chargepoint initiatives are much wider as they bring in many services including transport, highways, infrastructure and planning (who are already stretched for resources and with no budgets). The conversation noted that partnership working between councils is excellent, but it is not the silver bullet to add EV infrastructure work to partnership climate/sustainability groups (if they are setup between councils).

County and District/Borough EV responsibilities

Discussions identified that the county level should focus on leading overall strategy, with clear lines of responsibility/ demarcation between a county council and its district/borough councils.

One challenge noted is that local district councillors are closer to officers, and may have a direct line to an officer. That leads to pressure and a sense of urgency at local level. At the county level their strategic approach is more complex in which the overall picture is considered. Not that there is no sense of urgency, it's just a different lens.

Key areas of interest

- When the next round of funding is for LEVI to be prepared for it
- The reasons for who won or lost LEVI pilot funding (NB: only 21 of the 42 bids for LEVI funding had an EV Strategy, which is key to the application being successful)
- Understanding what makes a strong LEVI bid

3.3. Fleet electrification by 2030 – 2040

Electric Vehicle market development

With the long timeframes for electric vehicles and the age of the fleet vehicles coming up to their end, it is forcing some councils to look at ICE replacements and therefore not looking at depot infrastructure until 2030/2035.

Depot infrastructure and business case

Upfront costs and limited government funding was mentioned. Energy Saving Trust mentioned the Workplace charging scheme and Plug in vehicle grants for larger vehicles, but these do not deal with the upfront costs with budgets, even with the lower running and maintenance costs overall.

Discussions were had over the suitability of current depot for electrification, looking at potential challenges around size of depot or rural location impacting capital costs of EV infrastructure, however the challenges around relocation were on leases of depots to new depots. The key challenge noted, that that fleet managers/operation managers are too stretched to tackle these challenges and start to develop a EV infrastructure on site and project manage delivery, specialist vehicles to DNO connection, as time is limited. Most of the councils on the call asked if there was any way to fund resources to manage this for fleets. They wanted to explore if the £50 million LEVI resources could support this challenge for councils.

With all the complexities around depot EV infrastructure and electric vehicles, a lot of conversations focused around alternative fuels as seen as easy option that doesn't change the way of refuelling (saves time), even though fleet managers are aware of the whole life cost savings of EVs. HVO was being explored by many officers however most are been put off moving to this fuel due to current high costs and therefor looking at electric vehicles more. The EV infrastructure currently is very expensive to most councils due to DNO costs and hoping that the significant code change from April 2023 may help, but the delay of EV infrastructure and EVs are long and costs increasing due to inflation and demand for services.

Difficult to navigate Chargepoint units and options

It was felt that the CPO that helps the most or engages you first is almost the first option as it is hard to know which CPOs are available and what their offering of chargepoints is and what might be the right solutions.

Connection costs

Western Distribution Power talked about the upcoming DNO Significant Code Change coming in April 2023 which this code change will impact both public EVCP and depot electrification costs. It covers any connection to the DNO's grid and talked about timeframes on obtaining costs from DNOs, reinforcement timescales, and to engage with DNOs as early as possible.

4. Feedback on forums

At the end of the forum, due to time constraints we received no feedback on this session. However we assessed the hybrid session to see how we can improve this in future.

- To have defined forum slot with any partnered sessions to allow for the 30-45 minute slot that officers want to chat and discuss
- Technical support for any MS Teams issues, as we found we could not assign room coordinators and they could not move themselves back to the breakout room even with full permissions
- Forum in-person rooms to be located close to the main event room

We found that officers even without EST support for the breakout room had full and useful conversations and that they are experiencing presentation overload at the moment. So we are going to explore more discussion facilitation for our next forum, with the only presentation being the OZEV update.

Feedback on the Innovate UK KTN event

For those attending the event in person, we wanted to understand how they found Innovate UK's EV charging event for staff only to understand how this partnership with the LA EV forum could be developed in future.

Only two people fed back their thoughts:

- They enjoyed the morning presentations, but one found it a little too long
- Of the morning presentations, they liked
 - OZEV presentation
 - BEIS presentation
 - Charging technology session