Reference number GB01T23H83

LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (LEVI) FUND PROCESS EVALUATION

frontier economics

SYSTRA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In March 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) published the UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy to support the transition to zero emission vehicles in the UK. This included the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, to support local authorities[1] across England to plan and deliver local charging infrastructure. The LEVI Fund is intended to deliver primarily low power chargepoints for residents without access to off-street parking and to accelerate the commercialisation of, and private sector investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector.

In December 2023, DfT commissioned SYSTRA and Frontier Economics to carry out a process evaluation of the LEVI Fund up to May 2024, along with initial analysis of progress in delivery up to January 2024.[2]

A mixed-methods approach was used, involving collection of primary quantitative and qualitative data from LEVI Fund recipients and other stakeholders across the chargepoint delivery ecosystem. This was complemented by analysis of published secondary data and DfT monitoring data. As delivery is at an early stage, the initial outputs reported here are focused on the Pilot and Tranche 1 Capital Funds.

Progress to date

A summary of evidence for capability funding, pilot funding and Tranche 1 capital funding is provided at the end of the Executive Summary.

Since 2022, more than 80 local areas have received some form of LEVI funding. Initially, £31.9 million of pilot funding was awarded to 25 schemes each run by a local authority over 2 stages in 2022 and 2023, for the delivery of on-street chargepoints. Learnings from this Pilot Fund informed the approach for the subsequent allocation of £343 million of capital funding[3] to installation projects run by 113 local areas which was allocated over 2 tranches (subject to timings of applications, and approvals of Tranche 1 applications). To support the delivery of these chargepoint plans, local skills and capability are essential, so £45.8 million of capability (resource) funding was allocated to 80 local area[4] recipients across England for dedicated expertise to plan, procure and tender the delivery of local chargepoints.

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1 Funding was mainly allocated to local authorities, but also some mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England. In some cases, several local authorities applied as a consortium for LEVI capital funding: where this was the case, the consortium of multiple local authorities is considered as a single LEVI 'project'.

2 This is the latest available monitoring data at the time of analysis.

3 While capital funding has been allocated, it has not yet all been delivered.

4 These local areas comprised local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England.

Capital funding is contributing towards a significant planned increase in on-street chargepoint infrastructure. Initial evidence for Tranche 1 finds that capital allocations per chargepoint were estimated on average to be £3,523, and the median average planned increase in chargepoints is 263%.[5]

Initial evidence suggests LEVI funding has enabled chargepoint delivery that might not otherwise have happened or would have happened more slowly. Of the 54 Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipients who responded to the survey, 57% said without LEVI funding they would have installed public charging infrastructure at a smaller scale using other funding, and 39% indicated they would not have had any funding to install public charging infrastructure.

Private sector funding is an essential component of local chargepoint delivery plans. Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipients anticipate an average contribution of 69%[6] from private sector sources towards their planned local chargepoint delivery, alongside LEVI funding. This suggests LEVI could be playing a role in de-risking such investment and facilitating a scale of chargepoint roll-out that exceeds what would otherwise be feasible.

Capability Fund recipients are using this funding to hire new staff and train existing staff for developing their Capital Fund applications and Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategies. Local authorities have reported[7] that capability funding has been essential in supporting the development of Capital Fund applications and EV infrastructure strategies (two-thirds now have them), particularly for those without supplementary funding available. Recipients, however, reported experiencing difficulties with recruitment, potentially owing to the significant demand for suitable candidates across areas, and difficulty recruiting people for fixed term contracts.

LEVI funding has facilitated other benefits across the chargepoint ecosystem. Many local authorities reported[8] that LEVI funding has enabled them to better target non-commercially viable locations that offer significant social benefits, such as more deprived areas, and residential areas across the city, rather than focussing only on high-value commercial areas in city centres, supporting broader social and economic objectives of the Fund. It has also enabled them to avoid a more piecemeal delivery. Partnerships established with key stakeholders during the application stage, including other local authorities, chargepoint operators (CPOs), distribution network operators (DNOs), and the Energy Saving Trust (EST) are helping to facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building, and access to funding opportunities, enhancing the overall success of EV infrastructure initiatives.

Local authorities receiving LEVI funding have enhanced their engagement with local residents and helped build community awareness and support for EV infrastructure projects. Some felt

5 Based on the monitoring data reported by local authorities to DfT.

6 Based on local authority pre-procurement estimates and is subject to change post-tender.

7 In-depth interviews undertaken as part of this process evaluation.

8 In-depth interviews undertaken as part of this process evaluation.

utilising a strategic selection of chargepoint locations based on community input aided delivery, as did integrating EV infrastructure projects with broader city regeneration plans.

The LEVI Support Body[9] and the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) have provided local authorities with effective and tailored guidance and advice to support delivery of the LEVI funding. Local authorities interviewed said that one-to-one support, the Knowledge Sharing Repository[10] and roadshows have been particularly useful for assisting with applications for LEVI funding, and planning the delivery of local chargepoints. However, they would welcome more consistent and timely guidance, and more guidance and knowledge sharing relating to procurement and best practice.

While delivery is still in its early stages, many pilot schemes reported chargepoint procurement to be experiencing delays, citing initial timelines as overly optimistic, inadequate staffing and slow responses and sign offs from a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Four of the 14 pilot funded survey respondents plan to deliver fewer chargepoints than they had anticipated at the point that they submitted their application. This was most frequently attributed to increased costs of suppliers, materials, infrastructure and distribution network operator connections. However, it is too early to assess whether Pilot Fund and Capital Fund recipients will deliver their planned chargepoint installations, given that most pilot rollout programmes were (at the time the in-depth interviews took place) due to finish in late 2024/early 2025, and Capital Fund Tranche 1 recipients only recently started to receive their funding.

Learnings from the Pilot Fund have been used to refine the LEVI funding processes. For example, based on key findings from the Pilot Fund about the definition of 'innovation', the Capital Fund has shifted focus away from funding more innovative technologies that are also higher cost. The process for Tranche 2 capital funding applications was also streamlined with a dedicated product manager for the applications portal and improved alignment with local authority processes to allow more time to complete applications.

Reflections for future policy development

This process evaluation has found that the application and delivery processes for LEVI are generally perceived to be working well, and support provided by the LEVI Support Body and wider LEVI Team to complete applications is generally effective. But challenges were noted with both the design of LEVI and the context in which it is being delivered, highlighting potential improvements which could be considered.

9 Consortium of consultancies who provided ongoing support and guidance to applicants. They act as the first point of contact for any queries or questions about the LEVI Fund.

10 The Knowledge Repository was launched by the LEVI Support Body in January 2023 to provide local authorities with information and guidance about EVs and EV Infrastructure to inform chargepoint strategies and support effective deployment.

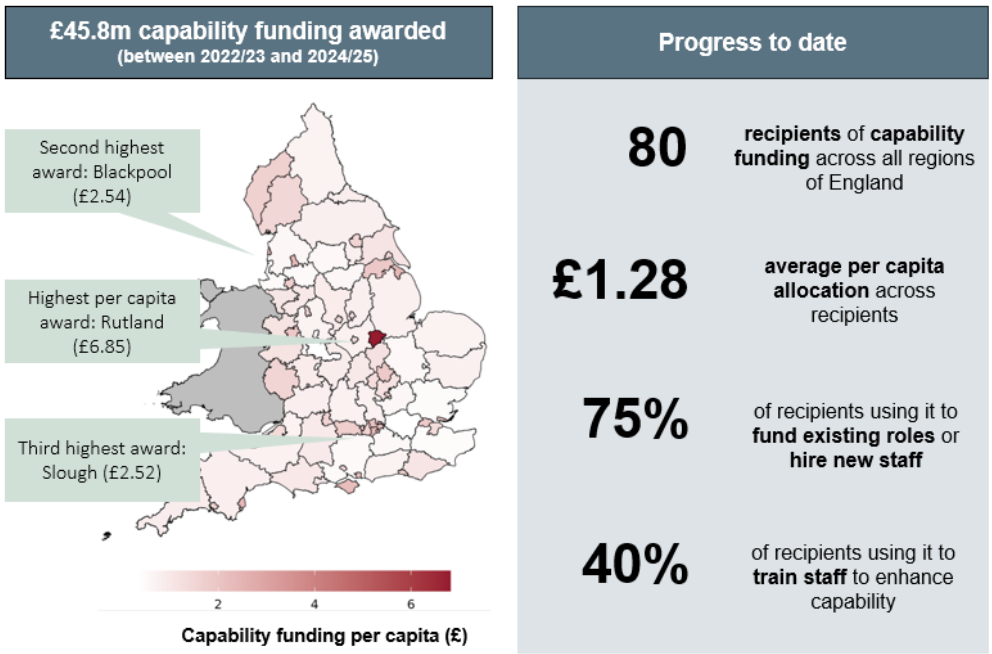
The tight timescales for applications and chargepoint delivery were noted by several local authorities interviewed as a significant challenge inherent to the design of LEVI, suggesting there would be benefits in providing more time for applicants to submit applications. Local authorities interviewed also suggested more comprehensive guidance from OZEV and the LEVI Support Body on procurement, and quicker responses from the LEVI Support Body and OZEV, particularly in relation to Post-Approval Action Plans (PAAPs).

Around half of local authorities who took part in the in-depth interviews raised concern about their capacity to deliver their EV infrastructure plans once capability funding ends. They felt this could potentially lead to increased reliance on commercial operators to manage the contracts, and loss of staff on fixed term contracts before procurement of chargepoints is underway. They suggested further funding for staff beyond the current Capability Fund timescales and exploring flexibility in capability funding might address this challenge. For example, earlier allocation of funding to allow for earlier staff recruitment, and additional funding to be allocated as needed throughout the application process.

Local authorities also noted challenges related to the context in which LEVI is delivered, particularly difficulties with local authority staff recruitment, cost inflation, concerns about inadequate future grid capacity, and difficulties with new procurement legislation. Some suggested consideration of support by DfT to facilitate expansion of DNO capacity.

Summary of Evidence

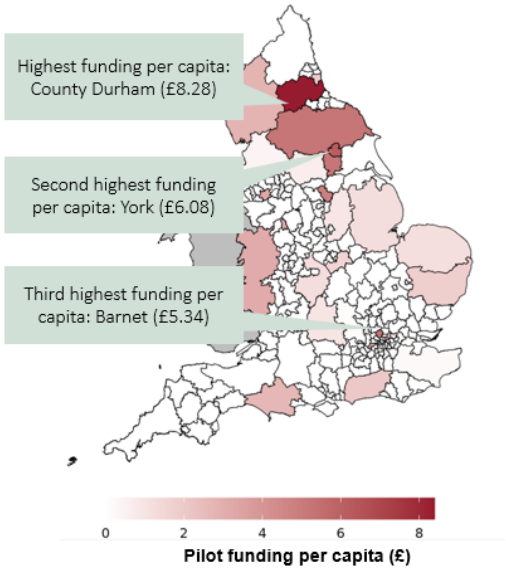
Capability Fund



Note: Data collected as of January 2024.

Pilot Fund

£31.9m Pilot funding awarded
(between September 2022 and March 2023)



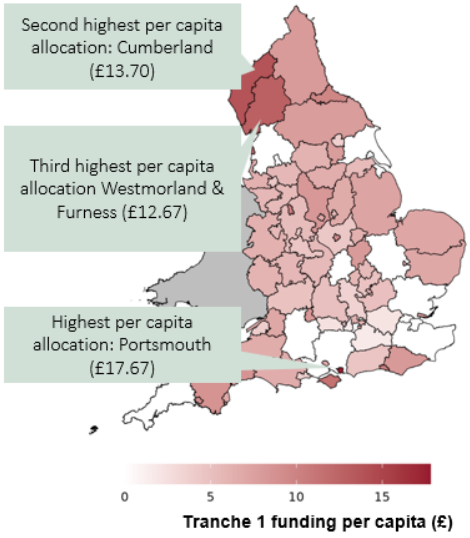
Progress to date

25	Pilot **projects received funding** across all regions of England
£2.53	**average per capita funding** for Pilot recipients
43%	**planned average increase in chargepoints** for Pilot recipients
48%	of total funding anticipated **from supplementary sources**, alongside LEVI capital funding
£7,182	estimated average **LEVI Pilot subsidy per planned installation**

Note: Data collected as of January 2024.

Tranche 1 Capital Fund

£257.6m Tranche 1 capital funding
(allocated as of January 2024, prior to funding award)



Progress to date

51	Tranche 1 **projects allocated funding** across all regions of England
£6.58	**average per capita funding allocation** for Tranche 1 applicants
263%	**planned average increase in chargepoints** for Tranche 1 applicants
69%	of total funding anticipated **from private sources**, alongside LEVI capital funding
£3,523	estimated average **LEVI Tranche 1 subsidy per planned installation**

Note: Data collected as of January 2024.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the LEVI Fund

In March 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) published the UK Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy to support the transition to zero emission vehicles in the UK. This strategy included the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, to support local authorities in England plan and deliver local chargepoint infrastructure.

The LEVI Fund is intended to deliver a step-change in the scale of deployment of local, primarily low power on-street charging infrastructure for residents without access to off-street parking across England, and to accelerate the commercialisation of, and private sector investment in, the local charging infrastructure sector.

The LEVI Fund was launched with a competitive Pilot Fund to test the design of the new scheme, awarding an initial £10 million which was expanded in 2023. Alongside this, a Capability Fund allocated £8 million resource funding to local authorities in 2022/23, and further £37.8 million funding in 2023/24 and 2024/25, to build local authority expertise to plan, procure and tender the delivery of local chargepoints in their area.

Unlike the Pilot Fund, capital and capability funding was allocated to upper tier local authorities using a model developed by DfT which assessed chargepoint funding needs against chargepoint rollout progress.[11] Allocations were announced in March 2023 following which local authorities were invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) setting out their plans for using their LEVI funding. Responses to the EOI stage were used to sort local authorities into funding tranches, based on an assessment of their readiness to submit an application. Local authorities whose plans were more developed were invited to apply for their allocated capital funding in 2023/24 (Tranche 1); those whose plans were less advanced were invited to apply in 2024/25 (Tranche 2).

1.2 Monitoring and evaluation

DfT has commissioned SYSTRA and Frontier Economics to carry out an evaluation for the LEVI Fund over the period December 2023 to May 2024. The evaluation focuses on the process of implementing and delivering the LEVI Fund, including learnings on the application process, implementation and delivery of the Pilot and Capability Fund, and the application process for Tranche 1 of the Capital Fund. In addition, a preliminary analysis has been carried out of delivery progress to date.

This report provides the evaluation findings and is structured as follows:

[11] More information about the LEVI Fund allocation model can be found in the LEVI funding allocation methodology report

- Chapter 2: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY provides more detail on the aims of the 3 funds and the evaluation approach undertaken
- Chapter 3: PROGRESS TO DATE explores what has been delivered to date
- Chapter 4: EXPERIENCES OF THE APPLICATION AND DELIVERY PROCESS describes the experiences of local authorities and other stakeholders in the application process and the process of deploying funding
- Chapter 5: KEY LEARNINGS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS provides a summary of key learnings and reflections for future changes and policy making

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and eligibility for capability, pilot, and capital funding

Capability Fund

The Capability Fund is intended to support the 'activities' and some of the 'outputs' within the theory of change (See ANNEX B), which are critical enablers of chargepoints being delivered, along with embedding relevant capability within local authorities to underpin sustained chargepoint delivery. Specifically, it provides local areas[12] with resource funding to secure dedicated expertise to plan, procure and tender the delivery of local chargepoints in their areas. In doing so, the capability funding aims to equip all recipient local authorities to take full advantage of capital funding. It also aims to facilitate every local authority to have a published EV infrastructure strategy for its area. Across the 3 financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25, £45.8 million of capability funding was allocated across England to 70 upper tier local authorities, 9 combined authorities, and London.

Pilot Fund

According to DfT's electric vehicle charging device statistics (January 2024)[13] the Pilot Fund aimed to test the design of the Capital Fund prior to full roll-out. In total, £31.9 million capital funding was awarded to 25 pilot schemes:[14] 19 local authorities, 2 combined authorities and 4 London boroughs. The Pilot Fund was rolled out in 2 stages. In the first stage (August 2022), a total of £10 million funding was initially awarded to 9 pilot schemes (8 local authorities and 1 London borough). In the second stage (March 2023), a further almost £22 million capital funding was awarded to 13 additional local authorities, and 3 initial pilot projects were expanded (11 local authorities, 2 mayoral combined authorities and 3 London boroughs).

Capital Fund

The Capital Fund aims to deliver a step-change in primarily lower-power on-street charging infrastructure and to accelerate the commercialisation of the local charging infrastructure sector. A total of £343 million capital funding has been allocated to local areas[15] to install charging

12 Funding was mainly allocated to local authorities. It was also allocated to some mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England.

13 Electric vehicle charging device statistics: January 2024 - GOV.UK

14 This report refers to 25 pilot 'schemes' run individually by either: local authorities, mayoral combined authorities, or individual London boroughs. The report refers to 51 Tranche 1 capital 'projects', where each project is run by either: individual local authorities, individual mayoral combined authorities, other bodies (North East Joint Transport Committee, London Borough Partnerships) or consortia groups of local authorities.

15 Funding was mainly allocated to local authorities. It was also allocated to some mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England.

infrastructure ahead of need. Local authorities have been invited to apply in 2 tranches, across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. As of May 2024, Tranche 1 funding has been allocated, though procurement and delivery is limited at this early stage. Tranche 2 funding has also been allocated but evaluation of this fund is not within the scope of this study. Installation of LEVI-funded chargepoints is expected to ramp up over the next few years.

Principles of the LEVI Fund

LEVI funding was allocated to local authorities by DfT, underpinned by 2 guiding principles:

- **need:** The LEVI Fund is primarily targeted at addressing the need for public EV charging to support residents without off-street parking, as EV owners who park on-street will rely more heavily on the public charging network
- **progress:** Currently, certain local authorities are further ahead in their charging network development than others. The allocation model reflects this aspect to ensure that provision is developed equally across the country

The delivery of the LEVI Fund is supported by the LEVI Support Body, a consortium of consultancies who provide ongoing support and guidance to applicants. They act as the first point of contact for any queries or questions about the LEVI Fund.

2.2 LEVI in the context of the transition to zero emission vehicles

The LEVI Fund sits within the wider portfolio of support provided by DfT to facilitate the transition to zero emission vehicles. By addressing local needs for on-street charging infrastructure, especially where this is more challenging to deliver, LEVI funding is intended to facilitate the uptake of EVs across the country by rolling out infrastructure ahead of demand. Realising this ambition will require various parties across the chargepoint ecosystem to work together. This is illustrated in the 'theory of change' captured within the logic model in ANNEX B.

2.3 Focus of this evaluation - the evaluation questions

Underpinning this evaluation is a series of evaluation questions which articulate the priority issues of interest to DfT. The evaluation questions were iteratively agreed with DfT, and are provided in full in ANNEX C, and summarised below. The chapters of this report provide a thematic synthesis of evidence elicited across these questions:

- What have we learned about progress to date across the LEVI Pilot, Capability and Capital Fund?
- What have we learned about the application process for the 3 elements of LEVI funding?
- What have we learned about the support and guidance provided to applicants?
- What have we learned about local authorities' experiences in delivering chargepoints that LEVI is contributing towards?
- What are local authorities' views on future chargepoint delivery after capability funding ends?

2.4 Approach to monitoring and evaluation

A mixed-methods approach has been used, including the collection of primary quantitative and qualitative data from LEVI Fund recipients and other stakeholders, and analysis of secondary and monitoring data.

Approach to primary data collection

The primary data collection involved online surveys with local authorities, and in-depth interviews and workshops with local authorities and other stakeholders.

The online surveys were designed in collaboration with DfT and conducted between December 2023 and January 2024 with Capital Fund recipients, and between March 2024 and April 2024 with Pilot and Capability Fund recipients. The surveys explored:

- **Capability Fund:** how the Capability Fund and other sources of funding have been used and the impact on local authorities' ability to complete the Capital Fund application
- **Pilot Fund:** the application process and information and engagement provided during this process, and experiences of delivering the Pilot Fund project
- **Capital Fund:** the application process, information and engagement provided during this process

Table 1 shows the number of local authorities who responded to the online surveys, and the response rate.

Table 1: Number of survey responses

SAMPLE	NUMBER OF LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONDENTS	RESPONSE RATE	TOTAL POPULATION
Pilot Fund recipients	14	56%	25
Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants	54	90%	60
Capability Fund recipients	52	64%	81

Qualitative research, carried out between March and May 2024, explored issues in more depth with 3 groups of participants:

- **in-depth interviews with local authorities explored:** the processes of applying for funding, how funding has been used to date, and any barriers or enablers identified to delivering projects or resourcing applications
- **in-depth interviews with chargepoint operators (CPOs) explored**: general barriers and enablers to delivery charging infrastructure, as well as specific barriers and enablers relating to the LEVI Fund and how this has been delivered
- **workshops with OZEV and the LEVI Support Body explored:** experiences of delivering the LEVI Fund, and any areas where processes could be streamlined going forward

Table 2 summarises the number of individuals reached.

Table 2: Summary of interviews and workshops

SAMPLE	SAMPLE SIZE
Pilot, Tranche 1 Capital and Capability Fund recipients (Interviews)	15
Sub-national transport bodies (Interviews)	4
CPOs (Interviews)	5
OZEV delivery team members (3 workshops, 1 for each of Pilot Fund, Capability Fund and Capital Fund delivery teams)	14
LEVI Support Body members (3 workshops, 1 for each of Pilot Fund, Capability Fund and Capital Fund delivery teams)	18

Approach to primary data analysis and reporting

Qualitative data gathered from the interviews, workshops and the online surveys underwent thematic analysis. This involved familiarisation with the data to systematically identify and develop themes.

Quantitative data from the online surveys underwent statistical analysis. Due to the small sample size for the online survey for the Pilot Fund recipients, findings from this survey are provided as numbers, while those from Capital and Capability Fund recipients are provided as percentages.

One local authority provided 2 responses to the Capital Fund survey. The open-ended responses were similar across both submissions, and were coded as a single response. The closed question responses were also similar, and only the most recent response was used.

Findings from qualitative data are reported where there are consistent views on a particular point raised across stakeholders. Where points have been raised by individuals in isolation, or by only a very small number of interview participants, these have been reported where they have particular

relevance to the evaluation questions, and it is made clear that this point was only made by a small number of stakeholders.

Collation of monitoring and secondary data

To complement the primary data, analysis has been undertaken of the relevant monitoring and secondary data. The monitoring data is collected from LEVI Fund recipients at regular intervals by the LEVI Support Body, and relates to pilot schemes and capability projects. Information on Tranche 1 Capital Fund projects was collected from the Tranche 1 applications dataset, compiled by DfT. Secondary data sources have also been drawn upon to explore factors related to the delivery and outcomes of LEVI.

The specific data sources used include:

- DfT funding: DfT funding awarded for pilot and allocated for capability and Tranche 1 capital funding
- DfT monitoring data collected by the LEVI Support Body:
  - planned chargepoint installations to be delivered locally over the duration of LEVI-funded installation projects
  - the status of chargepoint installation and procurement as of January 2024 (Pilot Fund only)
  - estimated LEVI funding subsidy per planned chargepoint installation (Pilot Fund only)
  - planned full-time equivalent (FTE) staff hires using capability funding
  - actual FTE staff hires using capability funding as of January 2024
- DfT secondary data on chargepoint roll-out:
  - the number of chargepoints (total and per 100,000 people), by local authority, on a quarterly basis for October 2019 to January 2024 according to the DfT's Electric vehicle charging device statistics (2024)
- Wider secondary data:
  - degree of rurality by local authority, measured as 'predominantly urban', 'urban with significant rural' and 'predominantly rural' (according to Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Urban Rural Classifications, 2011)[16]
  - estimates of the population for England local authorities (according to ONS, 2022)[17]

[16] 2011 Rural Urban Classification lookup tables for all geographies - GOV.UK

[17] Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland - Office for National Statistics

Approach to secondary and monitoring data analysis and reporting

Analysis has been carried out using available data, noting that data is continuing to be collected over time by the LEVI Support Body and DfT. At the time of this analysis (January 2024), Tranche 1 capital funding allocations had been announced, although delivery of the funding to local authorities had not yet occurred. Therefore, detailed analysis within this report relates to allocations only. All funding allocations were collected from the DfT LEVI capital: funding amounts and project status and the LEVI capability: funding amounts webpages, with applicants assigned to either Tranche 1 or Tranche 2 capital funding at the time of analysis in January 2024. These funding allocations were checked and confirmed with DfT, with some adjustments to reflect local authorities applying as part of a consortium.

LEVI funding was provided to local authorities, combined authorities, consortia of local authorities, and a group of London borough partnerships. For the purposes of this analysis, these were all treated as the same unit of geography in the analysis (e.g. the groups of London boroughs submitted a joint application and hence are considered as one unit).

Several limitations were identified in the data and have been transparently noted throughout this report where appropriate. These include:

- information on both the planned number of FTE hires and actual FTE hires was available for 30 of the 80 recipients of capability funding. While there is a significant number of recipients without usable data, the sample of 30 recipients is considered a reasonable group from which to draw inferences on the use of capability funding to date
- information on supplementary public funding was not provided for the local authorities receiving Tranche 1 capital funding. While this represents a gap in data collected, evidence from the break-down of funding sources for Pilot schemes is that supplementary public funding accounts for a low proportion of total funding (7%), and a much lower proportion than supplementary private funding
- information on expected supplementary private funding was not provided for 2 local authorities who applied for Tranche 1 capital funding: Leicestershire and Greater Manchester
- information on the planned number of chargepoint installations was not provided for Leicester (a Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicant)
- Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants provided a lower and upper bound estimate for their planned additional chargepoints. The lower bound estimate has been used as a cautious approach for this analysis
- the definition of chargepoints in the data includes both charging devices and sockets. This means that the figures provided on the number of chargepoints would not directly correspond to the number of EVs that could be charged, as a charging device may have more than one socket

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the progress of the LEVI Fund to January 2024 in achieving its aims of supporting the delivery of local on-street chargepoints, and in building the capability of local authorities[18] to plan and deliver local chargepoint plans.

Key messages

The LEVI Fund will deliver £45.8 million of capability funding, £31.9 million of pilot funding and £343 million of capital funding across England.

Capability Fund recipients report using this funding to hire new staff and train existing staff to support the design and delivery of their chargepoint plans. By January 2024, more than half (53%) of a sample of 30 Capability Fund recipients had already achieved or exceeded their hiring targets, with almost all the remaining sample (43%) close to doing so.

Capital funding is contributing towards a significant planned increase in chargepoint infrastructure by recipients. The median average planned increase in chargepoints is 263% for Tranche 1 applicants and 43% for Pilot Fund recipients, though these averages mask a wide range of planned increases across recipients. Capital funding has been distributed across England to areas with different degrees of rurality and at different stages of chargepoint network development. Average capital funding allocations per person were £6.58 for Tranche 1 applicants and £2.53 for Pilot Fund recipients.

Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants anticipate an average contribution of 69% from private sector sources towards their planned local chargepoint delivery, alongside LEVI funding. This suggests LEVI could play a role in de-risking such investment and facilitating a scale of chargepoint roll-out that exceeds what would otherwise be feasible.

On average, allocated capital funding per chargepoint is estimated to be £3,523 for Tranche 1 projects, and £7,182 for pilot funded schemes , subject to final procurement outcomes.

[18] Funding was mainly allocated to local authorities. It was also allocated to some mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England.

This analysis covers the period since the launch of the Pilot Fund in March 2022, to January 2024 by which point Tranche 1 capital funding allocations had been announced.

3.2 Capability funding

Allocations to date

To support local areas in delivering their chargepoint installation projects, £45.8 million of capability funding was allocated by DfT in September 2023 to 80 recipients, comprising local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and other bodies.[19] The former includes upper tier authorities (county councils, unitary or combined authorities) across England who are responsible for transport planning, developing EV strategies, and regulating and permitting the development of the highway. The funding allocations varied by area, because the allocation approach took into account several factors, including the current level of resource dedicated to electric vehicles within the local area.

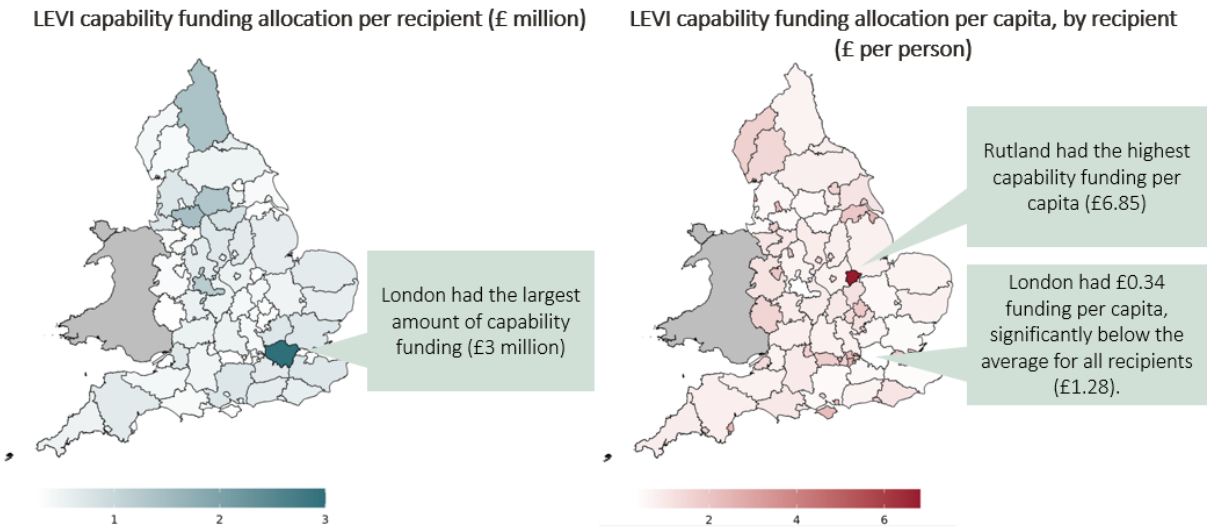
As shown in Figure 1, capability funding was allocated relatively evenly across England. Rutland in the Midlands received the highest allocation per capita (£6.85),[20] compared to the England-wide average of £1.28. London was allocated the highest level of total funding (£3 million),[21] although the allocation was distributed through TfL and councils to individual boroughs, who each would only receive a fraction of this total amount. Per person, London's allocation was among the lowest.

19 The North East Joint Transport Committee and London borough partnerships.

20 Due to Rutland being one of the smallest unitary authorities in England.

21 London has an initial Capability Fund allocation of £3 million. This allocation goes to TfL and London Councils for their central resourcing team, working with London boroughs to support local chargepoint strategy and rollout. Additional capability funding has since been provided to several London boroughs in March 2024.

Figure 1: Distribution of LEVI capability funding across England (£ million, left, and £ per person, right)



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI capability funding recipient monitoring data.*

Use of capability funding

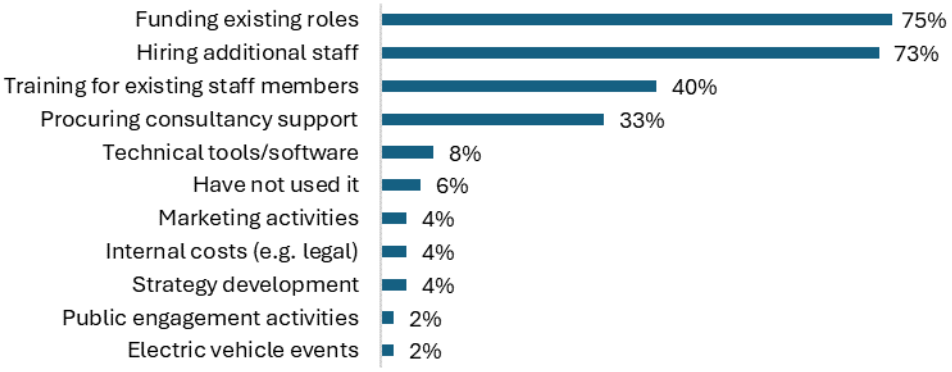
The Capability Fund is intended to provide local authorities with resource funding to secure dedicated expertise to plan, procure and tender the delivery of local chargepoints in their area, thus equipping them to take full advantage of capital funding.

Figure 2 shows that of the 52 Capability Fund recipients who responded to the survey for this evaluation, three-quarters (75%) used capability funding to fund existing roles, and a similar proportion (73%) used it to hire additional staff. Other common uses include providing training for existing staff members (40%) and procuring consultancy support (33%).

A further 6% had not yet used the Capability Fund. While they were not asked the reason for this, 1 in-depth interview respondent said that they had not used it because they were holding it back to pay for staff to manage the actual delivery of chargepoints.

Figure 2: Use of Capability Funding

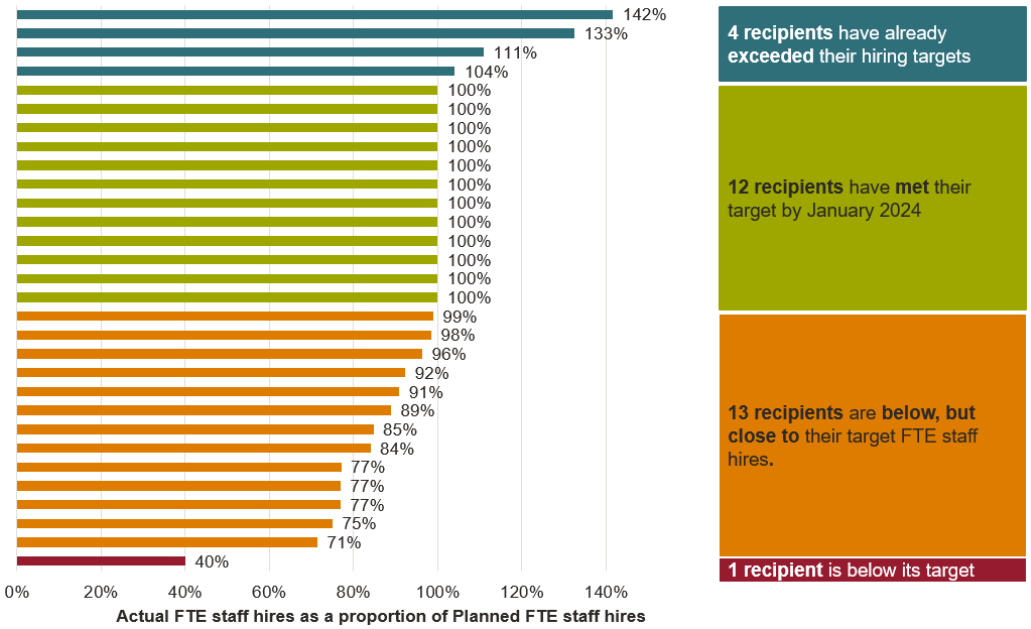
Please can you specify what the capability funding has been used for? (Base: 52 Capability Fund survey respondents)



Source: *Responses to Capability Fund Survey, multicode question.*

Figure 3 shows that by January 2024, from a sample of 30 Capability Fund recipients, 16 had met their planned number of FTE staff hires (including 4 who exceeded their planned hires). Of the remaining 14 recipients, 13 were close to meeting their hiring plans, having already made at least 70% of their planned FTE staff hires.

Figure 3: Actual FTE staff hires relative to planned for a sample of 30 Capability Fund recipients (January 2024)



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI capability funding recipient monitoring data.*
Note: *Usable data on both the planned number of FTE hires and actual FTE hires (as of January 2024) was only available for 30 of the 80 recipients.*

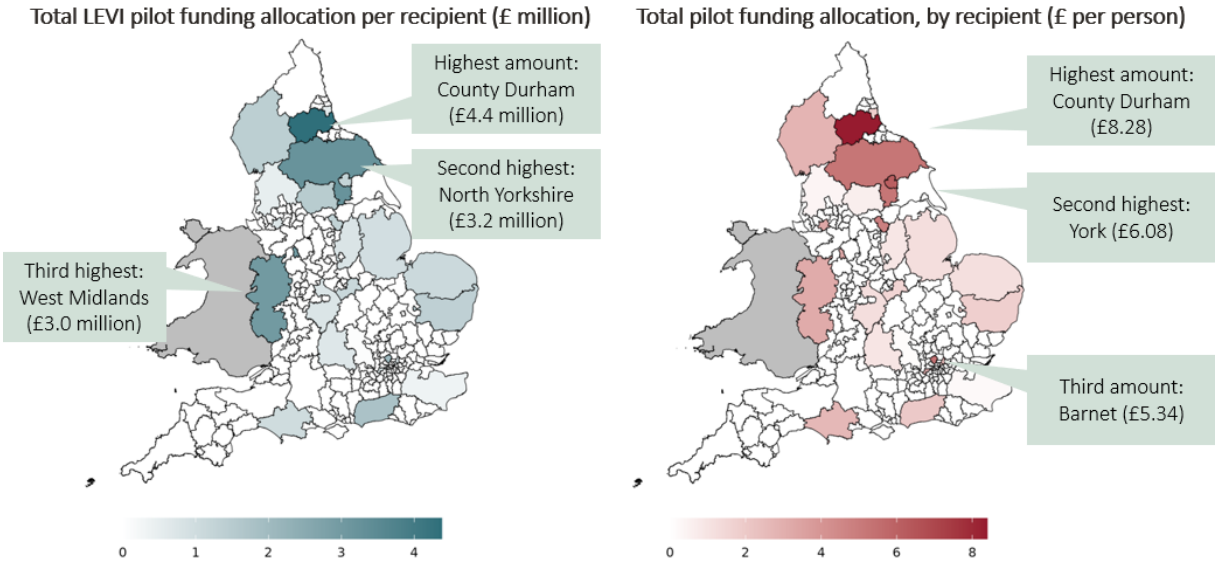
Capability Fund survey respondents that experienced difficulties with recruitment, commonly reported the challenge of competing with significant demand for suitable candidates due to concurrent recruitment across programs, and difficulty recruiting people for fixed term contracts. Some also felt they lacked the technical knowledge to write job descriptions, especially where they did not already have EV infrastructure expertise in house. The LEVI Support Body provided a recruitment workshop to support on these issues which was reported to be valuable.

3.3 Pilot funding

Awards of pilot funding

Since its launch in 2022, the Pilot Fund has delivered (through competition) £31.9 million of public funding, supported by more than £25 million of private investment, to 25 schemes across 2 stages in 2022 and 2023. As shown in Figure 4, the 3 regions that received the highest pilot funding (left chart) were County Durham, North Yorkshire and the West Midlands, all of which are in the North or Midlands. In per capita terms (right chart), pilot funding followed a similar geographic distribution, with the highest amounts awarded to County Durham, York and Barnet. The average funding per capita for Pilot programs was £2.53, calculated across all Pilot areas of England.

Figure 4: Distribution of LEVI pilot funding awarded across England (£ million, left, and £ per person, right)

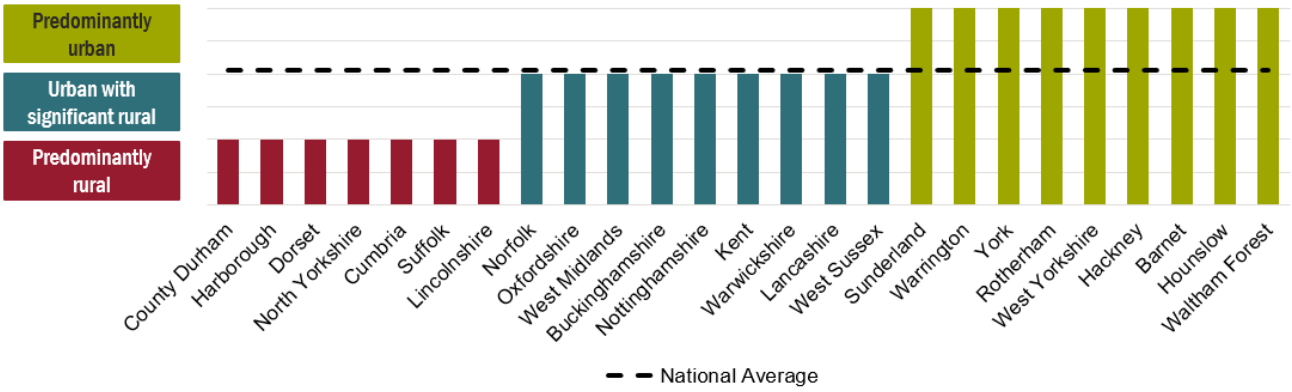


Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI Pilot Fund recipient monitoring data.*

A core principle of the LEVI Fund, for both pilot and capital funding, is to award funding to schemes with a greater local 'need' for on-street residential chargepoints, which include rural areas and rural-related hub towns.[22]

Figure 5 shows that the pilot funding was distributed to recipients that were relatively more rural compared to the average level of rurality of all local authorities across England: 16 of the 25 local authorities who received pilot funding (64%) are classified as predominantly or significantly rural, compared to 52% of local authorities nationally.[23] These 16 local authorities accounted for 70% of pilot funding.

Figure 5: Rural/urban classification of LEVI Pilot Fund recipients



Source: *Frontier analysis of DEFRA data on sub-national rural-urban classification.*
Note: *As defined by DEFRA, recipients are classified as 'predominantly rural', 'urban with significant rurality' and 'predominantly urban'. The national England average (median) level of rurality is 'predominantly urban' (52% of local authorities in England), shown by the dotted line.*

In principle, the LEVI Fund also aims to support local areas in the earlier stages of chargepoint delivery with the aim of an equitable growth in chargepoint rollout across England. Figure 6 presents the number of chargepoints per 100,000 population (chargepoint density) for each Pilot Fund recipient in July 2022, the latest quarter prior to the initial delivery of pilot funding in August 2022.

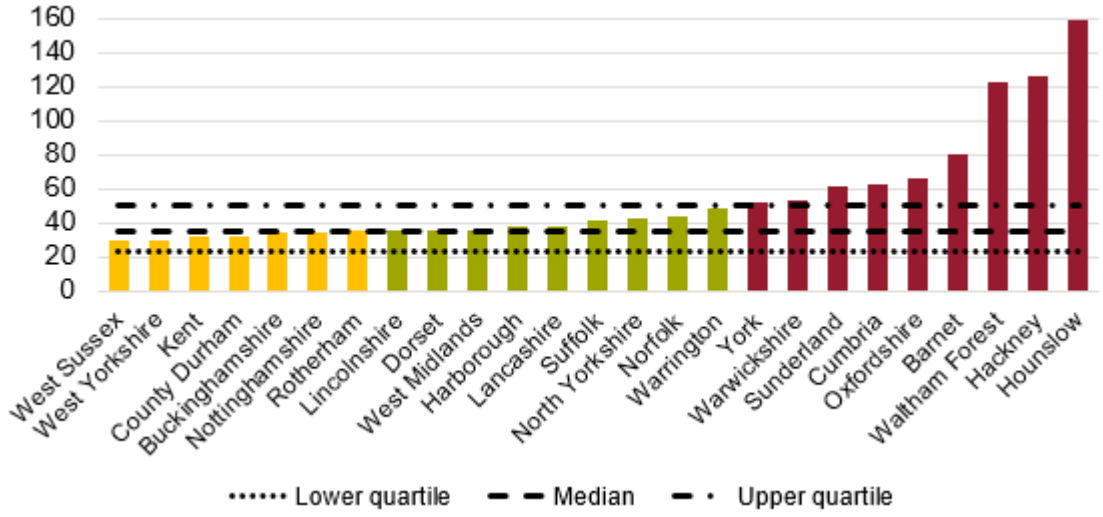
Figure 6 shows that before the Pilot Fund, 7 out of the 25 recipients (shown in light blue bars), had a chargepoint density below the average of all local authorities in England, 9 had around the average (in green) and 9 (in red) were above average (among the 25% highest density England local authorities). This suggests that the delivery of pilot funding was awarded to local schemes across the spectrum of existing chargepoint provision. This suggests that although the distribution

22 The focus on rural areas was because those areas likely have a lower commercial case for chargepoint provision due to lower population densities.

23 2011 Rural Urban Classification lookup tables for all geographies - GOV.UK

of funding awarded aligned with the aims of the Pilot Fund, practical considerations were also taken into account in the awards process, such as local authority readiness to partake in the Pilot Fund.

Figure 6: Chargepoints per 100,000 population in July 2022 for Pilot Fund recipients

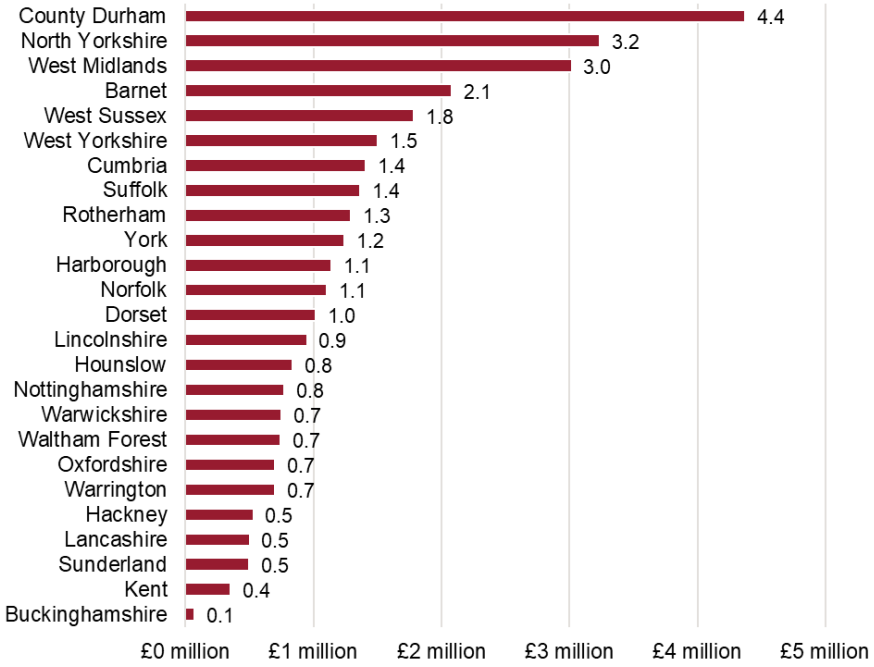


Source: *Frontier analysis of DfT data on sub-national chargepoint infrastructure, July 2022*
Note: *The average (median) value, and the lower and upper quartile values across all England local authorities are shown with dotted lines. The lower quartile line relates to the threshold associated with the 25% of England local authorities with the lowest density of chargepoints per 100,000 population. The upper quartile line relates to the threshold associated with the 25% of England local authorities with the highest density of chargepoints per 100,000 population.*

Complementary funding sources

Figure 7 shows the breakdown of LEVI pilot funding by local authority, with County Durham receiving the largest amount of £4.4 million. However, other funding from supplementary private and public sources is expected to also contribute significantly to the chargepoint installation plans of Pilot Fund recipients. On average, local authorities estimated that pilot funding would account for 52% of all funding, with 48% anticipated to come from supplementary funding sources. The anticipated relative contribution of supplementary funding varied across pilot schemes: private funding accounted for an anticipated 25% or less of total funding for 7 schemes, and more than two-thirds for 2 schemes.

Figure 7: LEVI pilot funding, by local authority (£ million)



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI Pilot Fund recipient monitoring data, January 2024.*

The 14 local authorities that completed the Pilot Fund survey were asked to specify where they felt this supplementary funding would come from. Private funding was generally anticipated to come from CPOs, and public funding was anticipated to come from a range of sources including existing council funds and other central government funding, where appropriate.

The significant contribution of supplementary funding, alongside pilot funding, indicates that no single funding source is sufficient to realise the overall chargepoint delivery plans of Pilot Fund recipients. This suggests pilot funding facilitated additional chargepoint delivery compared to what might have been possible without public subsidy. However, this merits further monitoring over time to assess the relative contribution of different funding sources more robustly.

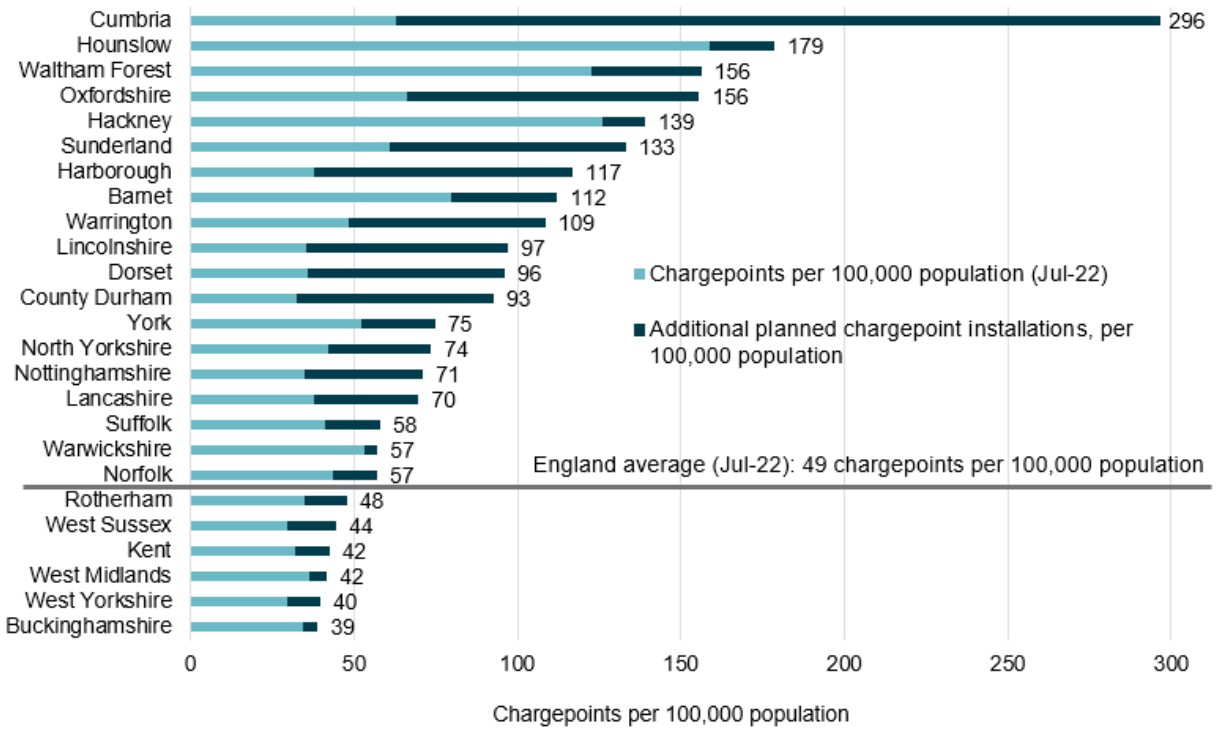
Planned chargepoint delivery

The LEVI Fund aims to deliver a 'step-change' in the deployment of local, primarily low power, on-street charging infrastructure across England.[24] The monitoring data submitted by Pilot Fund recipients to DfT shows that the median average increase in planned chargepoints is 63% relative to their July 2022 infrastructure, although this average sits within a wide range (8% to 370%).

[24] Source: Apply for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding - GOV.UK

Figure 8 shows that pilot funding is expected to support the increase in chargepoint density, which on average across England in July 2022 was 49 chargepoints per 100,000 population. Prior to the provision of pilot funding in July 2022, 16 of the 25 Pilot Fund recipients had a chargepoint density below the England average (represented by the light blue bars). However, following the completion of Pilot schemes, only 6 recipients are expected to have a chargepoint density below that average level.[25]

Figure 8: Pilot Fund recipient chargepoints per 100,000 population in July 2022, and future planned installations



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI Pilot Fund recipient monitoring data, January 2024.*

As shown by Figure 8, there is wide variation in the scale of planned chargepoint additions across Pilot Fund recipients. For example, Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire each planned to install 4 and 5 chargepoints per 100,000 population (the lowest planned additions), whereas Cumbria and Oxfordshire planned to install 233 and 89 chargepoints per 100,000 population (the largest planned additions). These differences may be explained to some extent by differences in funding, with Buckinghamshire in particular receiving the lowest pilot funding (£70,000) and Warwickshire receiving limited additional private funding. It also appears to be explained by the type of chargepoint infrastructure planned. For example, more than 85% of Cumbria's planned

[25] For simplicity, this calculation does not consider any population changes and does not account for changes in chargepoint installations across local authorities that are not LEVI Pilot Fund recipients.

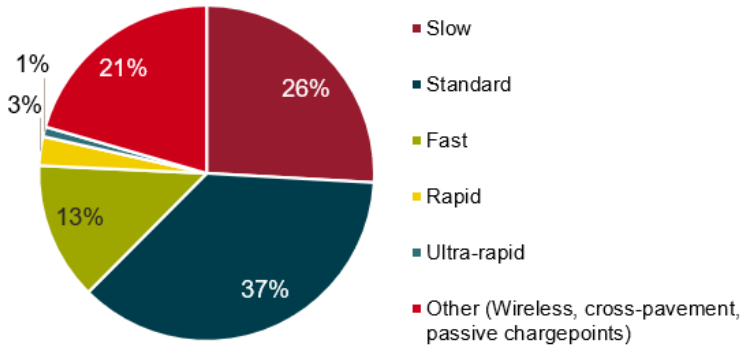
installations are low power and all of Oxfordshire's chargepoints are cross-pavement chargepoint solutions[26] or passive chargepoints, both of which are lower cost to install.

The scale of support provided by the Pilot Fund also varied across recipients. Per planned chargepoint, using local authority estimates of costs as of January 2024, pilot funding was on average £7,182 across all recipients. One key driver of recipients having higher funding per chargepoint was the speed profile of planned installations, where rapid chargepoints typically cost more to install (but with the additional benefit of charging a higher number of vehicles).

It is also worth noting that the estimated pilot funding per chargepoint includes other supporting technologies (batteries, photovoltaics, etc.), where these formed part of pilot schemes. The inclusion of these technologies, alongside more conventional charging infrastructure, significantly increased estimated costs for some schemes. Based on key findings from the Pilot Fund, the Capital Fund has shifted focus away from funding more innovative technologies that are also higher cost.

The Pilot Fund intended to focus primarily on lower speed on-street chargepoints. Figure 9 shows that this was achieved in the pilot. The majority of planned installations (62%) to which pilot funding contributed are either 'Slow' or 'Standard' speed chargepoints (2,778 planned installations), with 'Fast', 'Rapid' or 'Ultra-Rapid' speeds accounting for 17% (756 planned installations). These categorisations of the speed of chargepoint installations were provided by Pilot Fund recipients in their regular monitoring data submitted to DfT.[27]

Figure 9: Break-down of the proportion of planned Pilot Fund chargepoint additions, by speed



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI Pilot Fund recipient monitoring data, January 2024.*
Note: *Speeds of chargepoints are defined in the Monitoring data as follows: Slow (< 7kW), Standard (7kW), Fast (11 to 22kW), Rapid (43 to 50kW), Ultra-Rapid (> 50kW). Figures rounded to nearest decimal place. 'Other' represents chargepoint additions that were not classified into a speed category in the application data, which relates to gullies and passive chargepoints.*

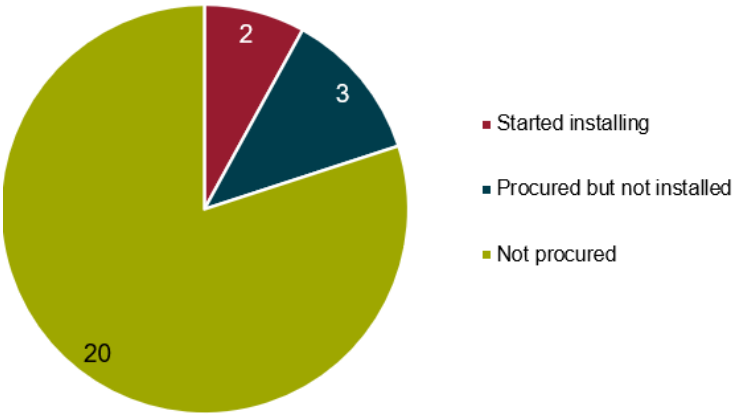
[26] Cross-pavement solutions are not likely to be public chargepoints, and therefore this statistic is illustrative.

[27] The note in Figure 9 matches the recipients' speed classifications to chargepoint power bands.

Delivery of chargepoints to date and expected going forwards

At the time of this analysis (January 2024), it was too early to assess whether pilot schemes are on track to deliver their planned chargepoint installations, given that most schemes have a planned delivery of late 2024 or in 2025. The status of pilot schemes as of January 2024 is in Figure 10, showing that 2 out of the 25 schemes had successfully installed a small proportion of their total planned chargepoints. Of the 2, 1 scheme has installed 6 out of its planned 120 chargepoints, and the other has installed 10 out of its planned 300.

Figure 10: Progress in delivering chargepoint installations (January 2024), LEVI Pilot Fund recipients (Base: 25)



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of LEVI Pilot Fund recipient monitoring data, January 2024.*

The procurement of preferred suppliers has also been limited to date. In total, as of January 2024, 5 out of the 25 Pilot Fund recipients had procured a preferred supplier. This would be anticipated to increase as plans progress. Chapter 4 discusses the procurement issues in more detail.

3.4 Tranche 1 capital funding

Progress to date

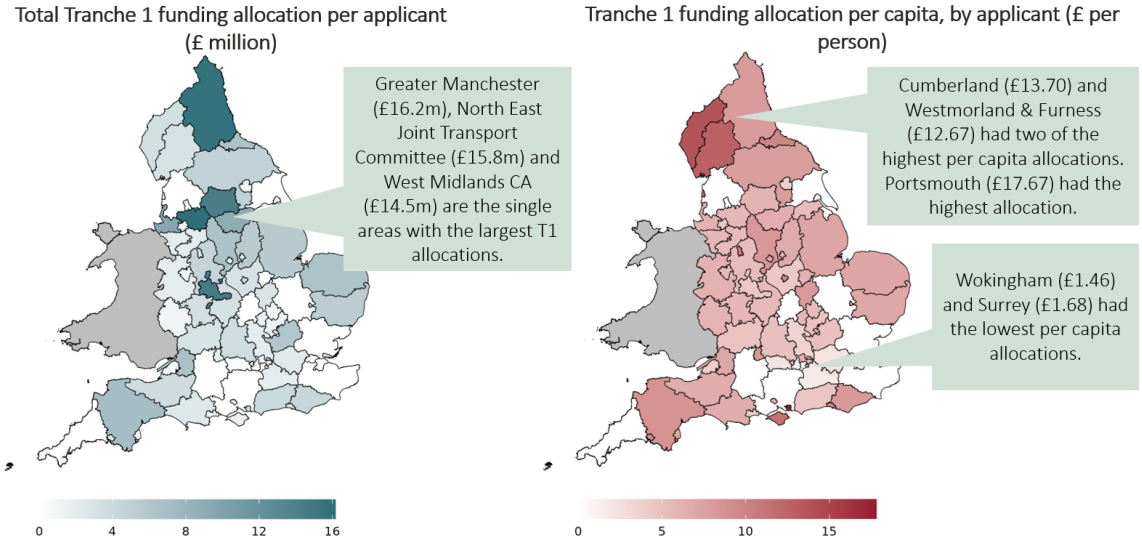
Building on learnings from the Pilot Fund, to distribute the Capital Fund, initial allocations of funding were determined based on principles defined by DfT, followed by an application stage. Applicants were sorted (through consultation) to partake in Tranche 1 if they were ready to submit an application, and if not were placed into a later Tranche 2. Local authorities invited to apply in Tranche 1 had a combined capital funding allocation of £257.6 million across 51 projects, with confirmed allocations provided by DfT in March 2023 and tranche allocations in September 2023. Projects were funded across 55 local authorities, 7 mayoral combined authorities, the North East Joint Transport Committee and, collectively, some London borough partnerships. The total number of projects (51) was lower than the total number of local geographical bodies applying for funding (55), due to several local authorities applying collectively as part of 2 consortia.

As shown in Figure 11, as a single area Greater Manchester received the highest Tranche 1 capital funding allocation (£16.2 million). The next 2 highest allocations were the North East Joint Transport Committee (£15.8 million) and West Midlands (£14.5 million). The 2 consortia of multiple areas led by Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire each received higher combined funding amounts (£23.7 million and £19.2 million, respectively), although the allocations to individual LAs in those consortia were much lower than this.

In per capita terms, the highest Tranche 1 capital funding allocations were to Portsmouth on the south coast of England (£17.67), Cumberland (£13.70) and Westmorland and Furness (£12.67). The lowest allocations per capita were to Workingham (£1.46) and Surrey (£1.68), significant below the average of £6.58 per capita.

The subsequent delivery of Tranche 1 capital funding has been different to the LEVI funding allocations at the time of this analysis (January 2024) and presented in Figure 11. Not all Tranche 1 applicants have been delivered their full allocation to date as some potential applicants were deferred to Tranche 2.[28]

Figure 11: Distribution of initial Tranche 1 LEVI capital funding allocations across England (£ million, left, and £ per person, right)



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of Tranche 1 capital applicant monitoring data, January 2024*
Note: *These maps reflect the fuller group of Tranche 1 applicants: the funding allocations of any applicants that are part of consortia bids are presented separately in these maps. London boroughs did not all work together on a single project. The figure for 'London' relates to the average value of funding per London borough partnership.*

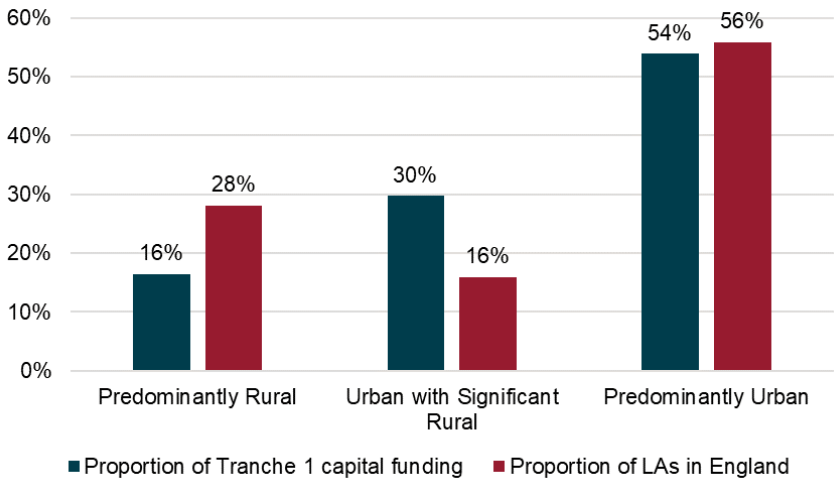
28 Other applicants receiving funding in H1 2024 would also only have received 90% of their funding allocation. This is because their application would have been approved subject to a Post Approval Action Plan, which they must complete in order to receive the final 10% of funding.

Tranche 1 capital funding was initially allocated across applicants based on several factors, including the level of 'need' for on-street residential chargepoints. One indicator of need considered by DfT was the proportion of residents within the local authority that are in rural or 'rural related' hub towns, as on-street residential chargepoints in these areas are likely to be less commercial due to lower population densities

Figure 12 shows that funding allocation value were relatively evenly split between urban areas (accounting for 54% of LEVI funding value allocated) and rural areas or urban areas with significant rurality (together accounting for 46%). This largely mirrors the level of rurality of England local authorities. However, a relatively greater share of Tranche 1 funding was allocated to 'urban with significant rural' areas (30% of funding), than to 'predominantly rural' (16%). For context, 16% of England local authorities are classified as 'urban with significant rural' and 28% are classified as 'predominantly rural'. Pilot Fund recipients, as noted above, were more rural than the national average.

This analysis is presented for context, describing the local characteristics of applicants that are allocated Tranche 1 capital funding. It should not be interpreted as assessing whether Tranche 1 capital funding has been allocated to areas in greatest 'need'. This is due to the importance of other considerations in allocating funding, such as the existing chargepoint density of local areas, the readiness of applicants to submit a capital funding application and the proportion of households without off-street parking (who would need to publicly charge their electric vehicle). It is also important to note that all LAs across England will have been allocated funding, once Tranche 2 capital funding allocations are considered.

Figure 12: Rurality of England local authorities compared to the rurality of Tranche 1 Capital Funding allocations

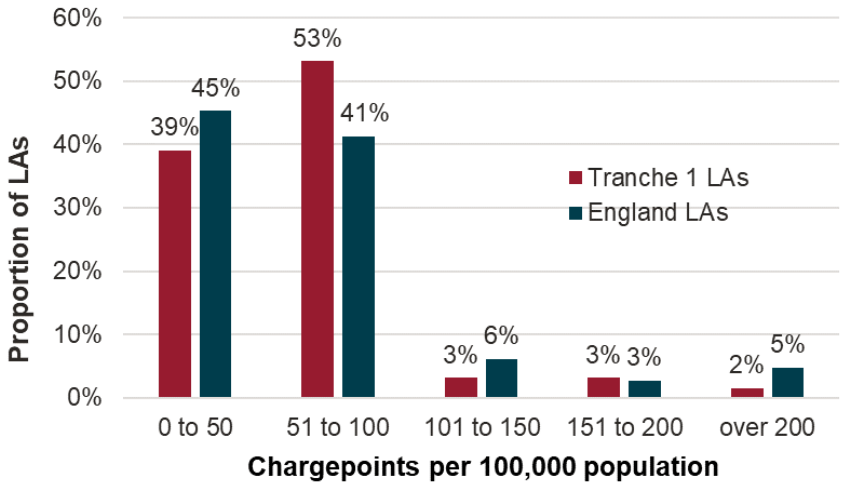


Source: *Frontier analysis of ONS data on sub-national rural-urban classification.*
Note: *Percentage figures rounded to 2 decimal places.*

In principle, the LEVI Fund also intends to support local areas at an earlier stage of chargepoint roll-out, reflected by current chargepoint density (chargepoints per 100,000 population).

Figure 13 shows that in January 2024, the chargepoint density across all Tranche 1 applicants was similar to that of all local authorities across England. Some 92% of Tranche 1 applicants had fewer than 100 chargepoints per 100,000 population, which is very similar to the national picture of 86% of local authorities.[29] Very few (2%) Tranche 1 applicants had a relatively high chargepoint density or more than 200 chargepoints per 100,000. As with Figure 13, this analysis should be viewed as contextual.

Figure 13: Pre-LEVI distribution of chargepoints per 100,000 population (January 2024) for Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants and local authorities across England



Source: *Frontier analysis of DfT data on sub-national chargepoint infrastructure, January 2024.*
Note: *X-axis shows bands (0 to 50, 51 to 100, etc) reflecting the number of chargepoints per 100,000 population. Percentage figures are rounded. The figures used relate to January 2024, which was the latest quarter of data available prior to Tranche 1 allocations.*

Complementary funding sources

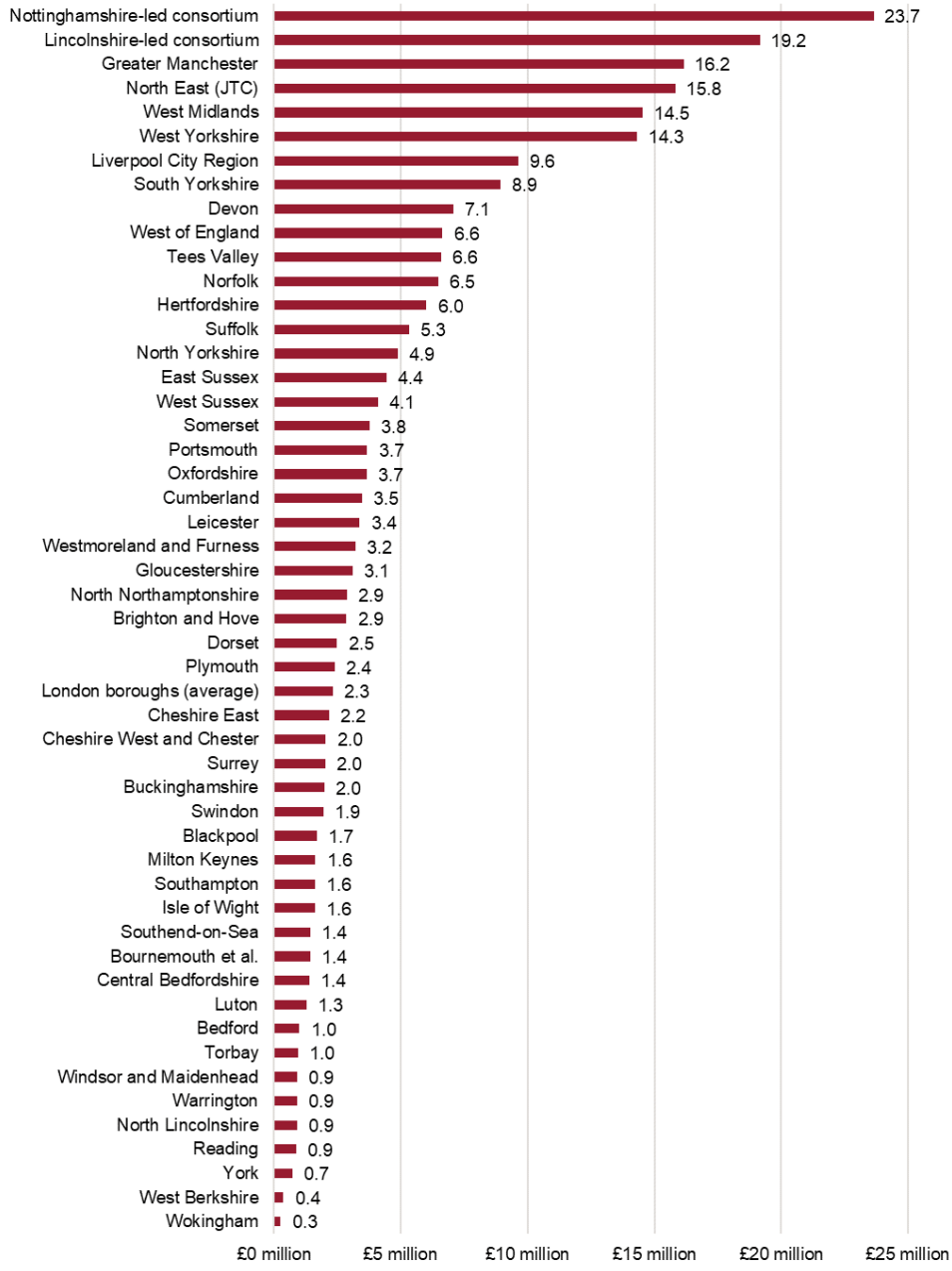
Figure 14 shows the breakdown of LEVI capital funding across local authority applicants, with both the Nottinghamshire-led and Lincolnshire-led consortia of local authorities allocated the largest overall amounts.

However, Tranche 1 Capital Fund projects also anticipate relying on supplementary funding sources. In fact on average, based on the applications data submitted to DfT, Tranche 1 applicants

[29] Source: Frontier analysis of data published at Electric vehicle charging device statistics: October 2023 - GOV.UK

anticipate 31% of total funding to be sourced from Capital Fund allocations, with an average of 69% expected from private sources.

Figure 14: LEVI Tranche 1 capital funding (£ million), by applicant



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of Tranche 1 LEVI Capital Fund application data, January 2024.*
Note: *This chart is based on data from 51 projects. This includes 2 consortia, led by Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.*
Note: *London boroughs did not all work together on a single project.The figure for 'London' relates to the average value of funding per London borough partnership.*

The relative contribution of expected private funding does, however, vary across Tranche 1 applicants. For example, across Tranche 1, 13 projects expect to source more than 75% of total funding from private sources, whilst another project estimates that private funding will account for below 33% of total funding. These differences in the level of expected private funding are influenced by the assessed commerciality of projects, which depends on factors such as existing levels of EV use or population density. The expected level of private funding is also estimated data, which may also vary depending on how optimistic a view has been taken by applicants about their ability to raise private funding and may change as projects develop with help from the LEVI Support Body.

The significant proportion of anticipated funding from private sources to supplement capital funding for Tranche 1 projects potentially suggests LEVI could be de-risking private investment. In doing so, LEVI may be facilitating a scale of chargepoint roll-out that exceeds what would otherwise be feasible. Further monitoring is required to robustly assess this.

The 54 Tranche 1 Capital Fund local authorities that completed the Capital Fund survey were asked to specify where they felt this supplementary funding would come from. Private funding was generally anticipated to come from CPOs, and other public funding was anticipated to come from a range of sources including existing council funds and other central government funding, where appropriate.

Planned chargepoint delivery

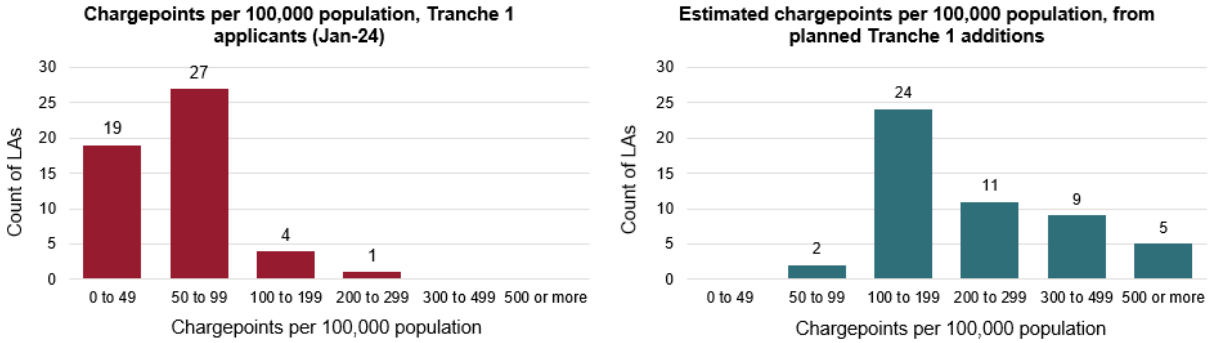
Capital funding is contributing towards a significant planned increase in chargepoint infrastructure by recipients, although it is worth noting again that private funding amounts are forecast by applicants, with the figures expected to change once procurements are complete. The median average planned increase in chargepoints is 263% for Tranche 1 applicants (compared to 43% for Pilot Fund recipients). They range from a 49% increase to more than a 36-fold increase, with the upper bound value relating to one local authority with a very low base number of chargepoints prior to LEVI funding.

Figure 15 presents the expected increase in chargepoint infrastructure for Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants, increasing from typically below 100 chargepoints per 100,000 population in January 2024 (left chart) to typically more than 100 chargepoints per 100,000 population if Tranche 1 delivery plans are realised (right hand chart).[30] As shown, the number of applicants with a chargepoint density of 100 or more chargepoints per 100,000 population would increase from 5 applicants (10%) in January 2024 to 49 applicants (96%) upon full anticipated delivery. Although the scale of this increase in chargepoints is approximate, even more chargepoints may be delivered as Figure 15 reflects the lower bound estimates of planned chargepoints by applicants,

30 This is calculated as the number of chargepoints in January 2024 plus expected chargepoint installations, all divided by the population as of January 2024, presented per 100,000 population. For simplicity, no population growth over time is assumed.

and these estimates do not include other chargepoints not related to LEVI that may be locally delivered.

Figure 15: Chargepoints per 100,000 population for Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants, before, (left) and after (right) planned chargepoint delivery



Source: *Frontier analysis of DfT data on sub-national chargepoint infrastructure, January 2024 and Frontier Economics analysis of Tranche 1 LEVI Capital Fund application data, January 2024.*

Note: *The charts are based on data for the full group of 51 LEVI Tranche 1 projects. Tranche 1 applicants submitted a lower and upper estimate of planned chargepoint installations; this analysis takes a conservative approach and uses the lower bound estimate. Two data points in each of these charts relate to the chargepoint density of 2 consortia, led by Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. For simplicity, the chargepoint density of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire is used to represent these consortia: the planned number of chargepoint additions for each consortium was aggregated and assigned to Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire in the application data provided. Therefore, a disaggregated analysis for individual consortia members was not possible.*

Among Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants, several are planning very significant chargepoint delivery. For example, some applicants are anticipating increases in their chargepoint density by more than 20 times. While these applicants have low current chargepoint density (as of January 2024), they are still planning chargepoint additions in excess of 500 chargepoints per 100,000 population. Many of these are lower power chargepoints.

The currently expected level of capital funding per chargepoint is also significantly lower than for the Pilot Fund (£3,523 per planned chargepoint on average, compared to £7,182 for the Pilot). The estimated subsidy per chargepoint outlined in applications represent January 2024 pre-procurement estimates and will change as projects develop with support from the LEVI Support Body.

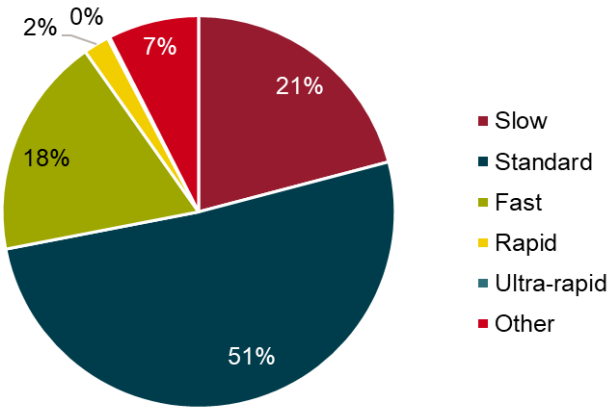
There are 2 main reasons for this difference in the estimated capital funding subsidy per chargepoint between the Tranche 1 Capital Fund and the Pilot Fund. Firstly, Tranche 1 applicants are planning an average increase in chargepoints of 1,434,[31] compared to 178 additions per pilot scheme. Secondly, the Capital Fund has less focus on funding more innovative chargepoint

[31] This is the average lower bound estimates of the planned chargepoints to be delivered. Tranche 1 applicants also provided an upper bound, but this analysis takes a conservative approach and uses the lower bound.

supporting technologies (batteries, photovoltaics etc.) which are also higher cost, compared to the Pilot Fund.

Tranche 1 Capital Fund projects are also supporting the installation of primarily lower speed on-street chargepoints. Figure 16 shows that the majority of planned additions (72%) are either 'Slow' or 'Standard' speed with the remaining chargepoint additions 'Fast', 'Rapid' or 'Ultra-rapid' speed. This is aligned with the aims of LEVI.

Figure 16: Speed of planned chargepoint installations for Tranche 1 Capital Fund projects



Source: *Frontier Economics analysis of Tranche 1 LEVI Capital Fund application data, January 2024.*
Note: *Speeds of chargepoints were defined in the Monitoring data by local authorities as follows: Slow (< 7kW), Standard (7kW), Fast (11 to 22kW), Rapid (43 to 50kW), Ultra-Rapid (> 50kW). 'Other' represents chargepoint additions that were not classified into a speed category in the application data, which relates to gullies, pavement channel and some pedestal chargepoints. Please note that most pedestal chargepoints did have an associated speed in the data submitted by local authorities, so there were only a small number of pedestal chargepoints without an associated speed included in the "Other" category.*

4. EXPERIENCES OF THE APPLICATION AND DELIVERY PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes local authority and stakeholder experiences of the application process, and experiences of the early stages of delivery, for the Capability Fund, Pilot Fund and Capital Fund to date. These are important 'activities' in the LEVI Theory of Change (shown in ANNEX B) as these processes are necessary for the appropriate and effective distribution of funding to local authorities, in line with the objectives of LEVI.

The data used in this chapter is drawn from the primary data collected from online surveys with responses from 52 Capability, 14 Pilot and 54 Capital Fund recipients; 24 in-depth interviews with Capability, Pilot and Capital Fund recipients, sub-national transport bodies and CPOs, and online workshops with 32 individuals from OZEV and the LEVI Support Body.

Key messages

Feedback from LEVI Fund recipients suggests LEVI funding has played an important role in their ability to design and deliver chargepoint plans, and facilitate chargepoint delivery.

The Capability Fund has been essential in supporting the development of Capital Fund applications and EV infrastructure strategies, enabling recruitment and retention of people with the relevant skills and providing additional capacity. Pilot and capital funding is facilitating the delivery of chargepoints that would not otherwise have been delivered or would have been delivered more slowly.

Pilot Fund recipients identified that LEVI funding is also helping leverage additional private sector investment in local authorities' chargepoint delivery programmes, building and accelerating chargepoint rollout; has encouraged increased partnership working; and has facilitated local authorities to better target non-commercially viable locations that offer significant social benefits, such as more deprived areas, and residential areas across the city, rather than focussing only on high-value commercial areas in city centres. This has expanded knowledge sharing and access to funding opportunities and enabled local authorities to more effectively target non-commercially viable locations, unlocking significant social benefits.

The application process, messaging, and support provided by OZEV and the LEVI Support Body is generally perceived by Pilot and Capital Fund recipients to be working well.

While delivery is still in its early stages, many pilot-funded schemes reported delays in chargepoint procurement (citing overly optimistic timelines, inadequate resource, and slow stakeholder responses or sign offs) and a minority plan to deliver fewer chargepoints than originally anticipated (most frequently attributed to increased costs).

Many Capability Fund and Capital Fund recipients shared concerns about local authorities' capacity to run EV infrastructure programmes once capability funding ends, potentially leading to increased reliance on commercial operators to manage the scheme. This may result in increased tariffs, have a negative impact on ongoing network development, and impact ability to meet chargepoint target.

4.2 Perceptions of the role of LEVI funding in supporting local chargepoint roll-out

The primary fieldwork elicited insights into the perceptions and experiences of local authorities receiving the capability, pilot and capital funding, as well as from other stakeholders in the chargepoint ecosystem. These are presented in this chapter, and can be used to inform future development of LEVI or related support.

Capability Fund

The majority of the 54 Capital Fund recipients responding to the survey reported the capability funding was useful to them (76%), compared to around 1 in 10 that found it not to be useful (9%). The remainder said it was neither useful or not useful (9%) or did not know (6%).

When asked during in-depth interviews, many local authorities shared the view that capability funding had been essential in supporting the development of their Capital Fund applications and (where not already in place) developing their EV infrastructure strategies. For many, existing resources and expertise for this task were limited or non-existent, and the funding was required to recruit expertise or upskill existing staff. Those who did not have other funding available (such as internal or grant funding) felt they would have been unable to apply for capital funding without capability funding.

> *"The capability funds secured us in order to be able to carry on ... if we didn't have the capability funding, we wouldn't exist." Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipient*
>
> *"The existence of the Capability Fund was absolutely essential in ensuring progress could be made on EV charging infrastructure in the area." Capability Fund recipient*

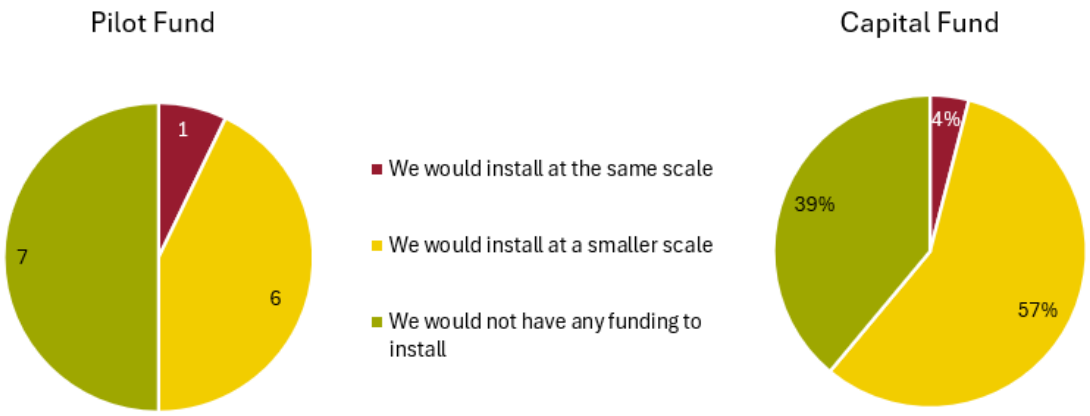
Pilot and Capital Fund

Figure 17 shows that without pilot funding, half the pilot survey respondents (7 of 14) would not have had any funding to install EV chargepoints, and almost half (6 of 14) would have installed them at a smaller scale. Only 1 local authority said they would have installed the same scale of chargepoints, and they would have done so using council funding. This is also the case for the Capital Fund as over half of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents (57%) would install public charging infrastructure at a smaller scale using other funding, 39% would not have any funding to install public charging infrastructure, and only 4% would install the infrastructure at the same level with council or other funding.

The extent to which funding has facilitated Pilot and Capital Fund recipients to increase, or accelerate their plans for local chargepoint delivery was also discussed in the in-depth interviews. By providing financial support and technical assistance, local authorities consistently suggested the funding had supported them to accelerate the deployment of EV infrastructure and contribute to the achievement of national electrification targets by 2030. One Tranche 1 local authority who would be unable to install any chargepoints without LEVI funding explained they will not be able to do any additional EV work beyond what can be funded by LEVI. Another explained that capital funding would enable them to reach both the number and types of EV chargepoints that their modelling indicated they would require, by focusing on chargers for residential use.

Figure 17: The extent to which local authorities would have installed public charging infrastructure without LEVI pilot or capital funding

Without pilot/capital funding, which of the following best describes your position about installing public charging infrastructure in your local authority? (Base: 14 Pilot Fund and 54 Capital Fund survey respondents)



Source: *Responses to Pilot and Capital Fund Surveys.*

Local authorities responding to the online survey, who said that without LEVI funding they would have installed public charging infrastructure on a smaller scale, indicated they would have done so using single or multiple sources. Of the 6 relevant pilot funded local authorities, the most reported funding sources were other grant schemes such as the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) (3 local authorities) and council funding (2 local authorities), while other sources, each mentioned by 1 local authority, were private sector funding, district authority funding, and consortium funding. For capital funded local authorities who were invited to apply in Tranche 1 of the Capital Fund, the other sources which they would have used if they did not have access to capital funding were more diverse and were as follows:[32]

[32] This was a multi-response question.

- 54% would have used funding from private investment
- 27% would have used other public sector programmes such as ORCS or CRSTS
- 15% would have used CPOs
- 12% would have used council funding
- 4% would have used local funding opportunities

Chapter 3 highlighted the importance of private and other funding for delivering local chargepoint plans. The significant contribution of other funding sources may suggest that pilot funding possibly played a role in contributing towards leveraging this supplementary funding, alongside contributing directly towards wider programmes of chargepoint delivery.

CPOs interviewed expressed they were looking forward to the point where the market is stable enough to not require public funding but welcomed the current support to help accelerate installation to support the growth in demand for chargepoints. They anticipate LEVI funding supporting with meeting EV demand up to 2030 but feel that complementary measures to increase demand would also be useful, such as more Ultra Low Emission Zone scrappage schemes or reducing VAT for public charging to help drive EV uptake. They felt that while demand would eventually be met by the private sector in the future, the LEVI funding allows the industry to take a more proactive approach and fuel demand rather than responding to it, increasing uptake of EVs by ensuring residents have access to nearby chargepoints. This supports one of the core aims of the LEVI Fund, to accelerate chargepoint roll out ahead of demand:

> *"[The response to chargepoint demand from the private sector is] more reactive than proactive. [With LEVI funding you can] put in some chargepoints which will not be used for 3 years. That's OK, you know that somebody has taken the risk with you, so you're happy. But if not, you wait till there [are more electric] vehicles to make sure that when you put the chargepoint, it gets used straight away and not in 10 years."* Chargepoint Operator

Four of the 14 Pilot Fund recipients who responded to the survey said they now planned to deliver fewer chargepoints than they had anticipated at the point that they submitted their application. Two anticipated delivering 30 fewer chargepoints, 1 anticipated delivering 70 fewer chargepoints, and 1 anticipated delivering 2 fewer chargepoints. Multiple reasons for this were provided. These most frequently related to increased costs of suppliers, materials, infrastructure and distribution network operator (DNO) connections, but also included objections from residents, lack of suitable sites, difficulty obtaining planning approvals and land ownership issues, internal legal issues, unwillingness to commit to long contract terms and procurement issues.

4.3 Additional benefits enabled by the LEVI Funds to date

In addition to contributing to the core aims of the 3 LEVI funding streams, stakeholders reported the funding has facilitated various other benefits, as described in this section.

Enabling strategic approaches that better align with social objectives

Some Pilot Fund recipients interviewed considered they would have been more commercially driven without pilot funding, which would have meant focusing on installing chargepoints in areas with high commercial value, such as retail centres and city centres, and relying more heavily on partnerships with private CPOs. These efforts would, however, have been constrained by the availability of internal resources and smaller Government funding schemes like ORCS. Pilot funding was considered to have allowed local authorities to better target non-commercially viable locations that offer significant social benefits, such as more deprived areas, and residential areas across the city, rather than focussing only on high-value commercial areas in city centres, supporting broader social and economic objectives. For example, 1 local authority expressed the view that if chargepoint installation had been left to the private market, and CPOs were not working on behalf of local authorities, they would be likely to prioritise profits when choosing chargepoint locations, rather than accessibility for as many residents as possible. In this way, chargepoint installation would not have achieved the strategic objective of providing broad chargepoint access.

Other ways in which Pilot Fund recipients considered the Pilot Fund had influenced their approach to chargepoint installation were as follows:

- without pilot funding some local authorities would have had to take a more incremental and piecemeal approach to EV infrastructure deployment, installing chargepoints one project at a time as smaller funding pots became available. Internal resources and funding would have been stretched thin, and councils would have faced significant challenges in delivering substantial EV infrastructure projects. Pilot funding has enabled them to enhance the scale and scope of their projects significantly, through facilitating the delivery of major projects and for some, to take a more holistic approach to the placement of chargepoints across the entire local authority area
- the additional resources and flexibility offered by the Pilot Fund have enabled some local authorities to integrate EV infrastructure within existing projects (e.g. new residential developments)
- pilot funding has enabled local authorities to consider more innovative approaches, including how they can optimise use of space. For example, some are exploring emerging charging methods such as cross-pavement charging solutions, particularly in urban areas where space is limited. Local authorities felt that these innovative approaches would have been difficult to pursue without the support provided by pilot funding
- 1 local authority has integrated EV infrastructure projects with broader city regeneration plans, which has proved effective in maximising resources and aligning with larger sustainability goals

> *"Being able to use the LEVI pilot funding gives us a bit more flexibility in terms of what we do with that funding and we might be able to investigate some entirely self-funded initiatives because of that. Without it ... we wouldn't have been able to ... even think about that."* Pilot Fund recipient

Encouraging partnership working

Many Pilot Fund recipients interviewed said they had developed good and effective partnerships with key stakeholders, including CPOs, DNOs and the EST, to leverage expertise and resources for project delivery. Many considered that the partnerships have facilitated knowledge and data sharing (particularly within combined authorities), capacity building (through partner local authorities or CPOs providing support, such as reaching out to existing contacts or facilitating resident engagement), and access to funding opportunities, enhancing the overall success of EV infrastructure initiatives.

Some local authorities entered into partnerships with each other to apply for pilot and capital funding. One benefit identified during in-depth interviews with sub-national transport bodies of applying as a consortium, rather than individual local authorities, was to leverage the buying power of a larger group of councils, especially for rural areas which would be less appealing to CPOs. For those Capital Fund recipients who were in a consortium, having good working relationships with the various local authorities was described as an enabler for delivery:

> *"The reason for applying was to support a consortium approach, that by bringing councils together we can leverage the buying power of councils ... because at the time the main challenge that we had was rural counties having a harder business case than a lot of the urban areas."* Sub-national Transport Body

> *"The relationship that we've got with our local authorities puts us in a very good position to be able to, to coordinate, that delivery from a regional perspective."* Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipient

Almost all Pilot Fund survey respondents indicated partnership working met or exceeded their expectations, compared to how they had anticipated it would work when they were at procurement stage (13 of 14) and pre procurement (12 of 14) stage. Where expectations had not been met, slow response rates from stakeholders, delays in procurement, and internal changes within the local authority were cited as the cause.

Engaging with residents

Some pilot funded local authorities noted during in-depth interviews that they have developed procurement frameworks and strategies tailored to local needs, enabling more efficient and effective project implementation. Pilot funded local authorities interviewed said they have conducted extensive resident engagement activities, including surveys, workshops, and digital consultations, to gather feedback and address concerns about proposed charging sites. This

engagement has helped build community support for EV infrastructure projects and fostered greater awareness and understanding of EVs among residents.

While some local authorities which had received capital funding had already been proactive with engaging with residents, they were more commonly at the planning stage, and indicated during in-depth interviews their positive intentions to engage with residents once business models and funding are approved, or when delivery begins. One such local authority explained engagement will mainly revolve around the locations of chargepoints, and that it had prepared a website for public feedback. Another said it would rely on previous engagement (e.g. from resident surveys) to guide delivery.

Some local authorities had, to date, been more reactive to residents' communications, relying on engagement initiated by residents in the form of suggestions for chargepoint locations, or complaints about loss of parking spaces or delays to installed chargepoints receiving power.

Some local authorities felt that utilising a strategic selection of chargepoint locations based on community input and practical considerations was an enabler to delivery. For instance, 1 local authority's EV working group (made up of representatives of the local council, parish council, residents, and climate action groups) utilised local knowledge and feedback to identify and prioritise suitable sites, ensuring community buy-in and project feasibility:

> *"[The EV working group has] been our first port of call for gaining ideas as to where they would like the locations to be."* Pilot Fund recipient

4.4 Views on the application process and support provided

In general, the application process for the Pilot and Capital Funds were perceived by local authorities to work well, although challenges were noted, and suggestions made for improvement.

Messaging about objectives

Messaging about both the Pilot and Capital Fund objectives throughout the application process was generally perceived to be clear:

- 12 of the 14 Pilot Fund survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were clear, and the remaining 2 neither agreed nor disagreed
- 74% of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed they were clear, 18% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed

Likewise, the individual objectives were generally considered to be clear:

- each Pilot Fund objective[33] was rated as clear or very clear by at least 13 of the 14 Pilot Fund Survey respondents (1 found the first to be unclear and 1 found the third to be unclear)
- for the Capital Fund objectives,[34] the first was rated as clear or very clear by 94% of Capital Fund survey respondents, and the remainder thought it was unclear or very unclear (6%). The second was rated as clear or very clear by 73% of Capital Fund Survey respondents, and the remainder thought it was neither clear nor unclear (18%) or unclear or very unclear (9%)

Suggestions for improvements to the communication of the objectives for the Capital Fund were made around the following themes (some respondents made multiple suggestions):

- more clarity around the wording and meaning of the commercialisation objective (3 local authorities)
- more clarity on ways local authorities can make their schemes profitable or commercial, to fund their ongoing management (e.g. provide examples of agreements between CPOs and local authorities around profit sharing) (3 local authorities)
- providing a baseline target for match funding (3 local authorities)
- more clarity around the percentage of houses without off-street parking on a street required for the area to be considered eligible (2 local authorities)

Messaging about requirements of the Capital Fund

Messaging throughout the application process about what Capital Fund applicants will be required to do if they are successful, was generally perceived by recipients to be clear. Over two-thirds (69%) of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents considered messaging about such requirements overall to be clear, 9% considered it unclear and the remaining 22% considered it neither clear nor unclear.

When considering individual requirements:

- the requirement to collaborate with other local authorities was least well understood with around half (51%) finding it clear, and half as many (24%) finding it unclear. The remainder found it neither clear nor unclear (25%)
- most respondents felt the requirement to run a competitive procurement process to maximise infrastructure provision and private investment to be clear, and the

[33] Pilot Fund objectives were described in the questionnaire as: (1) 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, (2) to 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, and (3) to increase consumer confidence in transitioning to EVs across England, ensuring increased uptake across regions.

[34] Capital Fund objectives were described in the questionnaire as: (1) to support households without off-street parking to charge close to their homes and (2) to accelerate the commercialisation of the local chargepoint sector.

requirement to deliver primarily low power on-street charging infrastructure at scale to be clear (83% and 80% respectively). Few found them to be unclear (9% and 7% respectively) and the remainder found them neither clear nor unclear (8% and 13% respectively)

Suggestions for improving how the Capital Fund requirements are communicated were made around providing more clarity on the commercialisation aspect of the requirements. For example, providing clear guidance on all viable options for commercialisation (6 local authorities) and providing clarity around which charger power ratings are eligible (3 local authorities).

The application process and form

Pilot Fund

Pilot Fund recipients taking part in in-depth interviews considered the key barrier to completing the application form was the timescales. Guidance was published on 25th March 2022 and applications were due 17th June 2022.

> *"The biggest challenge for us was just the turnaround time to be able to fill out the volume of information and level of detail that they were expecting in that process."*
> Pilot Fund recipient

Pilot Fund recipients also reported confusion around the requirement for innovation and what this constituted. Many local authorities interpreted the requirement for innovation as requiring technologically innovative projects (such as novel charging technology). However, the anticipation was that it was for commercially innovative projects (such as ones that drive high volumes of procurement). This led to frustration amongst and misaligned proposals from Pilot Fund recipients.

Suggestions for improvements to the Pilot Fund application process made during in-depth interviews, included:

- providing longer to complete the application process
- providing clarity around the term 'innovation'
- ensuring that requirements are aligned with the stated aims of the project
- allowing for chargepoint sites to be identified after the application process
- supporting councils in preparing or setting up resources prior to the application process (e.g. through capability funding)
- improving feedback for unsuccessful applicants

Following the pilot, OZEV reflected on the feedback from Pilot Fund recipients relating to what 'innovation' means and the term 'innovation' was removed for the Tranche 1 Capital Fund application. In addition, they ensured that requirements were aligned with the stated aims of the project; provided capability funding to assist local authorities with the preparing and setting up

resources prior to the application process, and improved the feedback process for applications to the Capital Fund.

Capital Fund

Like the Pilot Fund recipients, Capital Fund recipients taking part in in-depth interviews considered the timescales for completing the application form to be too short.

Many Capital Fund applicants struggled with the clarity of application form. Of the 54 responding to the survey:

- 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: "The information needed to complete the application form was clear"
- 65% agreed or strongly agreed that with the statement: "Some of the questions in the application form were ambiguous and difficult to understand"

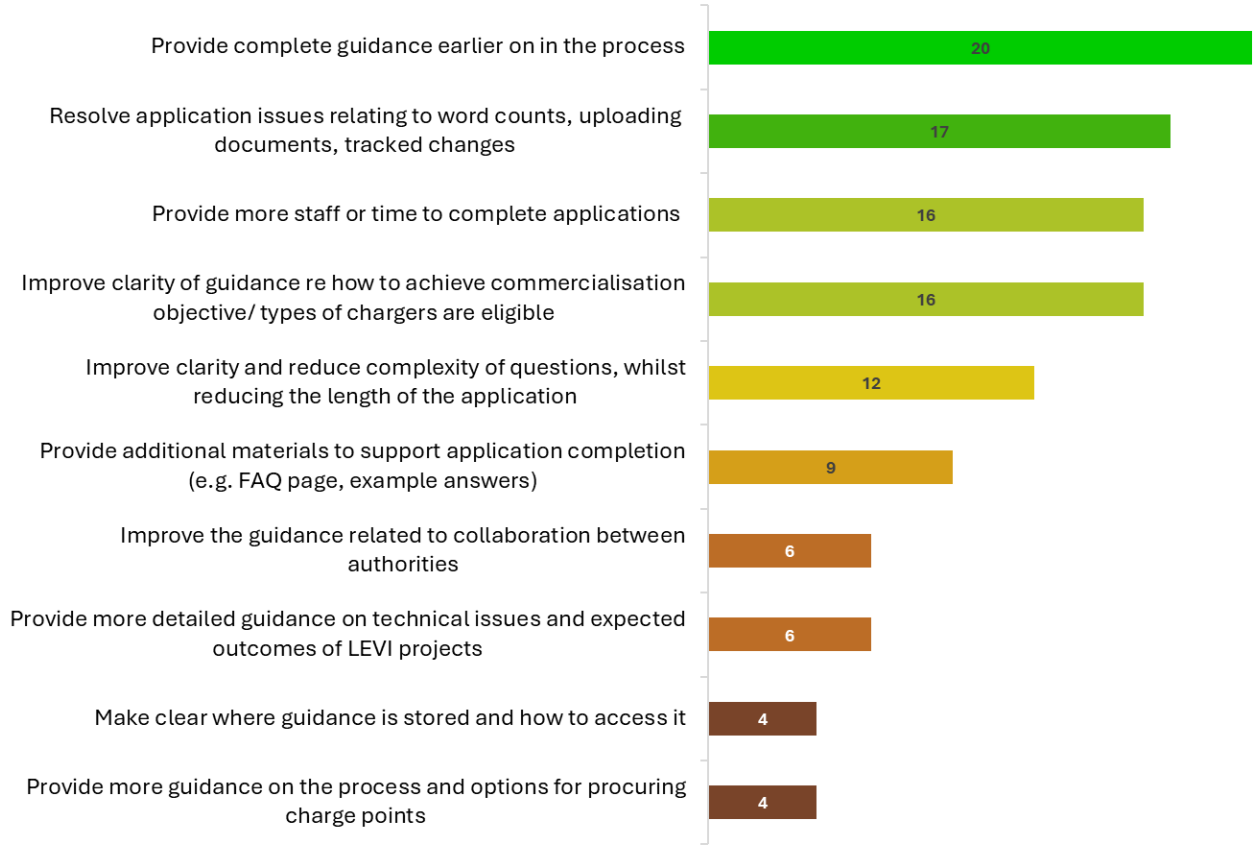
Some capital funded local authorities noted in the in-depth interviews that the requirements on the application form were unclear and overly burdensome. The requirement to provide the number and locations of chargepoints at the application stage was particularly difficult, as they had insufficient time or resources to do so at that stage, especially as they were required to engage with landowners, CPOs, and residents prior to agreeing locations for installation. Local authorities also noted difficulties with the application form itself such as incorrect word limit counters, inadequate word limits to enable questions to be answered with the required detail, and various issues which made it difficult for those trying to complete the form with other local authorities or teams (for example lack of a tracked changes function, and lack of an easy way to download responses or share draft responses for review by others).

The most frequently suggested improvements to the application process in the survey of 54 Capital Fund recipients related to providing earlier guidance. Figure 18 provides the feedback on other suggested improvements.[35]

[35] Suggestions relating to provision of support from the LEVI Support Body or wider LEVI Team, during the application process, are provided in the section 'Engagement with the LEVI Support Body and wider LEVI Team during the application process'.

Figure 18: Suggestions made by Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipients for improvements in the Application Process

What other improvements, if any, could be made to improve the LEVI Capital Fund application process for future applicants (Base: 54 Capital Fund survey respondents)



Source: *Responses to Capital Fund Survey, open-ended question.*

In the workshops OZEV identified that it was a challenge ensuring all organisations within the wider LEVI team were providing the same guidance to local authorities as it was updated during the application process. Challenges identified by the LEVI Support Body in supporting Tranche 1 Capital Fund applicants included an EOI stage which required local authorities to submit quite a lot of detail upfront, approvals timings, a lack of dedicated resource for portal development and some changes to the assessment process while it was taking place.

As a result, the LEVI Support Body suggested streamlining the process for Tranche 2 by putting in place a dedicated product manager for the application portal, and improving alignment with local authority processes to ensure adequate time is available for local authorities to complete their applications.

Skills and tools to complete the Capital Fund application

Pilot and Capital Fund recipients were generally confident they had the skills and tools to complete the Capital Fund application, but many felt they lacked the capacity. Survey responses reflected this:

- most Pilot Fund recipients surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills (12 of 14) and tools (13 of 14) to do so
- around 4 in 5 of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills (80%) and tools (76%) to complete their application
- only around half of Pilot and Capital Fund survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had the staff capacity to complete their application (8 out of 14, and 50% respectively)

Engagement with the LEVI Support Body and wider LEVI Team during the application process

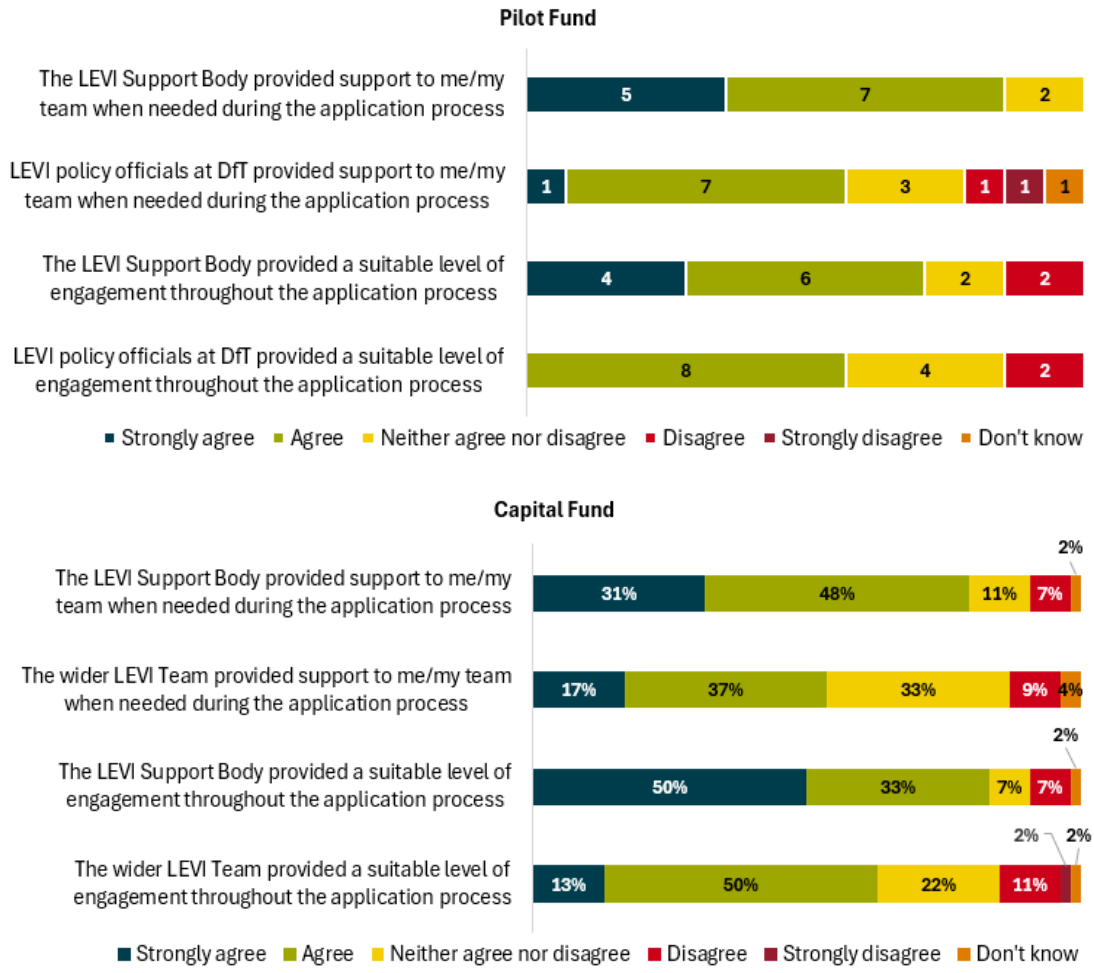
Overall, Pilot and Capital Fund survey respondents perceived there to be a good level of support from both the LEVI Support Body and wider LEVI team during the application process. Figure 19 shows that:

- most Pilot and Capital Fund survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that engagement with the LEVI Support Body was at a suitable level throughout the application process (10 out of 14, and 83% respectively), and that they provided support when needed during the application process (12 out of 14, and 79% respectively)
- over half agreed or strongly agreed that engagement with LEVI policy officials at DfT was at a suitable level during the application process (8 out of 14, and 63% respectively) and that they provided support when needed during the application process (8 out of 14, and 54% respectively)

Figure 19: Views on support provided during the application process

Now thinking about engagement throughout the LEVI Pilot/Capital Fund application process, to what extent do you agree or disagree that you had a suitable level of engagement with the following organisations? (Base:14 Pilot Fund and 54 Capital Fund survey respondents)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that the LEVI policy officials at DfT provided support to me/my team when needed during the application process. (Base:14 Pilot Fund and 54 Capital Fund Survey Respondents)



Source: Responses to Pilot and Capital Fund Surveys.

Most Capital and Pilot Fund survey respondents indicated that the different types of support provided were either very useful or useful.

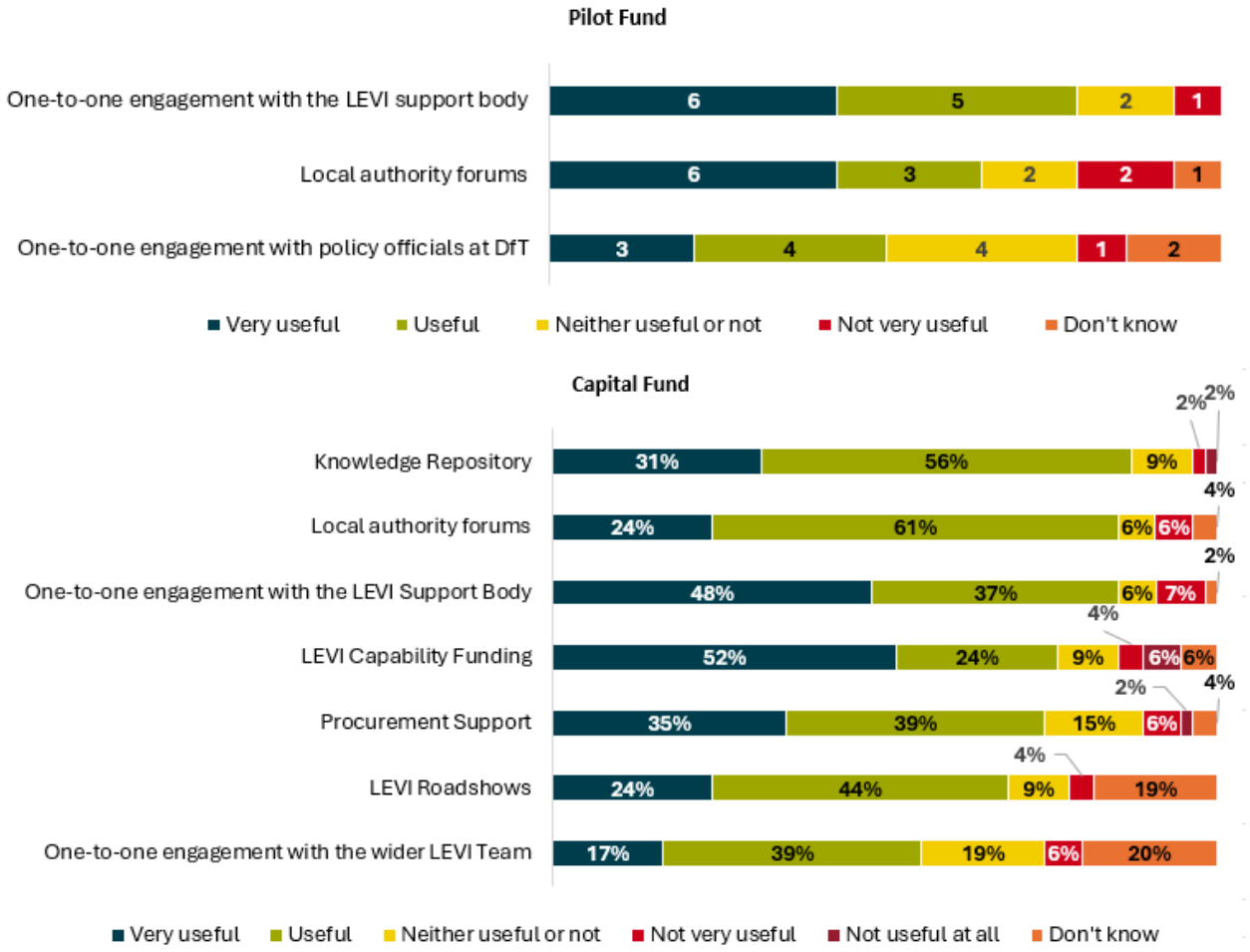
Figure 20 shows that:

- one-to-one engagement with the LEVI Support Body, the local authority forums and engagement with DfT policy officials were considered useful during the application process by at least half of the 14 Pilot Fund survey respondents (11, 9 and 7, respectively)
- one-to-one engagement with the LEVI Support Body, local authority forums and the Knowledge Repository[36] were considered useful by at least 85% of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents
- LEVI capability funding and procurement support provided (including the Heads of Terms, Technical Schedules, and Invitation to Tender Evaluation Guidance) were considered useful during the application process by around three-quarters of the 54 Capital Fund survey respondents (76% and 74% respectively)
- LEVI roadshows and one-to-one engagement with the wider LEVI Team were also considered useful by the majority of Capital Fund survey respondents (68% and 56% respectively), with around 1 in 5 (19 % and 20% respectively) indicating they did not know, which may reflect that they had not engaged with them

36 The Knowledge Repository was launched by the LEVI Support Body in January 2023 to provide local authorities with information and guidance about EVs and EV Infrastructure to inform chargepoint strategies and support effective deployment.

Figure 20: Types of engagement Pilot Fund and Capital Fund recipients found useful

Thinking about the different types of engagement throughout the LEVI Pilot / Capital application process, how useful were each of the following to you? (Engagement description matches questionnaire wording) (Base: 14 Pilot Fund and 54 Capital Fund respondents)



Source: *Responses to Pilot and Capital Fund Surveys.*

Views expressed about the LEVI Support Body in the in-depth interviews provided more insight and a wider range of views. Some who received pilot funding reported that they provided quick and helpful responses to general queries, which were well-received, however they also found there to be a lack of timely technical support as they felt this was something EST were not able to support on directly, and so were relying on receiving responses from other members of the LEVI Support Body. Some Tranche 1 local authorities described how the support had been extremely useful, in particular noting the value of regular one-to-one engagement with EST, LEVI roadshows, and the Knowledge Repository. However, others found some parts of the LEVI Support Body to be unresponsive and expressed concerns around changing or inconsistent guidance being provided throughout the application process.

> *"We had an e-mail that said you've been deferred on the 15th of March ... and then we didn't actually get our written feedback until the 18th of April. So it's a whole month of, OK, so you've told us we've been deferred, but we don't know why we've been deferred. We need to know so we can do something about it."* Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipient

The LEVI Support Body indicated some challenges in ensuring the Knowledge Repository had the correct level of detail within the required timescales and was easy to understand for those with little to no prior knowledge of EV infrastructure. However, overall, they felt this process was very effective and noted that the Knowledge Repository had a high level of usage amongst applicants.

Suggestions made by Capital and Pilot Fund survey respondents, with regards to engagement with the LEVI Support Body, related primarily to improving the speed and regularity of communications and providing more individualised support. More specifically they were to:

- (from 6 Pilot Fund recipients): engage prior to the bid process (2 local authorities), provide more support during the delivery stage (2 local authorities), provide clarity around points of contact (1 local authority), and provide more specialist guidance around technical matters and procurement (1 local authority)
- (from 28 Capital Fund recipients): respond more quickly, be more available or ensure the LEVI Support Body has sufficient resources to meet demands (8 local authorities), provide more frequent or regular contact with local authorities (8 local authorities), provide more direct one-to-one support to local authorities (8 local authorities), and ensure continuity of messaging across all organisations involved in the delivery of the Capital Fund (5 local authorities). Suggestions made by 1 or 2 local authorities were to allow online attendance to roadshows, hold roadshows earlier in the process, ensure continuity when LEVI Support Body personnel change, provide specialists in delivering on-street infrastructure, provide LEVI Support Body masterclasses, and provide regular information on the EV market

Local authority engagement with OZEV directly was much less common than engagement with the LEVI Support Body amongst the in-depth interview participants. However, amongst those that did engage with OZEV, there was a feeling that guidance was not tailored to individual local authorities' circumstances, and that advice provided was too prescriptive. There was also concern around their responsiveness, with local authorities reporting delayed responses to challenges. Suggestions from local authorities related primarily to the speed and regularity of communications and lack of individualised support. More specifically they were to:

- (from 5 Pilot Fund recipients): provide more engagement or be more involved (3 local authorities), improve responsiveness to queries (1 local authorities), and provide local authorities the opportunity for scoping sessions with LEVI policy officials (1 local authority)
- (from 13 Capital Fund recipients, similar themes): provide more one-to-one direct support (3 local authorities), provide more engagement, feedback or time for engagement (3 local authorities), and provide faster responses (2 local authorities).

Individual local authorities suggested managing expectations of support, providing clarity on roles within wider team, providing regular updates or communications, changing the format of engagement to reflect the application form, and being aware of the inability of local authorities to engage with them

Reviewing applications

During the workshops, the LEVI Support Body and OZEV reported that reviewing Capability Fund applications was made easier due to the simplicity of the application process, and the clear assessment criteria.

> *"With the capability fund, I think we're all assessing them from a very similar approach. There was a very set out, clear set of red, amber, green criteria in which local authorities were applying for."* LEVI Support Body

During the pilot stage, collaboration between the two organisations was considered helpful in bringing different views and perspectives on applications, establishing relationships, clarifying points of nuance and interpretation and solidifying understanding of assessment criteria.

Learnings and tools developed from Pilot Fund review process helped with future funds, for example the portal helped keep track of applications, information was all coming from one place, and documentation of decision-making during the review was improved. Collaboration between OZEV and the LEVI Support body was generally perceived as effective, leading to clear decision-making and successful completion of tasks during the application process and delivering funding.

Whilst these areas were perceived as positive, a number of areas of concern were raised during the workshops by the LEVI Support Body and OZEV regarding assessment of applications for all 3 funds, but primarily the Pilot Fund and Capital Fund.

The main barriers to assessing Capability Fund applications were the tight timescales and the fact that the portal was not ready prior to launching the Capability Fund.

For the Pilot and Capital Fund applications, short timescales and quick turn arounds for all parties (the LEVI Support Body, local authorities and OZEV) was seen as challenging. Conversely some CPOs suggested that the whole process (the time between announcing the LEVI Fund to announcing the local authorities that had qualified for funding) caused delays in deployment of chargepoints and existing projects, because local authorities focused their attentions on applying for funding and waiting to see if they would qualify for funding.

There was a perception by some LEVI Support Body members that some issues related to reviewing applications would be mitigated if more time (or resources) had been permitted to complete and review applications.

Quality of the application review process was also raised. OZEV representatives felt that they tended to place greater emphasis on the quality of the application while the LEVI Support Body

was perceived as focusing more on applications meeting deadlines. LEVI Support Body members recognised there was a need to distribute funding, and felt a sense of pressure to work through applications.

Other areas raised relating to the application process were staff changes, skill gaps for assessing applications both within the LEVI Support Body and OZEV, working through application of the marking scheme in practice, and the distinction between guidance and requirements, particularly for the Capital Fund.

Suggestions made by LEVI Support Body and OZEV to improve the application assessment process going forward included longer timescales or more resources, and increased training for new staff and refresher sessions for existing staff to ensure they all have a better skill set and understanding of the technical issues in order to assess applications with greater confidence.

In response to challenges identified during the LEVI Pilot, OZEV reported some changes that were made for the Capital Fund application, including removing the requirement for innovative technologies from the Capital Fund application, as this was challenging for local authorities to procure and detracted from the scale of rollout across the projects. Alongside this, training was incorporated for both OZEV and the LEVI Support Body. This included application review workshops and providing additional guidance for reviewing Invitation To Tender documents. Feedback from Tranche 1 applicants for the Capital Fund was also incorporated into revising the application process for Tranche 2 applicants, including simplifying the application, providing additional clarity around application requirements and updating application guidance which was communicated through application masterclasses.

4.5 Challenges to local authorities' delivery of chargepoint infrastructure

Timescales

As described in Chapter 3, almost all Capability Fund recipients for which data was available in January 2024 (30 out of 80) had used their funding to hire all or a high proportion of their planned staff. However, the in-depth interviews revealed that many local authorities agreed that delivery of the Capability Fund earlier in the process would have been valuable, as recruitment had been a struggle and taken longer than expected, having a knock-on impact on resources available to complete the Capital Fund application.

Half of the Pilot Fund recipients who responded to the survey (7 out of 14), indicated that timescales for chargepoint delivery were not going as well as they had expected prior to undertaking procurement activities, and almost as many (6 out of 14) said they were not going as well as they had expected they would at procurement stage. Many experienced delays in going out to tender from the time they received pilot funding:

- 3 took less than 3 months to go out to tender
- 6 took 4 to 12 months
- 2 took more than a year
- 3 had not gone out to tender at the time they completed the survey

Local authorities interviewed reported delays in procurement and delivery were due to initial authority timelines being overly optimistic; inadequate staffing or resource; slow responses and sign offs from a range of internal and external stakeholders (relating to chargepoint locations, advice on procurement, PAAP approval, DNO connections, and internal contractual, legal, planning and procurement issues); lack of capacity from CPOs, and changes in market conditions leading to cost increases. These factors affecting timescales are explored in more detail later in the chapter.

Recruitment for the Capability Fund

Difficulty finding and recruiting staff was a particular challenge for Capability Fund recipients. Factors considered to play a part were the limited number of candidates available in the market generally; many local authorities applying for LEVI funding and therefore recruiting simultaneously, thus providing increased competition for candidates, and the fixed term nature of the contracts being offered to candidates. One local authority who took part in an in-depth interview had several suitable applicants withdraw their application upon realising the contract was fixed term, and another had a staff member move to another team that was able to offer more stability. The fixed-term contracts also created issues following recruitment for 1 local authority, with the officers in post expressing uncertainty about the ability of the local authority to fund their position as the project moves into delivery stage:

> *"During the application process, we did originally have people apply, but then when they realised that it was only fixed term, they pulled out. And some of them would have been quite suitable for the role as well."* Tranche 2 Capital Fund recipient
>
> *"It is difficult to recruit in a market with limited relevant skills when all other local authorities are also looking for similar staff."* Capability Fund recipient

Suggestions by local authorities relating to recruitment included providing funding announcements and funding earlier to enable earlier recruitment and planning:

> *"There were issues with recruitment, so earlier receipt of monies (earlier in 22/23) as well as earlier confirmation that funding would continue beyond 22/23 would have helped with approvals to recruit and the recruitment process itself."* Capability Fund recipient

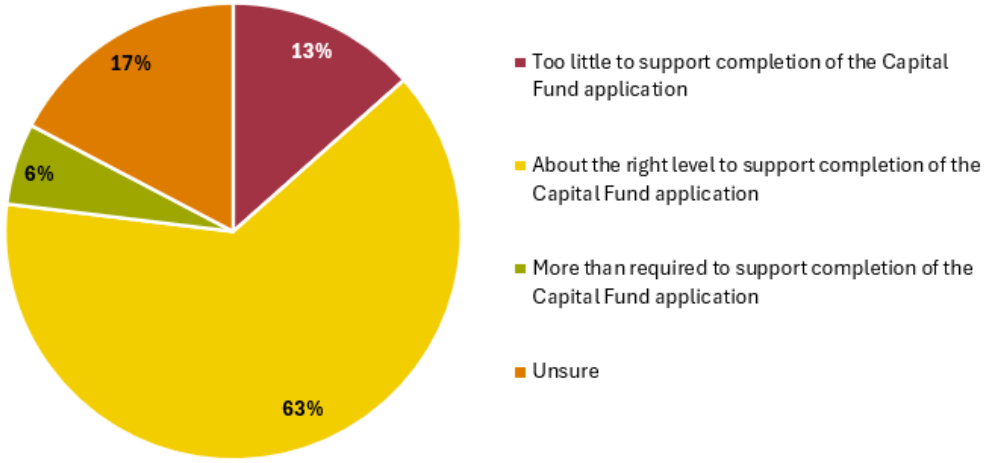
Level of capability funding

The amount of funding provided by the Capability Fund was generally considered to be appropriate for its purposes.

Figure 21 shows that almost two-thirds of the 52 Capability Fund survey respondents (63%) considered the value they received was about right to support the completion of their Capital Fund application, 13% thought it was too little and 6% thought it was more than required.

Figure 21: Local authorities views on the value of the Capability Fund

Do you feel the value of the Capability Fund you received was… (Base: 52 Capability Fund respondents)



Source: *Responses to Capability Fund Survey.*

The 7 local authorities which thought it was too little would have valued more funding for existing roles (3 local authorities), to procure consultancy support (3 local authorities), to hire additional staff (3 local authorities), to train existing staff (2 local authorities) or for community engagement activities (1 local authority).

During the workshops OZEV expressed that at the beginning of the Capability Fund process, it had less knowledge of the inner workings of local authorities, and the level of resources that would be required to complete the Capital Fund application, but their knowledge in these matters increased as the process advanced. The LEVI Support Body considered that local authorities underestimated the level of resources required, and some local authorities also considered that they had initially underestimated the resources required.

Following the initial funding allocation, an additional pot of capability funding was made available for local authorities to apply for. Local authorities that were successful in their applications for this reported during in-depth interviews that this had been extremely useful. The LEVI Support Body noted the significant demand for this additional funding, which they also perceived to be valuable. While the LEVI Support Body perceived that the timescales for applying for and distributing this funding posed a challenge, they tried to manage this by providing prior communication to local authorities to ensure they were aware it may become available, and that they should begin to prepare for the application:

> *"Yes, I think the capability funding was set to a good level. But as we've gone along and discovered more of the intricacies within the whole process, we've realised that actually we would like to stretch it that bit further. So having that opportunity [to receive additional capability funding] really was beneficial for us."* Tranche 2 Capital Fund recipient

Sub-national transport bodies interviewed had additional concerns where joint applications were made, led by the sub-national transport body on behalf of its councils. Concerns related to the level of collaboration required to prepare the Capital Fund application, and that the Capability Fund was not sufficient to resource this:

> *"Although it was a fairly significant amount. It ... didn't actually prove to be sufficient for our need for capability and so we had to supplement it with other funds."* Sub-national Transport Body

In addition to the level of collaboration required, individual Capability Fund survey respondents also required funding for resources to complete the application for capital funding. As a result, additional funding from other grants, such as City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements and Transforming Cities Fund, had to be used to support the application development. Around 1 in 5 of the 54 Capability Fund recipients responding to the survey (19%) made use of supplementary funding in addition to the Capability Fund to support the development of their Capital Fund application or EV infrastructure strategy. Nine of the 10 local authorities who made use of supplementary funding used internal funding from within their local authority, and 1 used funding from the Transforming Cities Fund. The 10 local authorities who made use of supplementary funding used it for one or more purposes. Most used the additional funding to fund existing roles (8 local authorities) or procure consultancy support (5 local authorities), but it was also used to train existing staff (2 local authorities) and hire additional staff (1 local authority).

This issue was acknowledged by OZEV, noting that where funding was provided to a higher-level authority, it would be difficult for that funding to cover all local authorities that fall within the consortium.

OZEV considered there would be benefits in integrating flexibility into the capability funding, due to the iterative nature of funding needs, allowing for adjustments based on evolving requirements and feedback from local authorities through providing funding in stages.

Delivery guidance

During the in-depth interviews, Pilot Fund local authorities indicated that they would have appreciated more timely and detailed guidance from OZEV and the LEVI Support Body on procurement processes, funding requirements and technological options eligible for. The lack of early clarity on acceptable routes to market, such as concession agreements, was perceived to have caused delays and necessitated revisions to project plans. Additionally, the LEVI Support

Body's capacity to provide localised advice and tailored solutions to Pilot Fund local authorities was perceived as limited.

For the Capital Fund, this evaluation has identified opportunities for OZEV and the LEVI Support Body to streamline and improve functions and processes, including the provision of more comprehensive and proactive guidance, the establishment of a central knowledge-sharing platform for local authorities to exchange best practices, and the development of standardised templates and tools for project planning and procurement. Enhancing the responsiveness and adaptability of support structures to address emerging challenges in real-time would also be beneficial.

Capital Fund recipients voiced fewer concerns about delivery guidance than about application guidance. However, they provided the following observations:

- some local authorities had difficulties arranging meetings with the LEVI Support Body to discuss PAAPs
- Key Performance Indicator (KPI) guidance releases from OZEV were delayed
- there was confusion over application requirements and delivery guidance, including a lack of clarity around the flexibility of guidance (resulting from updates and reviews to the guidance throughout the delivery process)
- current guidance was perceived as less applicable for rural areas, due to locations being viewed as less attractive by CPOs; different infrastructure in rural areas (e.g. in terms of where lampposts are placed and hence their suitability for having chargers installed in them), and insufficient electrical capacity in rural areas due to unreliability of the electrical supply:

> *"This application process becomes a whole lot easier where you're being told what you simply must have in place. You must have this agreement with a supplier, you know from a location point of view. You must have ticked these boxes. All those things would make it a very prescriptive process, which sounds negative, but I think it takes away a lot of the bureaucracy and the time it takes to get to the point of delivery ... If you've got that uncertainty and lack of subject matter expertise then telling people sometimes is much more helpful than asking them to interpret."*
> Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipient

CPOs noted during the in-depth interviews that they felt OZEV and the LEVI Support Body lacked industry expertise at the beginning of designing the LEVI Fund, and that the scheme would have benefitted from further engagement with CPOs at the outset and taking on board suggestions more readily. CPOs suggested that issues that have arisen relating to procurement could have been identified earlier or avoided by consulting with CPOs prior to launching the scheme. However, they did feel that OZEV and the LEVI Support Body's knowledge has developed throughout the delivery of the LEVI Fund, as has their responsiveness and willingness to engage with industry.

> *"If they consulted us on LEVI a bit more before everything was set in stone, then maybe someone would have raised the procurement issues, raised the fact that the processes were going to take a long time, that each Council would do their own procurement process and that would cause problems and make things less investable."* Chargepoint Operator

Other barriers and challenges to delivery

In addition to challenges already described in this chapter, Pilot and Capital Fund recipients and CPOs who took part in the in-depth interviews, identified several other challenges and barriers that impacted timely delivery of the anticipated number of chargepoints. Some related to the current design of LEVI, and others affecting the context in which LEVI is being delivered.

Challenges relating to the design of the LEVI Fund, particularly noted by Pilot Fund recipients, included:

- the requirement to undertake in-depth reviews of sites and installation drawings proposed in the original bid rather than after funding has been awarded, affecting time pressures at bid stage. This requirement was removed for the main Capital Fund.
- market engagement and negotiating with and appointing third-party suppliers or CPOs (e.g. relating to obtaining clarifications or costs was often seen as a challenge by local authorities)

Barriers identified by Pilot and Capital Fund recipients as issues that would impact (or had already started to impact) timely delivery of the anticipated number of chargepoints, can be summarised as follows:

- lack of adequate staffing and resources (Pilot Fund recipients only)
- changes in project scope or funding status when moving from pilot projects to Tranche 1 capital projects which disrupted planned activities and necessitates rapid adjustments (Pilot Fund recipients only)
- difficulties obtaining agreement of chargepoint locations (due to slow decision making by a working group for a consortium of local authorities, land shortage or restrictions and objections from residents)
- difficulties with contractual, legal and planning issues, and internal procurement procedures (e.g. relating to internal approvals or contract signing)
- lack of capacity from CPOs
- changes in procurement, including a new Procurement Act and legal challenge around procuring a concession contract through a dynamic purchasing system, making it more difficult for local authorities to procure via frameworks
- a change or potential change in market conditions (e.g. cost per chargepoint, cost of internal resources, cost of materials, and DNO costs) from when they had made forecasts in their EV strategies
- difficulties and the time required to coordinate with DNOs for grid connections, especially if faced with variable DNO connection costs

- political changes at the local level

> *"One of the reasons the pilot has been delayed is we were looking at a commercial model that then became the norm, which is a concession agreement. But because none of the information was available at the beginning of the application process, we couldn't progress with our pilot fund"* Pilot Fund recipient

Pilot Fund recipients identified several learning points and mitigation measures that had or could be undertaken to address these barriers, including:

- local authorities conducting extensive market research and engaging with potential suppliers early in the process to facilitate more accurate planning and smoother procurement
- local authorities ensuring early and continuous stakeholder engagement
- local authorities being conservative with cost and time estimates
- OZEV removing the requirement for chargepoint locations to be identified on applications for the LEVI Capital Fund
- OZEV establishing contingency funds and flexible planning frameworks that can absorb some of the more unpredictable barriers

The chargepoint ecosystem

Many local authorities who took part in the in-depth interviews were concerned that CPOs would be unable to meet market demand because of insufficient capacity in the transmission and distribution grid to meet future demand. CPOs also reported that grid capacity is already at its limit in some areas and therefore thought it likely that there will be delays installing the intended number of chargepoints in the timescales forecast. It was suggested that DfT should facilitate expansion of DNOs to accelerate upgrading the network to help CPOs overcome this barrier to implementation:

> *"It makes me wonder – are we going to get to a point where we've put in, let's say 150 or 200 chargers across the city. We've got money for another 300, but we haven't got enough capacity. The DNO at the time has said to us we can't give you any more connections because we don't have enough spare capacity coming in at the moment."* Tranche 1 Capital Fund recipient

CPOs felt that LEVI funding will lead to more and larger EV infrastructure opportunities than would have otherwise occurred, but there was still uncertainty about whether the fund will have positive long-term impacts on the industry. Two of the five CPOs who were interviewed expressed uncertainty because of the perceived short-term nature of the scheme, and one because of the reportedly low margins for CPOs.

CPOs interviewed reported that delays to local authorities reaching the delivery stage of LEVI projects as they worked through LEVI applications and related governance, had a knock-on impact

on the industry. During their interviews (March-May 2024) CPOs expressed the view that many businesses scaled up in anticipation of LEVI funding, and the anticipated increased demand in the market had not yet materialised. One CPO perceived that this had been exacerbated by the fact that local authorities had diverted EV officer resources to completing the Capital Fund application meaning there has been a drop off in procurement of smaller electric vehicle infrastructure projects. However, CPOs did anticipate increased demand and much larger projects than would otherwise be delivered once LEVI projects reach procurement stage.

OZEV were familiar with this concern expressed by CPOs, but noted that the existing ORCS had been kept open a further year to ensure ongoing funding and delivery as the LEVI fund was established, with 84 projects awarded £37m ORCS funding in financial years 2022/2023 and 53 projects awarded £15m in financial years 2023/2024, in addition to the LEVI Pilot.

CPOs also reported concerns about the volume of local authorities seeking to procure services at the same time, meaning that responding to tenders will require significant resources, making it especially difficult for smaller businesses to respond to the opportunities available. Some anticipated that this would be compounded by local authorities lacking experience and expertise in procurement, or lacking prescriptive guidance from OZEV on procurement, resulting in wide variations in the requirements for each bid:

> *"The smaller operators aren't gonna be able to answer all the bids, even if they've got a great product that fits [...] because they're just too many. [...] Everyone's got a different contract. So you've got to engage your lawyers, and the lawyers have got to spend time and money reviewing the contracts back and forth with the council. And then the next council comes along. Different contract, different sets of terms., different clauses..."* Chargepoint Operator

Future funding once capability funding has ended

Although the benefits of the funding were widely noted during the in-depth interviews with local authorities, there were concerns amongst many of them around resourcing plans, retaining staff and delivering capital funding once capability funding ends, particularly as many project leads funded by capability funding were on fixed terms contracts. Risks centred around the lack of other funding to fulfil these requirements, exacerbated in local authorities where there had been delays in projects, and therefore EV officers' contracts would end before procurement of chargepoints had taken place.

Local authorities who took part in the in-depth interviews shared an understanding that the plan was for income from delivered chargepoints or contract fees to fund ongoing scheme management once capability funding ended. However, it was thought that this income may not come soon enough or would not be enough to fund ongoing management of the scheme. This was a particular issue due to the long running nature of contracts (10 to 15 years), with much uncertainty about local authorities' abilities to resource the ongoing management of contracts. Some suggested additional resource funding should be provided to mitigate this:

> *"When you look at a multi-year project and the amount of strands of work in it and the amount of time that involves, it is amazing ... If anything, more resource funding I think is advisable."* Tranche 2 Capital Fund recipient

Potential consequences of a lack of resource after capability funding ends, identified by local authorities, included an increased reliance on commercial operators to manage the scheme. Some local authorities thought this may result in more expensive tariffs for residents and a negative impact on ongoing network development. Some local authorities were concerned that this would mean they could be unable to meet the delivery targets set out in their application. None of the local authorities mentioned the impact of tariff controls.

> *"I do worry that we'll be in a position where we just don't have the resource internally to continue to manage that and we'll end up ... in a position where we can't stay on top of developing the network and it starts to stall. Or it ends up being steered into a more commercial direction because we're having to use CPOs resources more and more." Tranche 2 Capital Fund recipient*

Generally, local authorities found it difficult to plan for the end of the Capability Fund and were uncertain about ongoing resourcing plans. However, one local authority that did have a plan, reported in an in-depth interview that they had set aside all their capability funding to be used solely for resourcing the management of the LEVI Programme in its delivery stage, which they felt that this would allow them to effectively resource the delivery of their LEVI project.

Some local authorities which had been moved from Tranche 1 to Tranche 2 expressed frustrations that they would not be receiving additional capability funding. In some cases, local authorities had undertaken recruitment and had officers in post to deliver their LEVI project but are now unable to do so due to being reallocated to Tranche 2, and as a result, having their funding to begin delivery delayed.

5. KEY LEARNINGS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together some of the key learnings from the evaluation of the early stages of the LEVI Fund. In particular, what has been achieved to date by the 3 funding streams (noting the early stage of the LEVI Fund with regards to delivery), what is likely to be achieved, what barriers the LEVI Fund has encountered, and reflections for future policy development.

5.2 Is the LEVI Fund achieving what it set out to achieve to date?

Allocation and distribution of funding

Since 2022, more than 80 local areas[37] have received some form of LEVI funding. Around £32 million capital funding was awarded for pilot schemes. In March 2023, £343 million of capital funding and £37.8 million capability funding was allocated to 113 local areas in England over the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. This follows an initial £8 million capability funding provided in 2022/23 across 81 local areas.

Funding from the Pilot and Capital Fund have been successful in aligning with the LEVI programme's aims and funding principles. Funding has been delivered across all regions of England.

Building capability to plan, procure and tender the delivery of local chargepoints

The Capability Fund has been successful in providing local authorities with capability to support the development of Capital Fund applications and EV infrastructure strategies. It has enabled them to recruit additional employees, in line with local authority plans. Among the 30 out of 80 Capability Fund recipients where data is available, most have either delivered their additional planned FTE staff hires, or are on track to do so, with a significant proportion also expecting to exceed their planned staff hires. Funding has also been used to retain existing roles, upskill staff and procure consultancy support.

Local authorities reported that the Capability Fund has been essential in supporting the development of Capital Fund applications and EV infrastructure strategies, particularly for those without supplementary funding available. Around two-thirds of 52 local authorities that responded to the Capability Fund survey (62%) have developed an EV infrastructure strategy, the remainder are currently in the process of doing so.

[37] These local areas comprised local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and other bodies across England.

Delivery of chargepoint infrastructure

Pilot and Capital Fund recipients plan to deliver significant increases in local chargepoint infrastructure, through their broader installation projects using LEVI funding. Pilot Fund recipients plan to increase their number of local chargepoints by a median of 43%, and Capital Fund applicants are planning to increase by a median of 263%.

LEVI funding has made a significant contribution to these broader installation projects, run by local authorities, combined authorities and other bodies across England. Pilot funding has represented 52% of total funding for broader pilot funded schemes, and Tranche 1 capital funding has represented 31% of total expected funding for broader Tranche 1 funded projects. While LEVI funding has directly contributed to project costs, the significant proportion of private funding also indicates that LEVI may also have significantly de-risked private investment, enabling the private sector to contribute funding at much higher levels than seen previously. Together, both of these points indicate that LEVI funding will contribute towards delivering a significant increase in local chargepoint infrastructure, if the local authorities deliver their planned chargepoint installations, which is the core aim of the LEVI Fund.

At the time of the analysis (January 2024), 2 of the 25 pilot schemes had successfully installed a small proportion of their total planned chargepoints and a further 3 pilot schemes had procured a preferred supplier but are yet to install chargepoints.

While delivery is still in its early stages, many pilot funded schemes reported delays in chargepoint procurement. Barriers preventing timescales from going as well as had been expected included:

- initial timelines being overly optimistic
- resource constraints and slow response rates and sign offs, both internally and at partner organisations, CPOs and DNOs (relating to agreement on chargepoint locations, advice on procurement, DNO connections, and internal contractual, legal, planning and procurement issues)
- lack of capacity from CPOs leading to delays in appointing them
- changes in market conditions leading to cost increases

Four of the 14 pilot funded survey respondents plan to deliver fewer chargepoints than they had anticipated at the point that they submitted their application (2 anticipated delivering 30 fewer chargepoints, 1 anticipated delivering 70 fewer chargepoints, and 1 anticipated delivering 2 fewer chargepoints). This was frequently attributed to increased costs of suppliers, materials, infrastructure and distribution network operator connections, but also included objections from residents, lack of suitable sites, difficulty obtaining planning approvals and land ownership issues, internal legal issues, unwillingness to commit to long contract terms and procurement issues.

Many local authorities and stakeholders reported that the LEVI Fund will facilitate the delivery of chargepoints that would otherwise not have been delivered. However, it is too early to assess whether Pilot and Capital Fund recipients will deliver their planned chargepoint installations, given that most pilot programmes are due to finish in late 2024/early 2025, and Capital Fund recipients only recently started to receive their funding.

Delivery of low power chargepoint infrastructure

A high proportion of Pilot and Capital Fund recipients planned chargepoint installations are low-power, aligning with the LEVI Programme's broader aim to deliver a step-change in primarily low power chargepoint infrastructure. Overall, 72% of estimated capital funding chargepoint additions outlined in local authority Tranche 1 applications are planned to either be slow or standard speed (up to 7kW).[38]

A more strategic and integrated approach to chargepoint planning and procurement

Many local authorities stated that LEVI funding has enabled a more strategic, holistic and proactive approach to the planning and procurement of chargepoints locally, ensuring that the entire local authority area can be considered, therefore avoiding more piecemeal, reactive approaches. This has in turn driven efficiencies and encouraged partnership working and engagement with stakeholders including CPOs, DNOs, and EST.

Supplementary private funding

Pilot Fund recipients have attracted large amounts of supplementary private funding for their broader chargepoint installation programmes, and Tranche 1 applicants also expect to receive a large proportion of private investment. For pilot funded local authorities, overall the local authorities estimated 48% of funding from private sources (only CPOs were specified) and for Tranche 1 funded local authorities, overall local authorities estimated an average of 69% from private funding. This indicates that LEVI grant funding can leverage significant additional private investment, and some local authorities reported that LEVI has helped them to leverage additional funding from private sector investment towards their local chargepoint delivery programmes, thus further building and accelerating the market for chargepoints. However, it is not feasible at this stage to robustly assess the extent to which LEVI has helped leverage additional funding from private investment until procurements have completed.

Engagement with residents

Engagement with residents was also seen to bring many benefits, building community support for EV infrastructure projects and fostering greater awareness and understanding of EVs. Some local authorities felt that utilising a strategic selection of chargepoint locations based on community input and practical considerations aided delivery, as did integrating EV infrastructure projects with broader city regeneration plans.

[38] Per the classification in monitoring and applications data collected from the LEVI Support Body and DfT.

5.3 Reflections for future policy development

The evaluation has provided insight into several areas relating to the application process and delivery process which have been barriers to effective and timely delivery of planned chargepoint infrastructure or are perceived to be potential future barriers. These are summarised below, along with measures local authorities have suggested would help to reduce or mitigate these barriers.

Provision of support and guidance

In general, local authorities felt that the application process, messaging, and support provided by OZEV and the LEVI Support Body worked well.

Local authorities and other stakeholders suggested key improvements for OZEV and the LEVI Support Body to consider, including streamlining and improving their functions, minimising the number of updates to guidance, ensuring guidance is consistent between organisations, being more accessible for meetings (in particular with the LEVI Support Body to discuss PAAPs), and ensuring that KPI releases and responses to queries (particularly in relation to PAAPs) are provided in a more timely fashion. They also suggested that more and improved guidance is provided in relation to application requirements, procurement and new procurement legislation, and additional resources are provided such as best practice examples, tools for project planning or procurement and a central knowledge-sharing platform for local authorities to exchange best practices.

Costs of preparing funding applications, and procuring and delivery chargepoints

The amount of resource required to both prepare the applications for funding and manage delivery were greater than expected by many local authorities and stakeholders, particularly where joint applications were made. Local authorities suggested a more flexible and iterative approach to capability funding, where additional funding could be allocated as needed throughout the application process, may help mitigate these resource and time constraints.

A number of capital funded local authorities expressed concerns about increasing costs of materials, suppliers and infrastructure being a potential barrier to delivering the number of chargepoints they had anticipated when writing applications. Local authorities suggested DfT consider a contingency fund and flexible planning frameworks that can absorb unforeseen issues such as cost fluctuations and local political changes.

Recruitment and retention of local capability

Recruitment challenges were evident for the Capability Fund, due to fixed-term contracts being offered, simultaneous recruitment by multiple LEVI funded local authorities, and short timescales for the recruitment activity to take place. Local authorities suggested that earlier distribution of this funding would help them recruit earlier and spread recruitment over a longer time period. This would alleviate recruitment difficulties to some extent, as would more funding to enable longer contracts.

The LEVI Support Body received feedback that their recruitment workshop was helpful in providing local authorities with the skills and resources required for effective recruitment into these new roles, although this would offer more value if delivered earlier in the process.

Timescales for delivery

Timescales for delivering chargepoints were the aspect of Pilot Fund projects that local authorities most commonly viewed as not going to plan, with some local authorities feeling that their original timescales had been overly optimistic due in part to a lack of experience with procuring and delivering an EV project of this size and lack of resource. As suggested above, distribution of capability funding earlier in the process would help local authorities deliver their plans earlier as it would enable earlier recruitment.

Difficulties agreeing locations for chargepoints during the application process was often cited as a barrier to effective delivery, and often related to the number of stakeholders involved in the decision (including local residents, DNOs, CPOs, and landowners) and the need for locations to be agreed at an early part of the process. Local authorities suggested that if decisions around exact locations could be made later in the process (as in the Capital Fund), this would allow time for engagement with all necessary stakeholders, and avoiding duplicating work by providing a list of potentially unviable locations at the application stage, helping to alleviate delays in delivery.

Grid capacity

Future grid capacity limitations are a perceived by some CPOs and local authorities as a barrier to future delivery, and some CPOs consider grid capacity is already at its limit in some areas. It is considered that this issue is likely to lead to delays installing the intended number of chargepoints in the timescales forecast. Additional support from DfT to facilitate expansion in capacity to match demand may assist in mitigating this potentially significant barrier to delivery.

CPO capacity

CPOs' capacity was also highlighted as a delivery barrier by both CPOs and local authorities. CPOs have concerns about the resources required to respond to the volume of local authorities seeking to procure services at the same time, and local authorities are concerned about the lack of capacity from CPOs ultimately impacting their overall delivery timescales. The scale of this issue and potential mitigations needs some further investigation.

Future funding

Capacity and capability in local authorities to run their EV infrastructure programmes once capability funding comes to an end is a concern for them, particularly as many project leads are on fixed term contracts in roles funded by capability funding. Many local authorities consider that when funding for these roles ceases there may be increased reliance on commercial operators to manage the scheme, which could have a negative impact on ongoing network development. This is exacerbated by delays in some local authorities' LEVI programmes resulting in contracts of those employed through the Capability Fund potentially coming to an end before procurement of

chargepoints is underway. Local authorities and stakeholders suggested that DfT consider the provision of further funding for staff beyond the current Capability Fund timescales to alleviate this issue. DfT have since confirmed that Capability Funding has been extended for all English local authorities into the 2025/26 financial year.

5.4 Conclusion

LEVI funding has successfully provided local areas with increased capability to support the development of Capital Fund applications and EV infrastructure strategies; has increased the size and structure of planned infrastructure programmes, and is on track towards leveraging additional funding from private sources. However, it is too early to assess whether local areas have delivered their planned chargepoint installations at this stage, given that most Pilot Fund recipients are due to finish in late 2024 or early 2025, and Capital Fund recipients were only recently delivered funding.

This process and early impact evaluation has identified some areas for improvements to the application process, in particular relating to timely and consistent provision of support and guidance, and further guidance relating to procurement. Barriers and perceived potential future barriers relating to timely delivery of planned chargepoint infrastructure have also been identified, along with suggested mitigation measures to reduce them. These primarily relate to future funding, recruitment and retention of local capability, timescales for delivery, costs of procuring and delivering chargepoints, grid capacity and CPO capacity.

ANNEX A LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

List of figures

List of tables

ANNEX B LOGIC MODEL FOR THE LEVI FUND

The logic model for the LEVI Fund is presented on the following page. Figure 22 presents the scheme outcomes that would be realised as a result of the LEVI programme up to one year, and Figure 23 presents the outcomes and impacts that would be realised in subsequent years.

The LEVI Fund inputs are shown on the far left hand side of Figure 22. These inputs include people time from those operating the scheme and in charge of applying for the grants and procuring installers at local authorities, the distribution of LEVI grant funding allocations, and inputs from other parties, such as installers. These inputs are used to operationalise the intervention, in particular through assessing LEVI grant applications and making grant awards.

The result of these activities are the outputs: the number of grants awarded and the value of those grants, and the number and distribution of chargepoints installed. The delivery of LEVI grant funding facilitates subsequent scheme outcomes: a change in visibility and availability of chargepoints and hence convenience of charging for those people without off-street parking, and improvements in local authority capabilities in the procurement of EV chargepoints.

The scheme outcome of a change in local chargepoint infrastructure may lead to a feedback effect, where after an initial increase in the uptake of EVs due to increased convenience of chargepoint infrastructure, there is a resultant increase in demand for further chargepoint infrastructure investment.

Figure 23 shows that over time from one year onwards, a range of short-term and longer-term outcomes are expected, due to wider developments in the market. This includes, for example, a change in the demand for adjacent services (such as chargepoint maintenance and insurance) as a result of a more extensive chargepoint infrastructure, and also a change in the number of EV models available in the UK as demand for EVs grows. These effects would be expected to continue over time as the market grows and matures.

Over the long term (5 years or more), the LEVI grant scheme would be expected to lead to a range of other impacts including economic opportunities across the supply chain and related sectors, material environmental benefits through reduced emissions and changes in energy security.

As with any intervention, without specific policy mechanisms to mitigate these risks, **unintended consequences** may be observed:

- the grant could create some level of dependency on this channel of funding
- the grants cover upfront costs but parties may not allocate adequate resources to repair and maintain the chargepoints over time
- local authorities may only invest if local EV uptake already high, leaving some areas left behind

Barriers that could hinder outputs and outcomes from being realised include:

- insufficient numbers of active installers to provide value for money for the local authority
- lack of EV infrastructure procurement capability in some local authorities could hinder uptake
- lack of knowledge about the type of chargepoint to procure and how to procure installations

Enablers that could support the outputs and outcomes include:

- knowledge sharing across local authorities, which may enhance efficiency of procurement
- clear signposting and information about location of chargepoints, which would increase their utilisation

Figure 22: LEVI Fund logic model: scheme outcomes (up to a year)

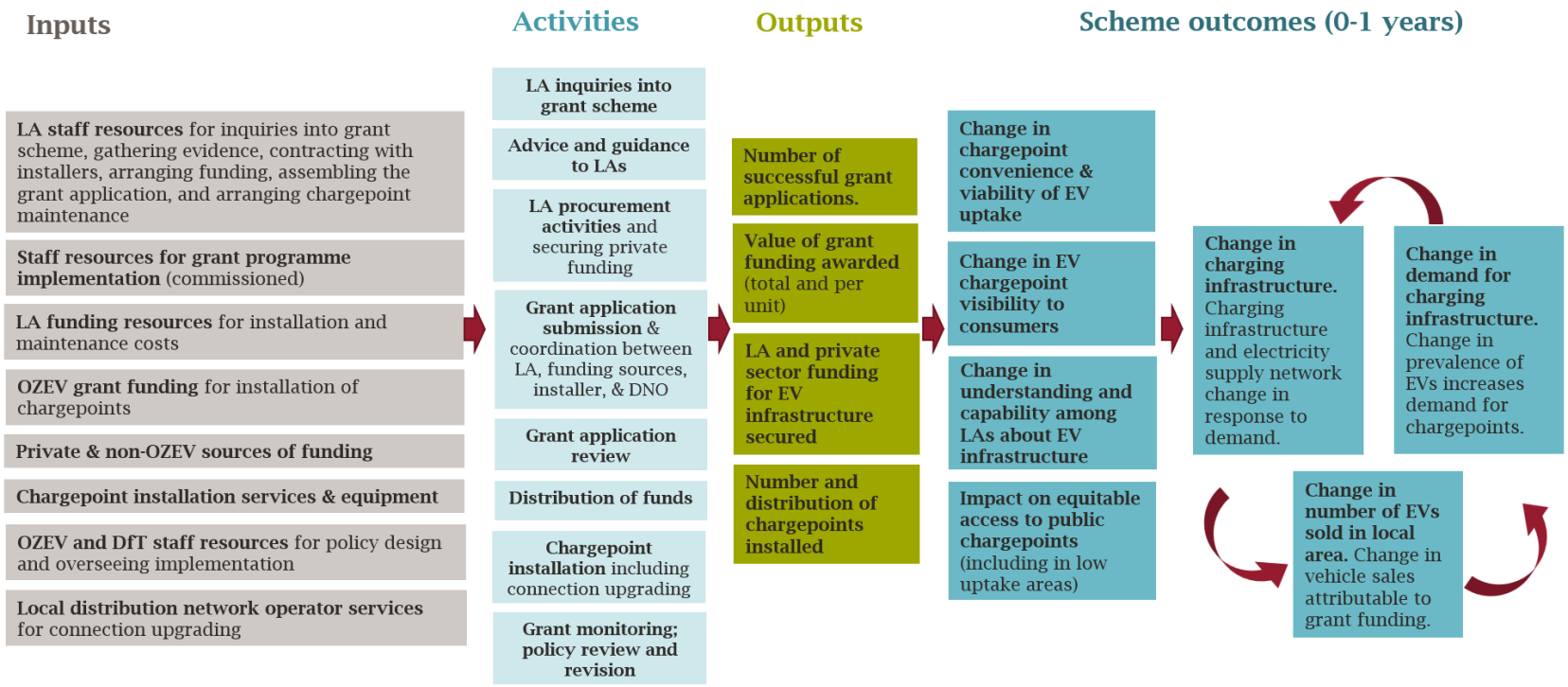
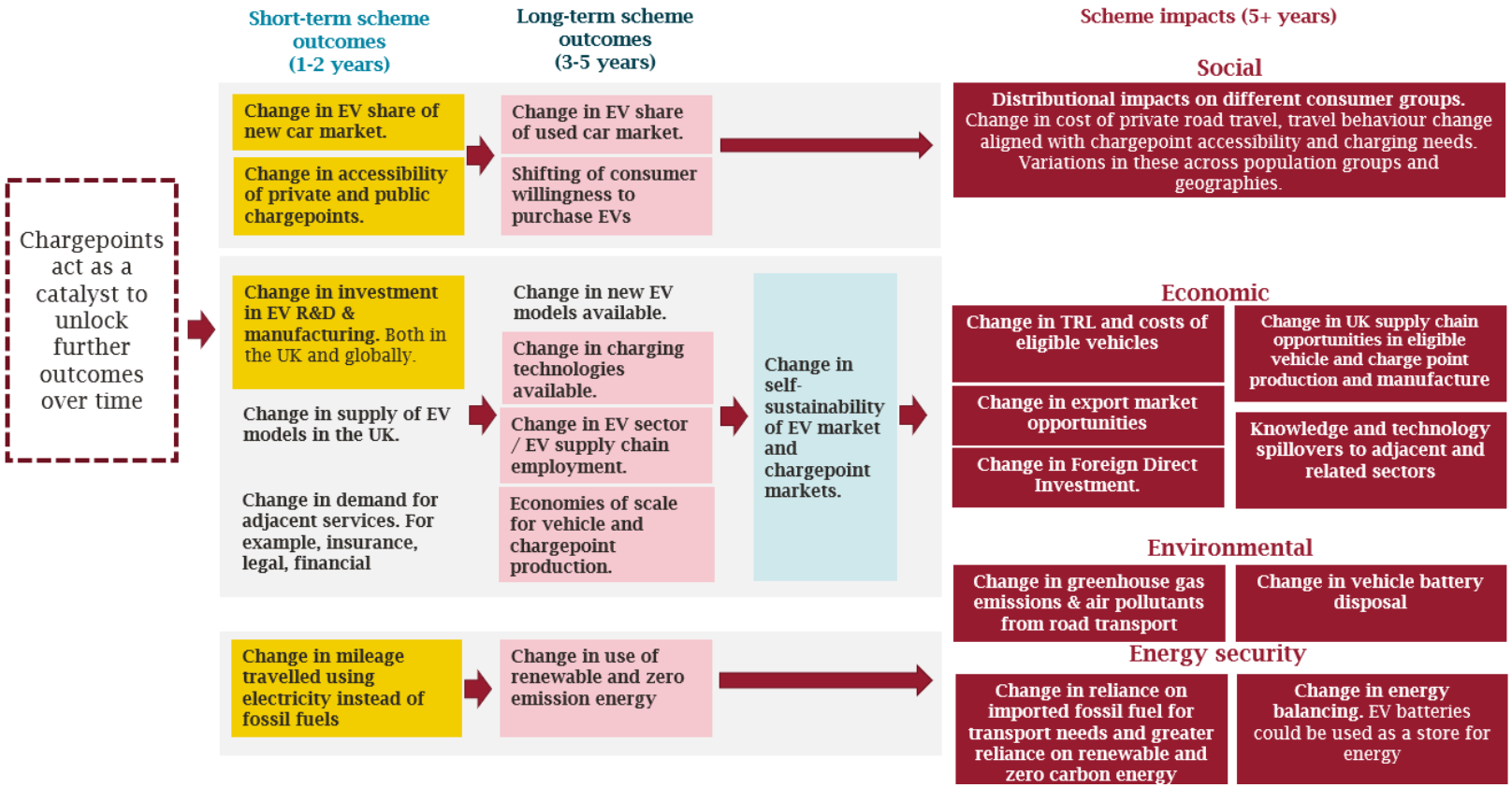


Figure 23: LEVI Fund logic model: subsequent years



Note: The outcomes highlighted in colour are where LEVI is most likely to influence.

ANNEX C EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Underpinning this evaluation is a series of evaluation questions which articulate the issues of interest to DfT, and on which this evaluation therefore generates evidence. The evaluation questions were iteratively agreed with DfT. The report provides a thematic synthesis of evidence elicited while addressing these questions. The questions are provided below.

PILOT FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS
What aspects of the pilot application process worked well/less well? Why and for which stakeholders? How can the application process be improved?
What has worked well/less well and why (with regard to support offered by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and the LEVI Support Body)? Are there any key gaps in support offered by the OZEV and the LEVI Support Body?
To what extent did the respective roles and responsibilities of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team support the early phases of the pilot effectively?
Are there any opportunities to streamline or improve functions and processes of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team?
To what extent did the level of engagement and information provided about LEVI funding meet local authorities needs? Were the requirements and objectives of the fund clear? How could this be improved to support Tranche 2?

CAPITAL FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS
What aspects of the application process have worked well/less well and why and for which stakeholders? How can the application process be improved?
How can the application process be improved and/or streamlined for Tranche 2 of the fund?
To what extent is the guidance (including procurement guidance, 'Heads of Terms') being used and/or applied? What improvements are needed? What is clear/unclear about the rules of the fund?

CAPITAL FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS

To what extent did the level of engagement and information provided about LEVI funding meet local authorities needs? Were the requirements and objectives of the fund clear? How could this be improved to support Tranche 2?
Are there any opportunities to streamline or improve functions and processes of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team?
What has worked well/less well and why? Are there any key gaps in support offered by the OZEV and the LEVI Support Body?

PILOT FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DELIVERY PROCESS

What is the geographical distribution of the pilot funding across local authorities ?
What have been the key lessons learned for local authorities planning the roll out of chargepoints/cross pavement charging solutions with LEVI funding? Have local authorities encountered any barriers to delivery? How could these be avoided/reduced?
What has worked well/less well and why?
Are there any key gaps in support offered by the OZEV and the LEVI Support Body?
Are there any opportunities to streamline or improve functions and processes of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team?
Were there any unforeseen issues and what changes might be needed to support the next stage of funding? To what extent have the pre-procurement and procurement stages of delivery proceeded in line with expectations? What have been the barriers and facilitators to timely delivery?

CAPABILITY FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DELIVERY PROCESS

What is the geographical distribution of the capability funding across local authorities?
How is capability funding being used and why/why not?
What have been the key challenges for new EV infrastructure staff members/resourcing support?
What has worked well/less well and why? Are there any key gaps in support offered by the OZEV and the LEVI Support Body?

CAPITAL FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DELIVERY PROCESS

What is the geographical distribution of the Tranche 1 capital funding across local authorities?
What have been the key lessons learned for local authorities planning the roll out of chargepoints/cross pavement charging solutions with LEVI funding?
Have local authorities encountered any barriers to delivery? How could these be avoided/reduced?
What has worked well/less well and why?
To what extent did the respective roles and responsibilities of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team support the early phases of delivery effectively? Are there any key gaps in support offered by the OZEV and the LEVI Support Body?
Are there any opportunities to streamline or improve functions and processes of the LEVI Support Body and OZEV team?
Were there any unforeseen issues and what changes might be needed to support Tranche 2?

PILOT FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO EARLY OUTCOMES

To what extent do the chargepoints planned or applied for in the Pilot and Tranche 1 funding represent a material change in local chargepoint provision (particularly low-power chargepoints)?
To what extent have the planned chargepoints to be delivered with pilot funding actually been delivered (or are on track for delivery)?
To what extent has the pilot funding accelerated installation?
What types and locations of chargepoints/ cross pavement charging solutions have been planned by local authorities and why? Are there any trends in chargepoint/cross pavement charging solution rollout approaches? What other outputs and outcomes have been achieved to date?
To what extent has the LEVI funding enabled local authorities to increase the scale of their chargepoint roll out up to 2030 against what they had originally planned/envisaged?

CAPABILITY FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO EARLY OUTCOMES

To what extent was the capability funding likely to be additional? To what extent has LEVI funding leveraged additional funding sources?
To what extent have Capability-funded local authorities hired additional full time equivalents (FTEs), compared to what was planned?
What are the early outcomes? How many new staff members have been recruited? How many local authorities have developed an EV infrastructure strategy as a result? What elements are included in these strategies developed and what are their perceived benefits?
How is the supplementary funding being used and what are the early outcomes?
To what extent has the EV resourcing acquired through the capability funding helped local authorities to prepare and apply for the main Capital Fund?
To what extent was the capability funding likely to be additional? To what extent has LEVI funding leveraged additional funding sources?

CAPITAL FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO EARLY OUTCOMES

To what extent do the chargepoints planned or applied for in Tranche 1 funding represent a material change in local chargepoint provision (particularly low-power chargepoints)?
To what extent has the LEVI funding enabled local authorities to increase the scale of their chargepoint roll out up to 2030 against what they had originally planned/envisaged?
To what extent do the chargepoints planned or applied for with Tranche 1 funding represent a material change in local chargepoint provision (particularly low-power chargepoints)?
To what extent do the chargepoints planned or applied for in Tranche 1 funding represent a material change in local chargepoint provision (particularly low-power chargepoints)?

PILOT FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE IMPACTS OF THE LEVI FUNDING COMING TO AN END

To what extent is the funding from the Pilot likely to be additional to what local authorities would have delivered anyway?
What other options would local authorities have taken if LEVI funding was not available? Is there early evidence of additionality?

CAPABILITY FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE IMPACTS OF THE LEVI FUNDING COMING TO AN END

What are the local authorities' resourcing plans once the capability funding period ends (i.e. post-March 2025)? Assuming no further funding will be made available, what impact will this have on the local authority's resourcing and therefore their ability to deliver EV infrastructure in the long-term?

CAPITAL FUND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE IMPACTS OF THE LEVI FUNDING COMING TO AN END

What proportion of chargepoint costs are local authorities requesting subsidy for? What other funding streams are being used for EV infrastructure aside from LEVI funds? What other options would local authorities have taken if the funding was not available?
To what extent is the funding from Tranche 1 likely to be additional to what local authorities would have delivered anyway?

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For more information visit www.systra.com/uk

Birmingham
Alpha Tower, Crowne Plaza, Suffolk Street
Birmingham, B1 1TT
T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Bristol
33 Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4UA

Cork
City Quarter, Lapps Quay, Cork City
Cork, T12 WY42, Republic of Ireland

Dublin
2nd Floor, Riverview House, 21-23 City Quay
Dublin D02 AY91, Republic of Ireland
T: +353 (0) 1 566 2028

Edinburgh
Ground Floor, 18 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DF
T: +44 (0)131 460 1847

Glasgow
The Centrum Business Centre Limited, 38 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3DX
T: +44 (0)141 468 4205

Leeds
100 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1BA
T: +44 (0)113 360 4842

London
One Carey Lane, London, England EC2V 8AE
T: +44 (0)20 3855 0079

Manchester
5th Floor, Four Hardman Street, Spinningfields
Manchester, M3 3HF
Tel: +44 (0)161 504 5026

Newcastle
Block C, First Floor, Portland House, New Bridge Street West,
Newcastle, NE1 8AL

T: +44 191 249 3816

Reading
Davidson House, Forbury Square,
Reading, RG1 3EU
T: +44 118 208 0111

Woking
Dukes Court, Duke Street
Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH
T: +44 (0)1483 357705

York
Meridian House, The Crescent
York, YO24 1AW
Tel: +44 1904 454 600

Other locations:

France:
Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Paris

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