

Portfolio Holder Decision

Approval to Submit Bid to LEVI Fund

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
Date of decision	9 June 2022
	Signed 

Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves the submission of a funding bid for Harbury EV charging hub to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.

Reasons for decisions

This report asks the Portfolio Holder to approve the submission of a funding bid to the LEVI fund. The County Council's constitution requires that Portfolio Holders approve any bid for funding in excess of £250,000 or that will commit the council to funding in excess of £50,000 that cannot be met from a service's allocated budget. It is anticipated that the bid will be for a grant of approximately £600,000 towards an overall maximum project cost of £800,000. It is anticipated that the differential will be funded by the private sector and will be secured via the procurement process.

Background information

1. Options and Proposal

1.1. In April 2022, the Government announced the launch of the pilot LEVI fund. This fund will support the rollout of Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure. To test the design of the full LEVI fund (to be launched in 2023), the government have launched a £10 million pilot competition which they anticipate will fund up to 8 projects. The deadline for bids to be submitted to this pilot fund is 17th June 2022.

1.2. The Fund has three aims;

- help enable strategic local provision of public EV infrastructure ahead of need and promote an equitable EV charging experience for those without off-street

parking

- leverage additional private sector investment and promote sustainable and innovative business models to enable the delivery of local chargepoint projects that would not occur in the near-term without public support
- increase consumer confidence in transitioning to EVs across England, ensuring increased uptake across regions

1.3. The fund is open to Local Authorities or partnerships led by Local Authorities and bids must align with the fund aims set out above. Warwickshire County Council have partnered with Harbury Future Energy to bid for and deliver a rural EV charging hub at Harbury.

1.4. The project at Harbury was chosen for two reasons; the programme of work to develop a Warwickshire rural charging network is at an embryonic stage and WCC are required to bid for funding within relatively short timescales (the fund was announced in early April 2022 with initial high level bids required to be submitted by the end of April 2022 with final bid submission by 17th June 2022).

1.5. The Harbury EV charging project is a well- developed project that enables the County Council to partner with Harbury Future Energy to submit the project to the EST for funding within the required timescales.

1.6. The project has been developed by Harbury Future Energy and scheme details are set out below. If the bid to the pilot LEVI fund is successful, the County Council intends to use the project as a pilot scheme to test the concept, deliverability and success of rural EV charging hubs.

1.7. People living in rural areas are often the most dependent on the private car to meet their mobility needs. Access to EV charging in the more rural areas of Warwickshire is challenging and in order to support transition to EVs, easy to access, convenient EV charging infrastructure is required.

1.8. WCC aspires to develop a rural network of charging hubs to meet existing and future demand for EV charging and to ensure that EV take-up in rural areas is not suppressed. This will be crucial to meet the net zero targets for the transport sector set by central Government and to meet locally set targets for Warwickshire. Work to develop this wider proposal is underway and will be complete by Autumn 2022.

1.9. The scheme at Harbury will be located on land owned by the Parish Council and the site is within a 10 minute walk of key residential areas that do not have access to private off street charging provision. The scheme seeks funding to deliver the following;

- 2 x rapid chargers
- Up to 20 standard 22kw chargers (the final number of chargers included in the bid may be less than this, but passive provision for future expansion will be included).
- Solar panels to provide a renewable energy source.

- Battery storage solution, to enable energy to be stored, with battery cladding to provide a community 'service area' that can be utilised at wider community events.
- Additionally, the project will enable the community e-Wheels vehicles to operate on a renewable electricity supply and provide access to EV charging for the surrounding villages and settlements in this part of rural Warwickshire. These vehicles provide much needed transport options for those in need and are operated on a volunteer basis.

2. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

2.1. The deadline for the submission of bids is 17th June 2022.

2.2. The Energy Savings Trust have indicated that a decision on the outcome of the bid is expected during summer 2022

2.3. Projects that are successful will have to be delivered during the 2022/23 financial year.

Financial implications

1. The current total scheme cost estimate is £800,000, although this is subject to further work and confirmation as part of the bid preparation. The LEVI fund guidance states that private sector investment should be secured where possible. Early market engagement and information from existing contracts indicates that approximately 25% of the total project cost could be secured from the private sector. Therefore, the value of the bid to the fund will be £600,000.
2. There is no expectation that the County Council will be required to provide any financial shortfall to enable the scheme to progress. The final project costs will be certain before we award the contract. At this stage, if tendered delivery costs exceed the available budget, a decision will be made as to how to progress, this may include one of the following options;
 - Halt the delivery of the scheme and return grant funding to government;
 - De - scope the project to reduce costs and enable delivery within the available budget
 - Seek further private sector investment/other grants.
3. To reduce the risk of this, a detailed costing exercise has been undertaken by Harbury Future Energy and this will be validated by a supplier against similar projects before the bid is submitted.

Environmental implications

The delivery of additional EV charging points in Warwickshire will enable more people to make the switch from a petrol/diesel vehicle to an EV. This will have a positive contribution in terms of improving air quality, reducing emissions and helping the Council

achieve net zero targets.

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Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None.

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Wallace Redford

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Nichola Vine

Finance – Andrew Felton

Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – Jeff Clarke, Jonathon Chilvers, Jenny Fradgley and Jackie D’Arcy

Local members: Christopher Kettle