



Cambridgeshire Electric Vehicle cable channel trial Cambridgeshire County Council

Expression of Interest notification for an electric vehicle cable channel supplier

1 Background:

Transport accounts for around 27% of Cambridgeshire's carbon footprint, with the contribution from cars forming over half of this. Electric Vehicles (EVs) have a key role to play in meeting the Council's ambitions regarding achieving net zero.

Charging using home electricity supplies can be significantly cheaper than public charging, through a combination of lower taxation levels, domestic sector cost-caps and emerging preferential EV domestic supply tariffs that are not available to the commercial sector. However currently only those residents with off-street parking are able to take advantage of these lower electricity costs. This is shown to be off-putting for many considering transitioning to EVs.

EV "crossing-over" is the trailing of a charging cable across the footway from a domestic electricity supply to a vehicle parked adjacent on the highway. If unmanaged this could introduce a range of safety, equity, and risk / liability issues.

Section 178 of the Highways Act states that "no person shall fix or place any ... cable, wire or other similar apparatus over, along or across a highway without the consent of the highway authority for the highway". This provision is designed to ensure safe conditions on the highway.

On 5th December 2023 Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways & Transport Committee approved an [On-Street Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Policy](#) ("the Policy") which sets out what is, and is not, acceptable on the highways with regards to EV charging infrastructure. The policy currently prohibits the use of cable crossing-over. However, the benefits of being able to use domestic energy supplies was acknowledged, and Committee agreed a recommendation for officers to explore the range of cable management solutions available on the market and develop a proposal for a pilot to inform the future Policy.

On 5th March 2024 Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways and Transport Committee approved an [Electric Vehicle Charging Cable 'Crossing Over' Pilot](#). The term 'EV cable channel' or 'channel' is used but can also be known as a 'gully' solution.

The purpose of the trial is to test EV cable channel supplier(s) across all districts in



Cambridgeshire, across different locations and surfaces. The trial will monitor and evaluate the process, installation and short-term challenges or issues that arise before a potential wider roll-out of an EV cable channel solution. The expected outcomes and deliverables of the trial are outlined below:

Outcome	Deliverables
a) Allow residents without off street parking to charge an EV using a domestic energy tariff via a trial of an EV cable channel solution	Installation of a maximum of 250 channels in the Cambridgeshire area (50 per district) in two phases: Phase 1 – up to 50 (10 per district) Phase 2 – up to 200 (40 per district) Commencement to Phase 2 would be determined by the evaluation of Phase 1.
b) Consider the implications of allowing a wider roll out of an EV cable channel solution	Test a solution and identify pros and cons through set evaluation criteria.

Cambridgeshire County Council has worked with regional partners in our submission for the Government's Electric Vehicle Pavement Channels Grant. Our proposal offers residents a £500 refund upon installation of the cable channel. We will also use the grant to cover the £196 S171 licence fee that suppliers will need to apply for to install the channels and will therefore be at zero cost upon application. If successful in our bid, these measures will significantly reduce the total cost of an EV cable channel for the resident. All other costs associated with the supply, installation and gaining of permissions will need to be covered by the resident.

2 Approval of channel supplier:

As outlined, Cambridgeshire County Council is looking to trial an EV cable channel solution to test if it is a viable option for EV owners in Cambridgeshire without off-street parking. We will also need to consider if it is an appropriate solution for the County Council to offer in terms of its responsibility for managing and maintaining the highway and ensuring that it poses no additional cost or resource pressure on the Council. Only a channel solution is acceptable to the Council to avoid the safety issues of trailing cables across or above the pavement, even with the use of a mat protector which still presents a trip hazard.

We seek to trial EV cable channel solution(s) in Cambridgeshire that meets the criteria as listed under 'Channel specification'. Any channel solution that can evidence that it meets the specification will be approved to be installed in Cambridgeshire as part of this trial.

In addition to the channel specification, any supplier must agree to and/or evidence they will be able to deliver the following.

- An approved channel supplier will be expected to manage the application process

directly with Cambridgeshire residents from start to finish, including post-installation customer support.

- An approved supplier will appoint an NRSWA-accredited and highway-approved contractor and must ensure all works under this licence is undertaken by this approved contractor..
- An approved supplier or its contractor must ensure that there is a guarantee period of at least 12 months for the workmanship of the installation.
- An approved channel supplier must work in partnership with both the Council and applying residents throughout the trial and beyond. A collaborative approach with the Council is expected, providing updates and open discussion on progress or issues. Good levels of communication and customer service with the applying residents is also expected, being a point of contact for any questions or concerns.
- An approved channel supplier must agree to the broad timescales of delivery in conjunction with the Council. Indicative timescales are set out under section 6. Suppliers must act in an efficient and timely manner throughout the process and keep to stated timeframes as committed to the residents.
- An approved channel supplier must participate in monitoring and evaluation as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, and in agreement with approved supplier.
- An approved channel supplier must agree to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, as explained below.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is included in this expression of interest pack. This document sets out the expectations of any approved channel supplier to be able to operate in Cambridgeshire as part of this trial. Any interested supplier will be required to agree to this MoU before they will become an approved supplier.

Only a channel solution in line with the specification criteria will be considered as part of the scope of the trial. A buried solution, or a channel that is not flush or non-slip will not be considered as part of the scope of the trial and will be refused. This is due to the safety concerns of such solutions where additional trip or slip hazards are present due to raised features on the footway, or where appropriate slip resistance is not provided. Also, only channel solutions are eligible for governments EV Pavement Channels Grant which, if we are successful in our bid, will be used to reduce the cost barrier to residents through a £500 refund towards the supply and installation of the channel. The cost of the S171 licence will also be paid for by the Grant.

The expression of interest notice will be open for 6 weeks until 5pm Wednesday 28th January 2026. Any supplier that has a product that meets the specification criteria can contact the Council to gain approval to be an approved supplier for the period of the trial only. Once the deadline has passed, no further supplier approvals will be considered for the duration of the trial.

On the completion of the trial, the recommendations from the evaluation of the trial period will determine if the expression of interest window will reopen for new eligible suppliers. This will be dependent on approval of any potential recommendations to Highways and Transport

Committee. If roll-out of the solution is approved by the Council, the approved supplier(s) will join the Council's approved list and remain as listed on the website.

3 Channel specification:

To ensure the highest safety precautions, reduced lifetime maintenance need, and ease of installation across varying footway conditions, including the avoidance of the need for stats to be undertaken, a channel must comply with the following criteria to be approved to be used in Cambridgeshire:

- a. A channel construction that is installed directly into the footway pavement or kerb, that is discreet and flush-fitting to the surface with no trip hazard - no buried cross-pavement solutions will be approved.
- b. Have a shallow construction depth to avoid the need for a utility (stats) search and that minimises the remedial works required.
- c. Have a flexible channel construction so that the channel can be easily installed in uneven pavements with minimal remedial works required. While the construction must be flexible, it must also be durable
- d. Have a self-closing lid that lies flat to the surface of the ground when the cable is inserted or removed to reduce the risk of it being a trip hazard.
- e. Be tested to relevant British Standards.
- f. A channel must be recyclable at end of life.
- g. Provide a good level of customer service, including post-installation support and product guarantee of at least 10 years.
- h. The channel supplier must provide an end-to-end fully supplier managed process. This includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Promotion.
 - ii. Be the first point of contact for applicants.
 - iii. Undertake initial eligibility and detailed site assessment, including site surveys where required.
 - iv. Collate all required permissions from the resident and submit to the Council before the final s178 licence will be issued. This includes planning permission where required, proof of appropriate insurance cover and that an EV chargepoint that meets required standards has been installed. The supplier must support applicants through these processes.
- i. The channel supplier must agree to sign the Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the expectation of the relationship between the supplier, the Council and the resident. This includes input into the Council's monitoring and evaluation of the trial, including providing data.
- j. The channel supplier must appoint an NRSWA-accredited contractor to undertake the installations and provide them with all necessary training to carry out the works safely, in accordance with the S171 licence conditions, the NRSWA, and the Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice.

4 Quality and performance standards

In addition to the essential criteria set out in the specification, we set out the following quality and performance standards that should be met:

- The channel must be easy to use for the resident, with minimal routine maintenance.
- The channel must have a minimum product guarantee of 10 years.
- The channel solution must be of high quality, meet the standards as set out under section 3, and have minimal longer-term maintenance that would be at the cost of the Council.
- The approved channel supplier must provide training to the sub-contractor, and both parties must be satisfied with the level of training provided to carry out the works to an exemplary standard.
- A Risk assessment and method statements will be requested as part of the supplier approval assessment process. We reserve the right to request a site-specific risk assessment and method statement at the discretion of the responding officer.
- It's expected that disruption to footway pavement and kerbing will be kept to a minimum, and a straight channel cut with a road saw or similar. If wider damage is caused to the footway, kerb or carriageway, localised reinstatement and repair to the satisfaction of the highway officer will be required.
- Joints between the gully and the bituminous material and / or kerb shall be cleansed of any loose debris and treated with a bond coat to BS 594987:2015+A1:2017 to prevent water ingress to the joint. Alternative method to prevent water ingress and ensure good adhesion will be considered.
- The supplier must issue before and after photographs of the footway to ensure issues can be addressed should they arise from the installation failing early.
- The Council's Highways Officers will conduct random checks of the installations to ensure satisfaction of quality of work.
- The approved channel supplier will work within the broad timescales set out under section 6 and seek to install the maximum number of installations per district as set out in each phase of the trial within those timescales. The Council should be satisfied that the approved supplier has undertaken satisfactory levels of promotion across the county to maximise the number of available trials in each district.
- The approved channel supplier will be expected to provide a high level of customer service to Cambridgeshire residents throughout the trial and beyond, as well as with all partners.
- The approved supplier must work in a collaborative manner with the Council, in line with the MoU, and provide the data and monitoring information as agreed throughout the trial period to actively track progress and consider improvements. If these requirements are not met, the Council may consider rescinding the permission for the supplier to work in the County and refuse further s178 licences.

5 Submitting an expression of interest

If you meet the specification criteria and would like to express your interest, please email electricvehicles@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. More information will then be provided and a proforma will need to be completed and submitted that evidences how you meet each

criterion. The Council will assess responses and evaluate each criterion on a pass/fail basis. Only suppliers that evidence they meet each criterion will be approved as a supplier as part of the trial.

The expression of interest window will be open for 6 weeks until 5pm Wednesday 28th January 2026 and then will close for the period of the trial. All applications must be received by this date. We aim to assess submissions and return a decision within 20 working days. Within this time, we may invite eligible applicants for an informal discussion before confirming the decision.

If more than one supplier is approved, the number of installations will be shared amongst approved suppliers but must not exceed the approved trial quantities. It will be up to interested residents to decide which supplier they wish to proceed with. The Council does not guarantee any number of installations per approved supplier.

Following the trial period, the opportunity to express an interest to become an approved supplier may be reopened, dependent on the conclusions and recommendations of the trial and gaining council approval.

6 Indicative timescales

The dates below aim provide guidance on likely timescales expected in the supplier approval process. After confirmation of approval and signing of the MoU, following timescales will be discussed with the approved suppliers. Ways to expedite the launch date of the trial will be discussed with approved suppliers. A launch date early in 2026 is preferred, and by April 2026 at the latest is expected.

Task	Indicative timescales
Expression of interest advert live	17 December 2025 - 28 January 2026
Assessment of submissions	20 working days from receipt of submission
Invitation to meet eligible supplier	20 working days from receipt of submission
Confirmation of decision	20 working days from receipt of submission
Memorandum of Understanding to be signed	Within 10 working days of confirmation of approval
Mobilisation of supplier – contract installation provider	Feb – March 2026
Inception meeting: Confirmation of roles, responsibilities and processes	Feb – March 2026
Launch date to be agreed	Feb – March 2026
Phase 1 live	March/April 2026 (TBC)
Phase One monitoring and Evaluation	Autumn/Winter 2026 (TBC)
Phase 2 live	Winter 2026/2027 (TBC)
Phase Two monitoring and Evaluation	2027/28 (TBC)
Trial evaluation and report to committee on recommendation	TBC

7 The trial process:

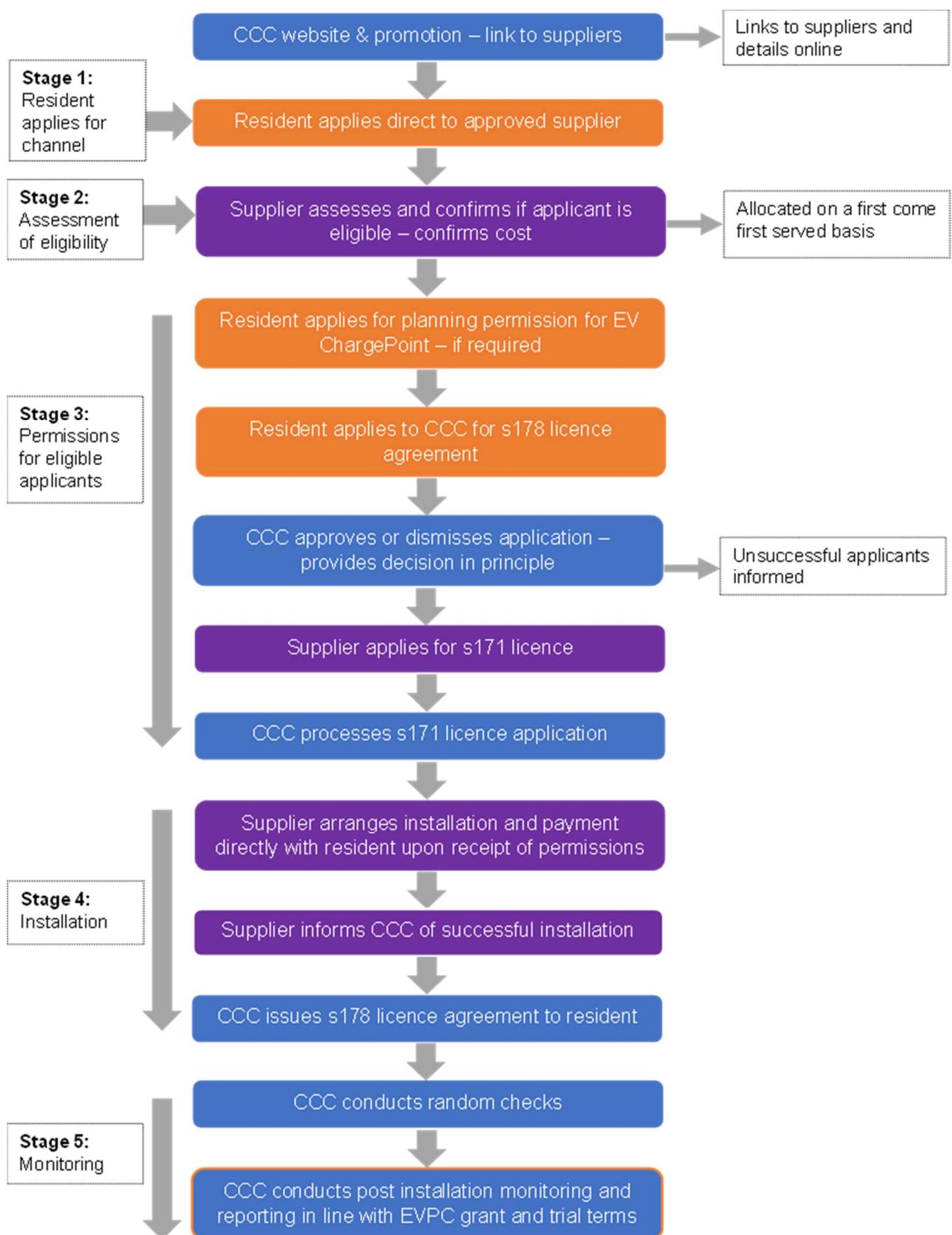
The following flow chart summarises the expected trial process once a channel supplier has been approved to operate as part of the trial.

Key:

Cambridgeshire County Council

Resident

Supplier



8 Roles and responsibilities:

	Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)	Resident	Channel supplier	Local Planning Authority (LPA)	Installation company
Stage 0:					
Approval of channel supplier	X				
Stage 1: Application					
Apply for channel directly to supplier		X			
Management of process directly with resident			X		
Stage 2: Assessment of eligibility					
Initial eligibility check			X		
Conduct site survey and confirm suitability of location			X		
Inform applicants of decision			X		
Confirm cost and next steps to successful applicants			X		
Stage 3: Permissions					
Resident applies for planning permission for EV chargepoint to LPA		X			
LPA processes planning application and issues decision				X	
Resident applies for S178 licence agreement to CCC		X			

	Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)	Resident	Channel supplier	Local Planning Authority (LPA)	Installation company
CCC assess S178 and issues decision – but does not issue final agreement	X				
Supplier / installer applies for S171 license to CCC			X		X
CCC process S171 licence and issues decision	X				
Resident to provide evidence of appropriate level of liability cover to supplier		X			
Supplier to confirm all permissions and requirements are in place			X		
Supplier requests payment from resident and books in installation			X		X
Stage 4: Installation					
Communications with resident			X		
Installation of channel					X
Post installation checks	X (random checks as per S171 licence)		X		
Post installation customer service			X		
Stage 5: Monitoring					

	Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)	Resident	Channel supplier	Local Planning Authority (LPA)	Installation company
Provide data and feedback			X		X
Complete and submit survey response		X			
Collation of data and feedback	X				
Additional issues					
Daily maintenance – clearing channel of debris etc		X			
Reporting of faults		X			
Maintenance – within guarantee period			X		X
Maintenance – after guarantee period	X				
Application for EV Pavement Channel refund £500 (if CCC's bid is successful)		X			
Approval and payment of £500 refund	X				

9 Key deliverables:

Up to 250 channels are approved to be installed across two phases set out below:

Phase 1: Up to 50 channel installations; 10 per district.

Phase 2: Up to 200 channel installations; 40 per district.

If district allocations aren't filled following satisfactory promotion and time, unallocated trial spaces can be given to other districts if and where demand allows.

The trial period is dictated by the number of installations up to 250 channels, dependent on

speed of uptake and length of time to get to installation stage for all 250 channels.

The Council will conduct high-level monitoring and evaluate the successes of the trial at the end of phase 1 with a view to move smoothly onto phase 2 dependent on whether significant issues arise. After phase 2, the Council will evaluate the success of the trial and provide a recommendation to the Council's Highways and Transport Committee to determine the outcome of the trial and proposed decision. The outcome could include, but not be limited to the following options; transition into a business as usual offer, extend the trial, or agree that no further EV charging cable channels should be installed. The monitoring and success criteria are set out in the MoU.

The Council reserves the right to pause or stop the trial at any given point if significant issues arise. Equally, the Council reserves the right to choose to report to H&T Committee before all 250 channels are installed if they deem significant data and feedback has been provided to make an earlier decision.