

COMMUNITIES & LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3 MARCH 2026

ANNUAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POLICY REVIEW

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an update on electric vehicle (EV) charging, since the adoption of the Darlington Electric Vehicle Charging policy in February 2025, with a focus on cross-pavement channel solutions, for those without off-street parking.

Summary

2. The Council's approach to electric vehicle charging as set out in the Darlington Electric Vehicle Charging policy is to provide and encourage the use of shared public facilities. Provision is already available in Council owned car parks, and the next phase is to create commercially operated charging hubs (pedestal charging) in community locations.
3. The development of cross pavement charging solutions is in the early days of development and a number of trials are being undertaken both in the Tees Valley and in the UK. More details are provided in the main report but Darlington's position remains as outlined in the current policy, with a commitment to keep this under review as trials and products conclude.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The contents of the report are noted.
 - (b) It is noted that a future review of the Electric Vehicle Charging policy will be presented to Members of the Communities and Local Service Scrutiny Committee in March 2027.

Anthony Hewitt
Assistant Director – Highways & Capital Projects

Background Papers

[Electric Vehicle Charging Policy](#)

Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan through the involvement of Members in contributing to the development of policy.
Addressing inequalities	Public charging equipment must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant legislation.
Tackling Climate Change	This report has implications for tackling climate change through the contribution of electric vehicles in achieving Net Zero.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The outcome of this report does not impact on the efficient and effective use of resources.
Health and Wellbeing	This report has no implications on the health and wellbeing of residents of Darlington.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual group is considered minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Strategic Overview

- The UK's EV policy to phase out petrol and diesel cars by 2035 is central to achieving the Net Zero 2050 target, given that transport is the largest source of UK emissions. To date, Government have invested £200M in charging infrastructure, aiming for 300,000 public chargers by 2030. At the end of December 2025, there were 87,796 EV charge points across the UK¹, which is a 19% increase from December 2024. Several Government grants for EV purchase and infrastructure are available, as outlined in **Appendix 1**.
- To meet Tees Valley Combined Authority's (TVCA) vision, as set out in the [Strategic Transport Plan](#) (STP) for the region, "to provide a high quality, quick, affordable, reliable, low carbon and safe transport network for people and freight to move within, to and from Tees Valley", TVCA aim to implement a comprehensive network of EV charge points. The STP outlines TVCA's intention to expand the network of charging infrastructure across Tees Valley to facilitate an increased uptake of electric vehicles.

¹ [EV charging statistics 2026 - Zapmap](#)

7. The EV Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out how TVCA will deliver the objectives set out in the STP in relation to EV charging infrastructure (EVCI). The Delivery Plan presents a vision for the development of EVCI within the context of both national and regional policy and the economic growth ambitions of the TVCA and its five local authorities. The vision is that “the EV charging network in Tees Valley will work for everyone, prioritising equity, ease of use, and accessibility to inspire confidence in charging opportunities. The network will have comprehensive coverage across the region, including rural areas, to ensure no community is excluded from the transition to zero emission transport”.
8. As of October 2025, it is estimated there are 495 publicly accessible EV charge point locations in Tees Valley, consisting of 370 owned by private entities and 125 public charge points owned by TVCA.
9. Darlington has a crucial role to play at a local level in enabling the transition to EVs, in proactively supporting the delivery of the rollout of EVCI and helping to ensure that the transition is integrated into wider local transport and community needs. Darlington’s Electric Vehicle Charging Policy became operational in February 2025, adopting an approach to provide public charging facilities for EV charging. A project for the roll out of charging points in Council owned car parks is complete, with 58 charge points installed and TVCA issued a tender specification in early 2026, for a charge point operator to deliver and operate on-street charge points across the Tees Valley area.

On-Street Residential Charging

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding

10. The Government’s LEVI fund directly supports the government’s long-term strategy to accelerate EV adoption and complements other grants available towards charging infrastructure (Appendix 1). The aim of the LEVI capital fund is twofold:
 - (a) to deliver a step-change in the deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure across England and,
 - (b) accelerate the commercialisation of and investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector.
11. The fund supports local authorities in England to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking and includes capital funding to contribute to the costs of delivering charge points. It also includes capability funding to employ and train new staff specifically to plan and deliver the charge point infrastructure.
12. In April 2023, local authorities were informed of their LEVI capital funding allocation, with TVCA allocating a maximum of £6.596M. Following a successful application, TVCA were awarded the full allocation in March 2024. Since the award, TVCA have been working with the LEVI Support Body, on project development. To satisfy the scope and conditions of the LEVI fund TVCA propose to procure a single Concessionaire on behalf of the five local authorities, to deliver and operate on-street charge points across the Tees Valley. The Concessionaire will finance, install, own, maintain and operate the on-street charging infrastructure, with 80% of the agreed programme to be delivered within the first five years of the contract.

13. Darlington's preference around the type of on-street infrastructure that's installed, is defined through LEVI as 'pedestal charging' which describes a charging unit, requiring build outs on the carriageway, which could be installed in locations such as the end of terrace streets and in existing parking bays.
14. To achieve equity of access in the EVCI roll-out across the Tees Valley, TVCA will utilise LEVI capital funding to provide a degree of subsidy, with a list of key locations included in the tender specification which the Charge Point Operator (CPO) will be contractually obliged to deliver, subject to an agreed site assessment. Key locations (exact sites to be determined) included in the list incorporate areas where provision of on-street charging opportunities are of strategic or local importance but are likely to be less commercially attractive to the CPO.
15. To arrive at the contractually obliged list (short list), the following steps were taken:
 - (a) A long-list was derived from desk-based analysis of strategic site locations and current infrastructure, and EVCI demand forecasting carried out by TVCA's consultant, Mott Macdonald during development of the EV Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify potential sites in the region.
 - (b) The long list for Darlington was reviewed by Officers to determine a short list for inclusion in the procurement specification, which includes a priority categorisation.
 - (c) TVCA appointed a contractor, Wyson, to undertake a feasibility of each site in relation to power supply, site specific location and to ensure deliverability.
16. Once the CPO has been successfully appointed, they will conduct a technical assessment on the short list which will include sharing the locations with Northern Powergrid for review on capacity availability. The technical assessment will also outline the most suitable charging infrastructure per site, which will be agreed by the local authority and TVCA. Based on Northern Powergrid feedback, a cost assessment, stakeholder engagement and an Equality Impact Assessment, the CPO will be contractually required to deliver the short list of key locations. Should the technical assessment or stakeholder engagement, which will include resident consultation, highlight barriers to installation there will be a change control process within the contract for the CPO to raise concern regarding any of the key locations listed and suggest a suitable alternative for consideration and approval by the relevant local authority and TVCA. The local authorities and TVCA reserve the right to add additional sites to the list the CPO is required to deliver at any point during the contract period.
17. One of the main aims of the LEVI funding is to maximise the private sector investment that can be leveraged by the funding. Therefore, the concession contract will enable the CPO to put forward additional locations for installation for the relevant local authority and TVCA to approve during the lifetime of the contract (15 years). Locations proposed by the CPO will go through the same technical assessment as detailed above, including resident consultation for the location. Locations deemed feasible will be provided to the local authority and TVCA for review and approval.
18. TVCA issued the tender for the provision of on-street EVCI on 5 January 2026, with a closing date of end March 2026.

Cross-Pavement Solutions

19. According to DfT research², 90% of EV users charge at home using a domestic EV charger. This has several benefits compared to public charging and consequently EV ownership is heavily influenced by access to home charging and households without off-street parking may see slower rates of EV adoption. According to the 2021 census 30.5% of properties in Darlington comprise of terraced, flats and shared housing and are therefore unlikely to have access to a driveway.
20. Cross-pavement charging solutions enable residents without off-street parking to safely extend a charging cable from their domestic electricity supply, over or under a public highway to charge an EV legally parked by the roadside. There are both benefits and challenges of this type of charging infrastructure, as set out in **Appendix 2**.
21. Cross-pavement channels are designed to house the charging cable whilst the vehicle is being charged and should be removed when this is complete. There are two main types of solution:
 - (a) Cable channels embedded within the pavement – this most used approach is a slot across the highway with a cable inserted into it that connects to at-home charging.
 - (b) Permanent under pavement cables - a permanent charging cable introduced under the footway connecting the domestic charge point to a removeable bollard or other connector to the vehicle, the cable is then retracted into the bollard or similar when not in use.
22. Whilst there are also other solutions to accommodate trailing EV charging cables that cross the footway, such as mats, these are temporary in nature and have been installed in a very small number of cases and haven't been widely tested.
23. Several organisations provide guidance and advice on cross-pavement solutions, including the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), which recently published its guidance³. In addition, the Energy Saving Trust offers online information⁴ for local authorities and the LEVI Support Body have also recently published a Delivery Blueprint⁵. Aside from this guidance there remains a lack of detailed and specific technical information or standards, to inform policy development, around electrical safety, regulatory compliance, and installation and maintenance.
24. Despite the potential benefits, the market for cross-pavement solutions is in the nascent stages, with implementation largely confined to small scale trials, such as those being undertaken in the Tees Valley:

² [Electric Vehicle Charging Research. Survey with electric vehicle drivers. Research report.](#)

³ [Cross-pavement solutions for charging electric vehicles - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Cross-pavement charging solutions - Energy Saving Trust](#)

⁵ [Delivery Blueprint for Cross-Pavement Solutions](#)

Tees Valley Local Authority	EV Policy	Cross Pavement Scheme
Middlesbrough Borough Council	No specific policy currently.	• Taking part in a trial alongside TVCA, to install cross pavement channel equipment requested by residents. • Part funded by TVCA to cover up to 50% of the equipment and installation costs, with the remaining 50% being funded by the resident for up to 20 installations. • The allocated funding is expected to be used up during early 2026. • Middlesbrough has had five requests (one installed). • Hartlepool has installed 20 channels.
Hartlepool Borough Council	Policy to be formulated on completion of current cross-pavement trial to inform future installations.	
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	EV Charger Strategy 2023-2030 (currently being updated).	• A pilot scheme is running enabling residents with on street parking to install EV chargers at the front of their properties and running the charging cable under a cable mat. • The resident provides public liability insurance of £5m and a cable mat to join the trial.
Stockton Borough Council	Currently developing an Electric Vehicle (EV) policy to support the growing demand for sustainable transport solutions.	Seen an increase in resident interest regarding cross-pavement channel solutions and are actively exploring opportunities to join pilot schemes.

25. Hartlepool Borough Council considered insurance and maintenance as part of the current trial and set out Terms and Conditions, which specify:

- (a) Residents must have relevant public/third party liability insurance cover, through their car insurer, house insurer, or specialist third party insurer to cover cable trip claims.
- (b) The Licensee shall indemnify the Council against any claim in respect of injury, damage loss or third-party claim with respect to the ongoing use of the cable channel.
- (c) The Licensee is responsible for the maintenance of the product itself should it become damaged after the agreed guarantee period has lapsed. Hartlepool Borough Council will only be responsible for the surrounding highway infrastructure.

OZEV Guidance

26. The OZEV guidance contains details of the main types of solutions that have been trialled by local authorities and the learning points from these trials have been adopted in the guidance. It states that the following factors need to be considered as part of any policy for implementing solutions:
- (a) Local environment/landscape
 - (b) Costs and financial support (such as grants)
 - (c) Ownership model, installation requirements and maintenance and associated standards
 - (d) Permission, liability and agreement on responsibilities.
27. The guidance suggests that the installation can be instigated by either a local authority or resident and the LA needs to consider how an individual resident solution would complement the local charging strategy. Permission for installation sits with both the highway and planning authorities so installation should be co-ordinated and the local authority should maintain records of location and type of infrastructure and who is responsible for maintaining it.

Ownership Model, Installation Requirements and Maintenance and Associated Standards

28. It will be a requirement to ensure that installation and ongoing maintenance is identified, and a suitable supplier is provided. Local authorities can either pre-approve suppliers or allow residents to seek their own. A qualified electrician will be required to undertake the work.
29. There are two types of ownership model:
- (a) the first being local authority owned and maintained where a resident pays an upfront cost then an ongoing subscription to use it.
 - (b) the second model is owned and maintained by the supplier once permissions have been obtained by the local authority.
30. In terms of maintenance, responsibilities should be identified including who is responsible for reporting damage and long-term maintenance strategies. As part of their current trial the likes of Hartlepool Borough Council are exploring options around this.
31. Cross-pavement solutions do not have a specific British Standard (BS), but gully tops and manhole tops do have BS references and its recommended these are followed. Ensuring mobility remains inclusive and adhering to Manual for Streets is also required. Any installation should also comply with the Specification for the Reinstatement of openings in the highway.

32. Residents are responsible for safe and suitable charge points at their property and must comply with the appropriate BS. The installation of a home charge point, and cross-pavement installation may need to be co-ordinated.

Permission, Liability and Agreement on Responsibilities

33. Legal liability should be identified in the event of accidents when the cross-pavement solution is both in use and not in use and when damage to the infrastructure has occurred. For example, if a reinstatement has not been undertaken to the correct specification, this would likely be considered the liability of the highway authority, however if a cable is left trailing and a tripping hazard then this would be the responsibility of the householder.
34. Under section 178 of the Highways Act 1980, overhead beams, rail, pipe, cable or other apparatus cannot be installed without the permission of the Highway Authority. An agreement under s178 can therefore be set out incorporating the responsibilities.

Electric Vehicle Pavement Channels Fund

35. Government announced the EV Pavement Channels grant in August 2025, which is a £25m capital fund, aiming to support local authorities to install cross-pavement channels and support residents without off-street parking to charge their EVs at home. The grant has the following objectives:
 - (a) To empower local authorities to adopt pavement channels in their EV strategies as a local charging solution.
 - (b) To increase EV uptake.
 - (c) To accelerate the rollout of pavement channels.
36. The grant is for permanent EV channels to temporarily house a charging cable whilst a vehicle is being charged and funds capital costs up to an average of £1,200 per channel. Maintenance costs aren't covered through the grant and residents must have or commit to installing an EV charge point.
37. In November 2025, DfT confirmed that TVCA's application for the grant was successful, following OZEV approval, with an award of £479k across the Tees Valley local authorities who have committed to take part (Middlesbrough, Stockton, Redcar & Cleveland and Hartlepool Borough Council's). Darlington Council is adopting a watching brief approach, aiming to learn from the trials that will be undertaken in neighbouring local authority areas.

Next Steps

38. Officers continue to monitor emerging guidance and solutions on cross-pavement EV charging and learn best practice from trials undertaken across England.
39. A further update will be brought to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix 1**Government Grants for EV Purchase:**

Scheme	Who's it for	How much (up to)	Key dates/info
Electric Car Grant (ECG)	New car buyers	£3,750 (Band 1) £1,500 (Band 2)	Open since 15 July 2025, closes 31 March 2030 At point of sale
Plug-in Van Grant	Small & large van buyers	£2,500 (small) £5,000 (large)	Open since 1 April 2023, closes 31 March 2026
Plug-in Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant	WAV converters/buyers	£2,500, base vehicle cap £50,000	Open since 6 April 2025, closes 5 April 2026
Plug-in Motorcycle Grant	Motorcycle buyers	£500, vehicle cap £10,000	Open since 2016, to at least April 2026

Government Grants for infrastructure:

Scheme	Who's it for	How much (up to)	Eligibility
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding	Tier 1 Local Authorities	£6,596,000 Capital £806,520 Capability (2022-2026)	• Low powered charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking. • Capability funding for resource to plan and deliver.
Households with on-street parking	Residential	£350	• No driveway. • Permanent cross-pavement solution, • Need permission from local highways authority.
Renters and flat owners	Residential	£350	• Must have private off-street parking, that is clearly defined.
Workplace Charging Scheme	Businesses Public sector organisations Charities	£350 Up to 40 sockets across all sites.	• Must have dedicated off-road parking for staff or fleet. • On site or a reasonable distance from the place of work. • Can be used by residents outside of office hours.

Infrastructure grant for staff and fleets	Businesses (SME)	£15,000 £350 per socket £500 per parking space	• For small and medium-sized businesses with 249 employees or fewer. • Must have off-street, clearly defined parking spaces.
Infrastructure grant for landlords	Residential	£30,000 per property: £350 per socket £500 per parking space.	Must own or manage flats, houses, apartment block or business premises (residential and commercial).
	Commercial	£350	

Benefits and Challenges of Cross-Pavement Solutions

Benefits	Challenges
<u>Convenience:</u> Ability to charge near to home, is convenient, flexible and reliable. Could encourage more households to adopt an EV.	<u>Property constraints:</u> Proximity issues will affect how many residents in one street are able to have a solution installed outside their home. Not a viable solution for residents without parking immediately outside such as at junctions, street corners, or those in flats. When a resident with a solution moves homes, the Council would be responsible for maintaining or removing/facilitating a transfer of ownership.
<u>Accessibility:</u> Disabled residents and those with mobility restrictions may find charging near their homes particularly beneficial.	<u>Accessibility:</u> Currently, no cross-pavement solution is fully inclusive or compliant to a PAS 1899⁶ standard. Some users may therefore have difficulty with some of the solutions.
<u>Availability:</u> Can be integrate into broader EV charging network, enhancing availability. May offer a feasible cost-effective solution where there are space restrictions, grid connectivity issues, or existing street furniture.	<u>Planning permission:</u> For properties without off-street parking, 'permitted development' rights do not apply, since the charge point will be used to charge a vehicle on the public highway.
<u>Cost savings:</u> Residents can benefit from lower home electricity tariffs, which are likely to offset any costs associated with applying, buying, installing and maintaining the cross-pavement solution. Government grant funding is available to reduce the up-front costs (Appendix 1).	<u>Liability and Insurance:</u> The Council would need to consider who is responsible for any costs arising from a trip or fall on the public highway. This may involve developing a mechanism for indemnifying the local authority and transferring liability to a resident via a licence. Residents also need to have suitable public liability insurance to cover potential damages resulting from misuse of the cross-pavement solution. There are uncertainties around the

⁶ [PAS-1899-Summary_Doc_Energy_Saving_Trust.pdf](#)

	level of cover required and which insurance policies and providers include this.
<u>Equity:</u> Many households in Darlington have no access to off-street parking, so cannot access low-cost home charging. Cross-pavement solutions can address gaps in public charge points and reduce disparity between areas with off-street parking and those without.	<u>Parking disputes:</u> A cross-pavement solution does not guarantee residents a parking space outside their property. This may lead to disputes and complaints being made to the Council over parking and charging access.
<u>Highway Safety:</u> May help reduce safety risks associated with trailing or unsecured charging cables across the pavement, particularly for those with visual impairments or mobility issues.	<u>Highway Safety:</u> Reliant on residents using the product correctly and keeping it in a safe working condition. Solutions could pose a hazard to pedestrians if not used or maintained correctly. Solutions may impact the condition of the surrounding footway; this could increase local highway costs related to ensuring that the footway condition complies with highway standards. There is an electric shock risk if a person comes into simultaneous contact with a charging EV on the highway and other electrical conductors (e.g. lamp column or 2nd charging EV). Electrical safety standards⁷ suggest a minimum 2.5m exclusion zone, although there is no dedicated electrical safety standard for cross-pavement charging.

⁷ [The IET Code of Practice for Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Installation, 4th Edition](#)