

Local authority EV forum

Discussion summary

Reflecting back on 2022

07 December 2022



Local Government Support Programme

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Polls and Presentations	2
3. Breakout sessions.....	7
4. Feedback on forums	10

1. Introduction

The Energy Saving Trust hosts local authority (LA) EV forums in partnership with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV). The aim of the forum is to help LA officers to find answers to their questions and share their experience with others working on public charge point 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

At our seventh LA EV forum, OZEV provided attending officers with an update on the LEVI scheme. During the forum, we focused on three core topics: **CPO performance, fleet electrification, and council relationships**. In response to feedback from previous forums, the format of the forum was altered to remove presentations and increase the time allocated for breakout room discussions. 94 officers attended the forum, making it the largest LA forum yet.

Council officers are invited to join our MS Teams group to continue the discussion. To join, please email lgsp@est.org.uk

Council 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/>

2.Polls and Presentations

OZEV and Innovate UK update

Andrew Larkham (Head of LEVI Fund Commercial and Delivery) from OZEV presented an update on the LEVI scheme. He discussed the trajectory of the scheme and its role alongside the ORCS scheme. Andrew stated that OZEV are hoping to release tranche one funding early which should hasten the delivery of on-street EV charging infrastructure.

Eleanor Marshall (Innovate UK - Knowledge Transfer Manager) updated us regarding the publication of a series of short videos recorded during Innovate UK's October 2022 conference, in which EV chargepoint technology companies gave 3-minute pitch presentations about their innovative products and services. These videos help LAs to find out more about chargepoint technology and make connections with key stakeholders. The pitch videos can be found here: [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Charging Innovation Showcase - Innovate UK KTN \(ktn-uk.org\)](https://www.ktn-uk.org/electric-vehicle-ev-charging-innovation-showcase)

Previous Forum Feedback:

At our February forum, we found that

- **TROs:** a third of councils had used Traffic Regulation Orders to redesignate parking spaces to EV Charging
- **Fleets:** over a half of councils were starting to electrify council fleets
- **Procurement:** the main challenges reported were focused on procurement and the difficulties associated with understanding and deciding on a procurement model

At our May forum, we found that

- **EV Strategy:** a third of councils had yet to make plans to put in place an EV Strategy
- **Fleet depot:** a third of attending councils had an electrification plan for their fleet depot
- **Procurement:** was still the area of greatest concern and challenge

At our July forum, we found that

- **Taxis:** a third of councils had started to engage with their taxi trade on electrification
- **ORCS:** poll responses found that councils were significantly affected by changes to ORCS funding, with 26% of respondents deciding against making an ORCS application

Reflecting back on 2022

At this forum, we wanted to review the progress and focus of LAs and how this had changed throughout 2022. Polls were created to highlight changes in the actions and attitudes of LAs and their EV strategies.

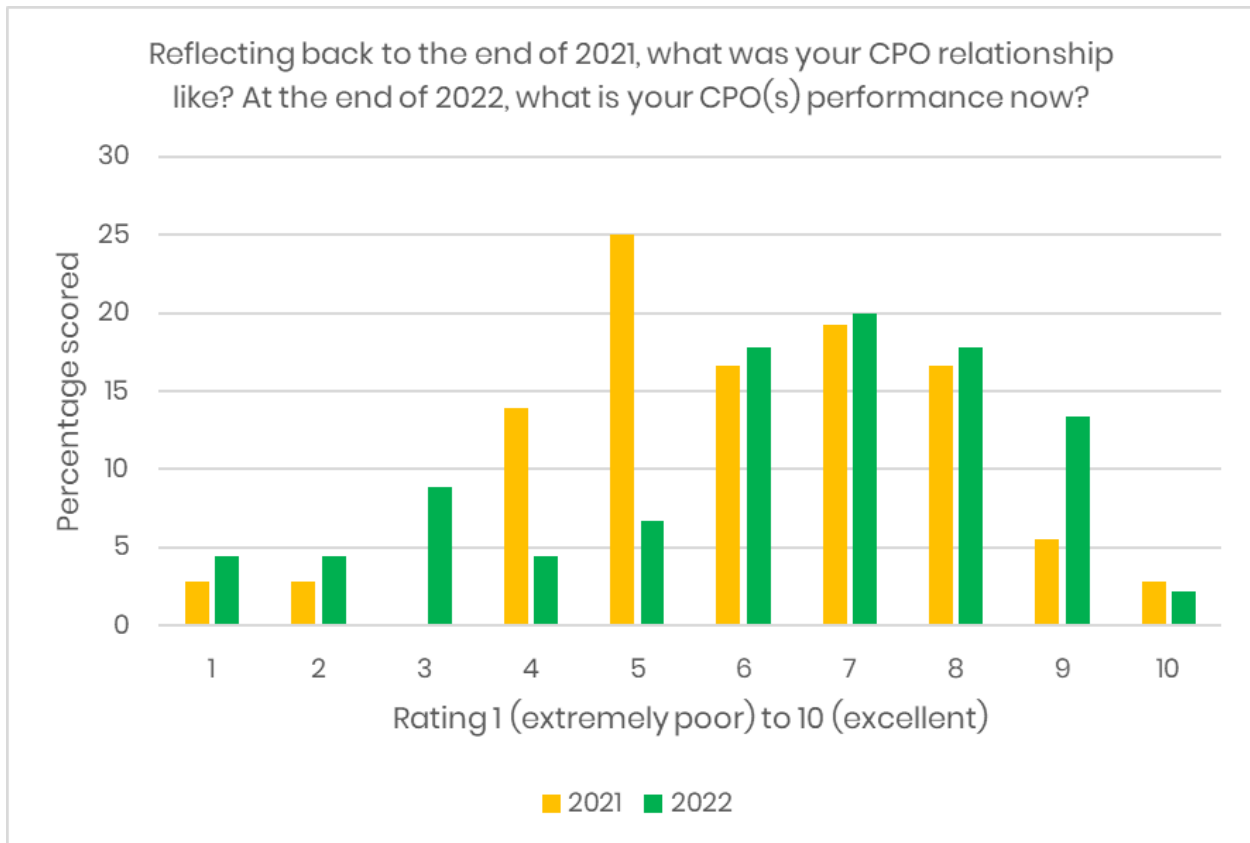
CPO Performance

We asked officers attending the Forum to reflect back to the end of 2021 on their relationship with CPOs. **Figure 1** shows:

- overall, the data shows a mixed picture

- on average, CPO performance improved between 2021 and 2022
- 50% felt their CPO performance was good or very good (7-10)
- but the proportion reporting poor CPO performance (1-3) increased from 6% (end of 2021) to 18% (end of 2022)

Figure 1: Reflecting back to the end of 2021, what was your CPO relationship like? At the end of 2022, what is your CPO(s) performance now? (Responses: 36 (2021) and 45 (2022)).



Improvements in officers rating CPO performance as ‘good’ might be due to efforts made to resolve challenges with CPOs. We asked officers how they achieved this. The poll suggested that:

- 47% relied on informal mechanisms
- 3% used formal pathways
- those who responded ‘other’ to the poll mostly said their CPO issues are not yet resolved

Managing tariffs

In previous forums, officers said that tariff management was a key challenge to electrification. In this forum, we asked officers what has helped the most to manage tariff settings with CPOs.

- 39% said that an SLA which mandates a breakdown of costs and updates on tariff charges for council approval has aided the management of tariff setting with CPOs
- 20% said that owning the electricity supply helped tariff management the most

Of the 24% of officers that responded ‘other’ to this poll, over half specified that they have been unable to manage tariff setting and that their CPO is solely responsible for managing tariff prices. Officers also reported the following as supporting factors in managing tariffs:

- Using parish council properties
- Using the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (GULCS) London tariff
- The council having sole responsibility for setting tariffs

Electrifying Fleets

In February’s forum, we found that over half of participating councils had started to electrify their fleets. In this month’s forum, we asked officers how confident they were in achieving an electric council fleet by 2030/40. **Figure 2** indicates that confidence regarding fleet electrification improved during 2022:

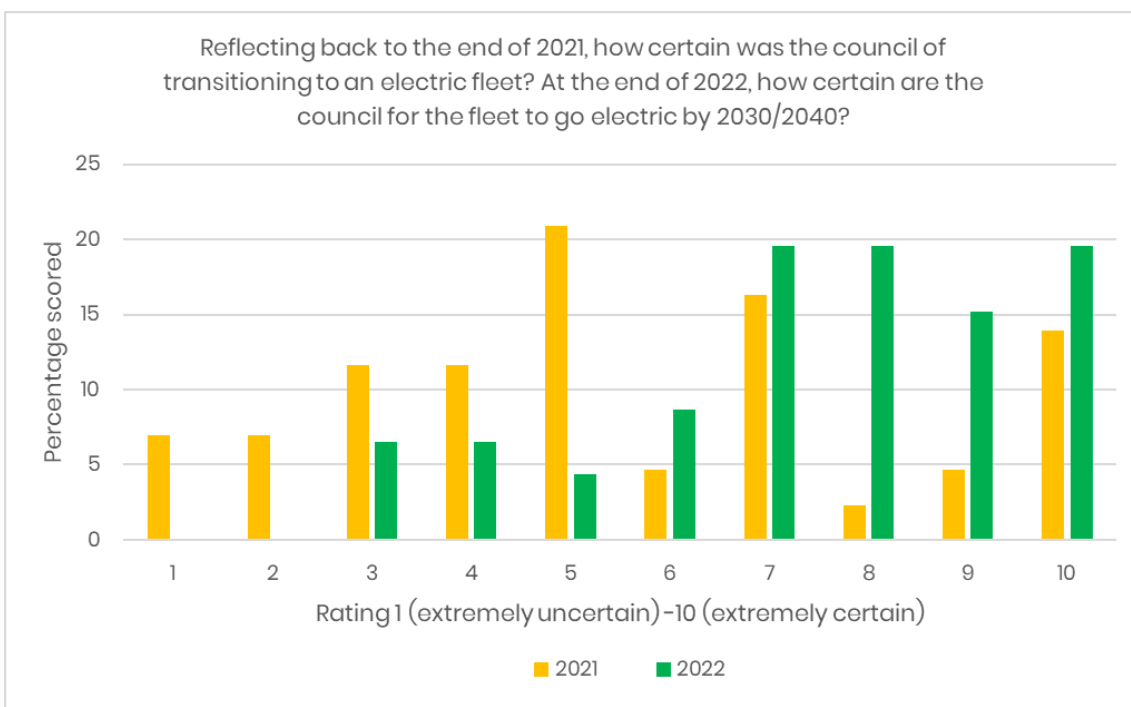
At the end of 2021

- a quarter were very certain (7-10) that their council fleets will electrify by 2023/40
- a quarter were uncertain (1-5)

At the end of 2022

- most were reasonably certain that their council fleets will electrify by 2030/40
- three quarters were very certain (7-10)
- less than a fifth were uncertain (1-5)

Figure 2: Reflecting back to the end of 2021, how certain was the council of transitioning to an electric fleet? At the end of 2022, how certain are the council for the fleet to go electric by 2030/2040? (Responses: 43 (2021) and 46 (2022))

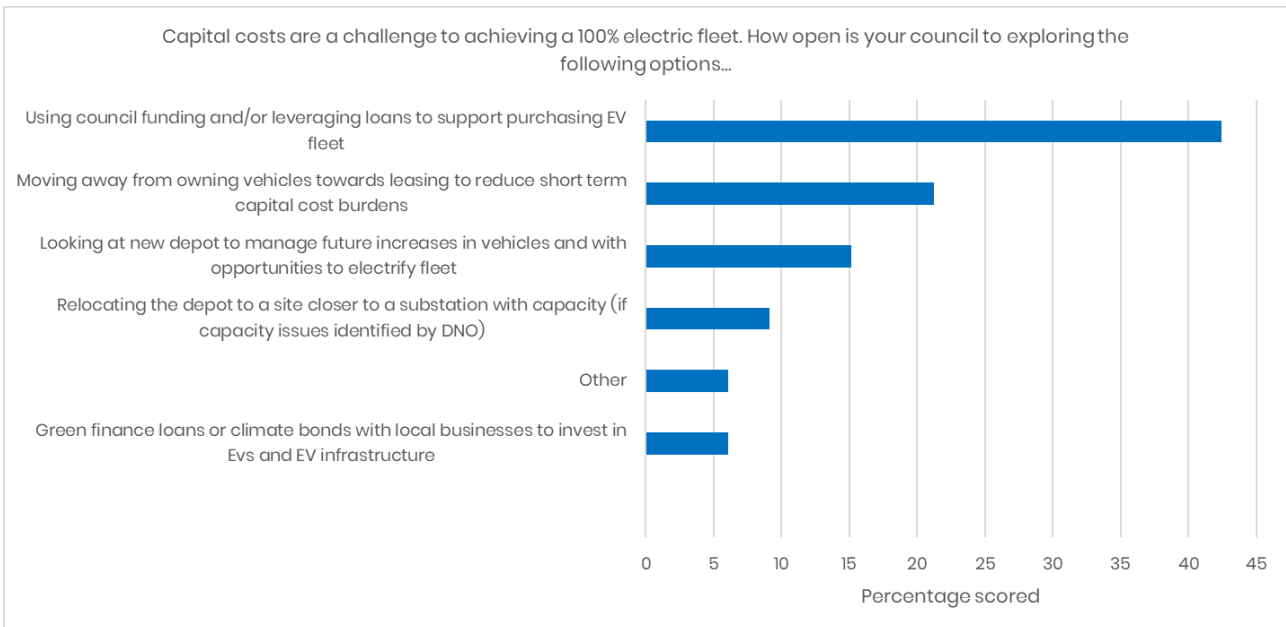


Capital costs

Capital costs of EV vehicles and EV infrastructure often pose a barrier to achieving a 100% electric fleet. With this in mind, we asked officers to share their council’s openness to a range of different options to aid electrification. The results of the poll suggest that

- the favoured approach is using council funding to leverage loans to buy EV fleets
- other approaches were
 - leasing to reduce short term capital costs
 - moving to a new, larger depot, possibly nearer to a substation with capacity
- few would consider green finance loans or climate bonds

Figure 3: Capital costs are a challenge to achieving a 100% electric fleet. How open is your council to exploring the following options... (Responses: 33)

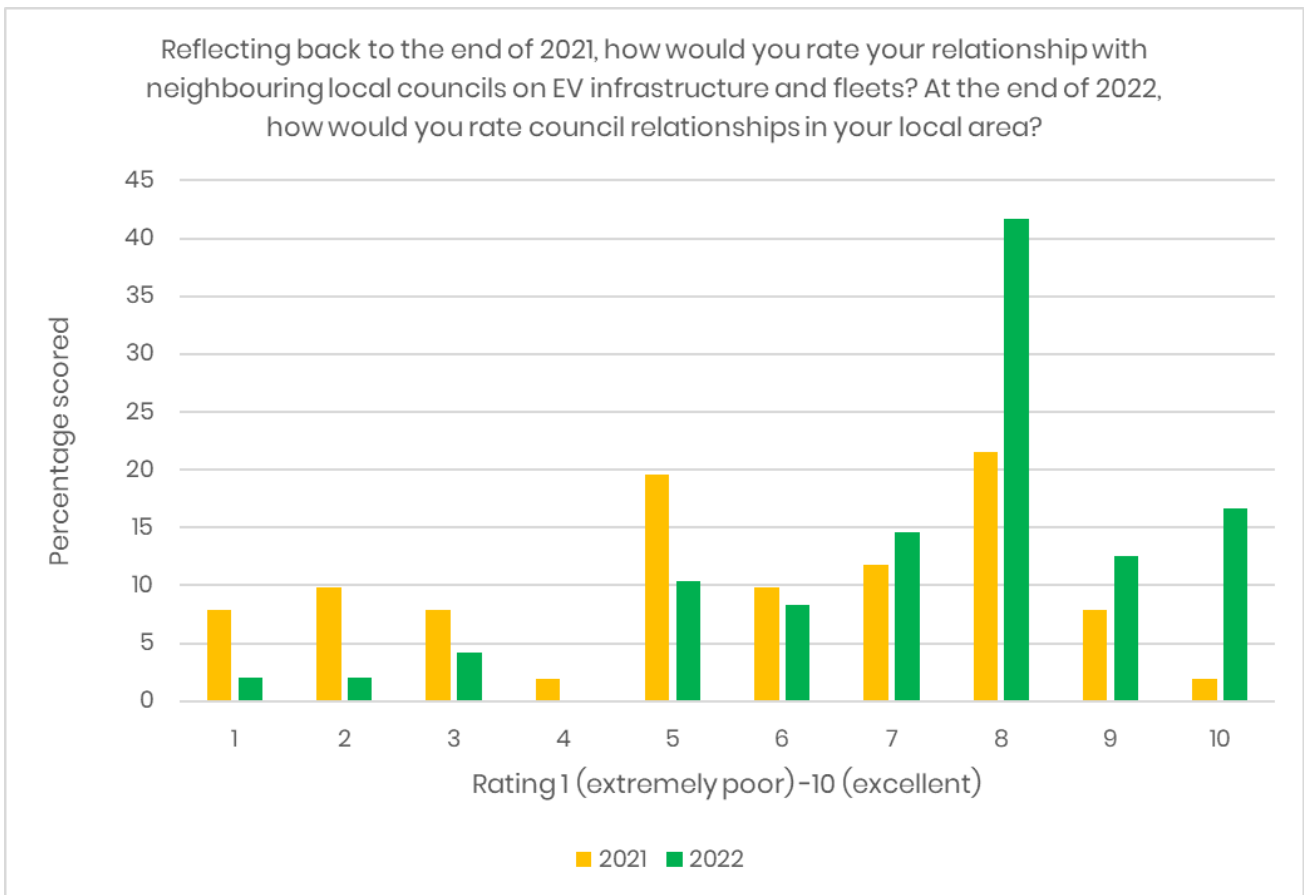


Council relationships

We asked officers to reflect on their relationship with neighbouring local councils regarding EV fleets and infrastructure.

At the end of 2021, a quarter had a poor relationship (1-3 rating). A year later, this had fallen to 8% of officers. **Figure 4** shows a clear improvement in council relationships by the end of 2022. Over 85% reported good or excellent relationships with neighbouring councils (7-10 rating).

Figure 4: Reflecting back to the end of 2021, how would you rate your relationship with neighbouring local councils on EV infrastructure and fleets? At the end of 2022, how would you rate council relationships in your local area? (Responses: 51 (2021) and 48 (2022))



3. Breakout sessions

In this forum, we held three breakout rooms covering topics identified by officers during previous forums. Responding to feedback received during the last forum, we extended the breakout sessions to 45 minutes to allow for longer discussions between officers.

3.1 Improving CPO performance

In this breakout room, officers shared their experiences with CPOs and discussed routes to improve CPO performance. From this discussion, we found that:

- many LAs were encountering similar issues with CPO procurement and performance
- some had concerns about business-to-business communications

Officers were disappointed with the service they had received from CPOs:

- some CPOs did not respond when asked about important issues
- that harmed customer service as chargepoint issues were not resolved efficiently
- that led some LAs to look into taking legal action against their CPOs

However, some reported having strong lines of communication with their CPO(s), due to recruiting a dedicated EV officer which allowed their council:

- to develop in-house knowledge of EVs and EV infrastructure
- to strengthen their position when procuring and working with CPOs
- to improve communication within the LA (which many LAs recognised as a need they have)

However, we noted that recruiting an EV officer is often very difficult due to skill shortages, leading to competition between LAs and CPOs vying for the same, few, experienced candidates.

LAs without an EV officer said that this responsibility is often bolted onto another job role, creating a situation in which the officer has very little time to establish strong relationships and good communication practices with CPOs.

A number of other issues were raised by officers during the discussion. These included:

- CPO shortfalls leading to increased workload for councils
- Revenue generation from chargepoints
- Grid connection and power supply (especially in rural areas)

Selecting a CPO model

There was ongoing discussion about preferences for CPO models. In particular, officers discussed the benefits and drawbacks of concessionary and non-concessionary contracts.

Officers whose council used non-concessionary models found this led to difficulty in coordinating the DNO, the meter supplier and the CPO, which led to delays in installing new chargepoints.

Some councils avoided this difficulty while also using non-concessionary contracts by implementing end-to-end contracts with CPOs, making the CPO responsible for coordination. This approach reduced LA input, but sometimes required more time to install chargepoints.

There was also concern that non-concessionary contracts are unpopular with CPOs as they do not present as great a profit potential. For one council, this has led to ongoing problems with their CPO who they are now looking to take legal action against.

There was also discussion regarding the procurement of single versus multiple CPOs. One officer highlighted that it is increasingly seen as best practice to procure multiple CPOs to increase resilience. They admitted, however, that this conflicted with the council's preference for ease of management by contracting a single CPO. Other officers agreed that while, in theory, procuring multiple operators should encourage competition and improve customer experience and tariff rates, in practice, it often creates a confusing patch-work of providers which discourages EV uptake and multiplies LA workload.

Some officers who wanted to procure a single CPO reported feeling overwhelmed by the sheer number of different CPO companies. Many CPOs offered similar services and there was no clear mechanism to choose between them. One officer advised that this can be resolved by having an exact specification of what the LA wants to achieve and what the CPO must do.

3.2 Electrifying Fleets

Energy Saving Trust's Pat Taggart explained his previous **fleet decarbonisation role in a Scottish LA**. Pat explained the process of investing in infrastructure to allow for the electrification of council fleets and the differences in guidelines between Scotland and England.

An officer asked about additional funding available in England. Pat explained how **funding in Scotland** functions differently to England, and how it had changed over time. Most importantly, funding in Scotland is allocated to councils based on council size rather than on applications made for funding as in England with the LEVI and ORCS grants. Pat also emphasised the importance of forward planning for infrastructure based on future funding.

Mark Smith from Energy Saving Trust added that, as well as LEVI and ORCS funding, the **Workplace Charging Scheme** is also in place to aid with the installation of EV chargepoints at workplaces, including local authority offices and depots. The Workplace Charging Scheme offers £350 funding per chargepoint for up to 40 chargepoints per applicant across all sites. More information on the scheme can be found here: [Workplace Charging Scheme](#).

One officer then gave an outline of their LA's approach to fleet electrification. The LA had commissioned a **green fleet review** from Energy Saving Trust's fleet team. The review provided a **business case** for fleet electrification which was presented to senior management and helped to cement a commitment to EV infrastructure investment. The LA also used Midlands Net Zero Hub resources to commission a **feasibility report** which was presented to senior management to demonstrate a phased timeline approach to infrastructure investment.

As well as electrifying fleets, this LA planned to switch to **Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) biofuel** as part of its fleet decarbonisation plan. This sparked some debate surrounding the green

credentials of HVO. Many LAs have begun to transition to HVO as it requires little to no investment and offers seemingly impressive carbon savings. However, the **sustainability credentials of HVO are complex and distorted**. Many organisations, including Energy Saving Trust, have raised concerns over the transition to HVO. For more information, please refer to the following report: [Our position on HVO fuel usage by fleets – Energy Saving Trust](#).

Depreciation of electric fleet vehicles was raised as an important consideration for LAs when making a business case for fleet electrification. Electric vehicles depreciate at a slower rate than ICE vehicles and generate a higher resale price.

The breakout room ended on a poignant comment from one officer who, while recognising the importance of making a business case for fleet electrification, asked officers to remember the underlying motivations to transition to electric fleets. Fleet electrification improves air quality and citizen wellbeing, and this should be prioritised over financial considerations.

3.3 Council relationships

In this breakout room, officers discussed a range of different strategies used to facilitate collaboration between LAs and concerns they had surrounding this.

Midlands Connect was identified as a key facilitator of collaboration in the Midlands area. Midlands Connect has worked to research and write a report on the number of chargepoints needed and by what date these should be installed. They hosted workshops facilitating collaboration between LAs and discussion on how best to achieve these aims. This led to continued collaboration between councils in the Midlands area, including the creation of the Midlands Highways Alliance.

Energy Saving Trust was identified as a key facilitator of council collaboration. Energy Saving Trust worked to encourage communication between councils in Essex to improve EV infrastructure provision. Essex councils have continued to build on this relationship via workshops and are pleased with improvements in interaction between councils. Officers were keen to understand whether Energy Saving Trust's role as a relationship broker will evolve to offer further assistance to LAs. Presently, Energy Saving Trust works within the confines of limited resources. However, we hope to continue our offer of support to facilitate further collaboration between councils.

It is important to note that collaboration between LAs does not necessarily rely on a facilitator. Many councils have themselves formed and maintained good working relationships with nearby councils. Councils within the **West of England Combined Authority** are working to build on and strengthen existing relationships to develop joint EV strategies and write funding bids. **South Gloucestershire Council explained** they have worked closely with neighbouring LAs to create a shared charging network and that they plan to work together to submit a LEVI application.

Norfolk County Council has created an EV working group across all council tiers. The group meets monthly to discuss EV strategies and upcoming proposals. This allows for the sharing of ideas between councils and prevents project duplication. They have also found that the working group has improved LAs' relationship with the DNO through the sharing of contact details and improved

communication. The working group has been so successful that other LAs have started to come to Norfolk County Council for advice and guidance.

Working with **parish councils** was a key area of interest, regarding how best to engage parish councils and encourage them to install chargepoint infrastructure in their area. Energy Saving Trust advised that Kent and Suffolk County Councils have led on parish-based approaches and signposted officers to contact these LAs for examples of best practice. However, it is not always easy or possible to work with parish councils to install chargepoints due to varying rules attached to procurement models.

Concerns were raised regarding the **rate of technological change** and the difficulty for LAs to keep up to date with this, especially when working together. There were also concerns around the **associated costs** incurred by individual councils when working together to procure a CPO or new charge point technology.

Concerns were also raised in the breakout room regarding the following topics:

- Understanding contract models (concessionary versus service contract)
- Removal of legacy chargepoints

4. Feedback on forums

We asked officers if they would recommend the LA EV forum to other LA officers. See Figure 5 below.

97% of responding officers would recommend or strongly recommend attending the forum, with 3% of respondents unsure as to whether they would recommend the forum.

We asked officers to feedback on the new format of the forum. 83% of officers enjoyed the new format with no council presentations and longer breakout room discussions.

Energy Saving Trust have also considered creating smaller, self-managed breakout rooms to discuss a greater range of topics. We asked officers if they would be open to trialling this approach at a future forum. Over half of responding officers were open to this suggestion.

We asked officers which topics they would like to cover in future LA EV forums. This was an open question which elicited a wide variety of responses.

- **Procurement and choosing a procurement framework** was the most popular response to this question, with 17 officers referencing this. This reflects discussions in the CPO performance breakout room where officers discussed the difficulty associated with selecting a procurement model
- Nine officers suggested **grants and funding** as a future topic for the forum. There may be a renewed interest in this topic due to the initiation of the LEVI scheme and the associated application for funding

Figure 5: Which topics would you like the next two forums to cover?

