

[News story: Funding for thousands of electric car charge points unused by councils](#)

- government urges local authorities to take advantage of a £4.5 million pot which could help people around the country join the electric car revolution
- Electric Vehicle Homecharge and Plug-in Car Grant schemes extended to help motorists make the switch to electric

Ministers Jesse Norman and Claire Perry have called for local authorities to do more to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle air quality after it emerged just 5 councils in the whole of the UK have taken advantage of an electric car scheme.

In 2016 the Department for Transport launched the [On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme](#), offering funding for local authorities to buy and install electric car charge points. But the take-up more than a year later has been extremely disappointing, meaning people up and down the country are being denied the opportunity to take advantage of the technology.

The two government ministers have written to councils urging them to take up the scheme which makes available up to 75% of the cost of procuring and installing chargepoints. Local authorities can fund the remaining costs through public and private sources.

Transport Minister, Jesse Norman said:

We are in the early stages of an electric revolution in the UK transport sector, and connectivity is at its heart.

Millions of homes in the UK do not have off-street parking, so this funding is important to help local councils ensure that all their residents can take advantage of this revolution.

Charge points can be anything from new points popping up on streets to adapting existing lampposts to make the best use of space. The money has been available since 2016 but so far only 5 councils have come forward, so there is £4.5 million still available for them – enough for thousands of extra points.

Prepared for the electric revolution

With a host of different support schemes for electric vehicles announced in the Autumn Statement, including a Charging Investment Infrastructure Fund to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure, and more money to help

people buy electric cars, the on-street scheme is an important part of the toolkit.

Around a third of homes in England do not have off-street parking, making it extremely difficult to charge an electric vehicle overnight. As a result, on-street charge points like those being offered through this scheme have the potential to entice drivers to switch to electric.

Now government ministers Jesse Norman and Claire Perry are writing to council leaders to remind them about the scheme and highlight the opportunities that making electric vehicles accessible to their residents can bring.

The number of electric vehicles bought in the UK was up nearly 30% last year, and having committed to ending the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040, government is also making sure we have the right infrastructure in place to support drivers.

A set of schemes for electric vehicles were announced in the Autumn Budget in November, including a further £100 million to help consumers purchasing electric vehicles. Following that, government is today (January 12 2018) also announcing the extension of current grant rates for both the [Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme](#), and [Plug-in Car Grant](#) which provides up to £4,500 to help motorists make the switch to electric.

Our Clean Growth Strategy, National Air Quality Plan and Industrial Strategy, all highlight the importance of electric vehicles, which is why the [Prime Minister announced In December that the UK would host a Zero Emission Vehicle Summit in Autumn 2018](#).

All this work is part of our plan to meet long-term climate change and air quality targets and for the opportunities that new green industries can bring with jobs and growth. With 1 in every 5 battery electric vehicles sold in Europe in 2016 already built in the UK, we are already leading the way on the electric revolution.

[Press release: Record prosecutions for hate crime in Wessex](#)

Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP will be in Salisbury today to see what is being done to tackle hate crime.

Hate crime is when someone is targeted because of their actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability, it is a criminal offence and the law provides additional penalties for such crimes.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Area of Wessex has the highest conviction

rates in the country for hate crime prosecutions, with 90.1% of hate crimes prosecuted in Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, and Wiltshire during 2016-2017 resulting in a conviction.

The Area's conviction rates have improved in all strands of hate crime, demonstrating how seriously prosecutors take cases where there is hostility based on a person's race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity.

The Solicitor will visit the CPS Wessex at Salisbury Law Courts to discuss its efforts to prosecute hate crime offences.

While in the region, the Solicitor will attend the Area's Hate Crime Scrutiny and Involvement Panel. Panel members include volunteers from community groups and key colleagues from the CPS Criminal Justice partner agencies, who support prosecutors in CPS Wessex to identify and adopt best practices reviewing hate crime cases where victims have suffered prejudice or hostility.

Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP said:

One incident of hate crime is one too many and those responsible need to be brought to justice. I'd like to thank CPS Wessex for the fantastic job it's doing to tackle hate crime in the region.

Victims need to report these crimes and feel that they will be taken seriously if we are to stamp this out, so it's encouraging to see the work happening to train prosecutors in case handling. This has no doubt contributed to improving the conviction rate and the CPS' service to victims.

The CPS rolled out a training programme in 2016 to all prosecutors on Disability Hate Crime that saw the conviction rate increased by 5.7%, to 86.4% for Disability Hate Crime cases prosecuted in Wessex. The Area has plans to deliver new training packages in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Press release: £1.7 million funding boost to Public Service Mutuals

Organisations that wish to become or grow as Public Service Mutuals can now apply for a share of up to £1.7 million in funding, Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, announced today.

A total of £1.2 million will be available to create new Mutuals, or

strengthen existing ones, by providing access to advice across areas including legal, financial, marketing, human resources and business planning.

The remaining £500,000 will be used to pilot support programmes such as partnership working to help Mutuals collaborate with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and others to broaden the service they offer. A mentoring scheme will also allow newly-formed Mutuals to benefit from one-to-one experienced advice and support, as well as a peer support network which will bring aspiring Mutuals together to share their experiences, challenges and successes.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

Mutuals are run under the influence of employees to support the delivery of public services and we want to help them thrive.

This £1.7m funding will deliver training, support programmes and mentoring to expand the high quality services Mutuals provide to communities across the country.

This round of funding will be available until March 2020 and follows the £572k that was awarded in 2017 to support Mutuals.

Organisations can check if they are eligible for funding by contacting the Mutuals Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on: mutuals@culture.gov.uk.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

*To apply for support from this programme you must currently, or intend to, fulfil our definition of a Public Service Mutual, which is an organisation that: i) has left the public sector (also known as 'spinning out') ii) continues to deliver public services and aims to have a positive social impact iii) has a significant degree of staff influence or control in the way it is run

*If you're an existing mutual, you must be in your first five years of operation, or delivering your original or extended contract which has not been retendered, or both.

*You must be able to demonstrate how support from this programme will help your organisation grow or diversify its operations

*All applicants will be required to demonstrate their commitment to their project and the mutual model by providing matched funding, in cash, towards the support needed

*For more information on eligibility and support expectations, please contact mutuals@culture.gov.uk.

[News story: Expression of Interest: MOD Defence People Challenge – Market Interest Day](#)

Defence Innovation Initiative

In September 2016 the Defence Secretary launched the [Defence Innovation Initiative](#), which acknowledged that we needed a new approach to innovation in order to maintain our military advantage and recognised that the private sector drives the rapid pace of technological, social and cultural change.

Defence People Challenge Background

In the [Strategic Defence and Security Review \(SDSR\) 2015](#) the Government stated “Our Armed Forces rely on the skills, commitment and professionalism of our people. We place heavy demands on them. Recruiting, training and retaining the right mix of capable and motivated Service personnel is essential to deliver success on operations.” (Paragraph 4.51)

One of the priorities for innovation in Defence is about how we can recruit, train, retain and motivate the right number of people and make the most efficient and effective use of its workforce, providing the skills required to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. The Defence People Challenge will ask companies to consider how their products and services could make a real difference to how Defence approaches people management.

Are you a company working in this area? Would you be interested in discussing your ideas, technologies and solutions?

If the answer is “yes” then our upcoming Market Interest day could be of interest to you.

The event is taking place on Wednesday 7 February 2018 in London. At the event we will be seeking to gain an understanding of what the marketplace can offer in this space and views from attendees to help shape our thinking before finalising the challenge and competition design.

The event aims are:

- to share the challenges externally with the current marketplace
- to collect wider external views in order to further assure/ refine the challenges based on the current market
- to encourage collaborative bids

If you would like the opportunity to help shape this upcoming competition,

please [register your interest](#) now and save the date.

Please note that places for this event are limited and if the event is oversubscribed, we will have to limit the number attending from a single organisation.

Important date: The deadline for Expression of Interest is Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 17:00.

We will contact you after this date to notify you if you've been selected to participate and offered a place, and provide you with further information such as the venue and agenda. We will also provide documentation that will outline our understanding of the challenges we face in this area.

Registration is only an expression of interest and does not guarantee a place at the event.

The full competition launch event will be held on Tuesday 27 March 2018 in London and further details will be available on our website in due course.

[News story: Sell out success at Severn Tolls event](#)

A sell out audience from both sides of the River Severn will be on hand at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport later this month when the UK Government hosts the first Severn Growth Summit (22 Jan).

350 delegates have signed up to attend the inaugural event hosted by the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns to explore how links between the South Wales and South West England economies can be strengthened following the announcement of the abolition of the Severn Tolls later this year.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am delighted to see such a positive response from communities to this first sell out event. The fact the event has sold out so quickly is a clear demonstration of the appetite to bring people and industry closer together on both sides of the border. That is what the Severn Growth Summit is all about.□

This event signals the start of an important conversation that will transform the joint economic and cultural prospects of South Wales and the South West of England. Boosting the local economy by over £100m each and every year□ by this major UK Government policy decision is a clear message that Wales is open for business.

I look forward to welcoming partners from both sides of the Wales-England border to the Summit and hope that we seize this opportunity to think big to make our economies stronger, more dynamic and fit for the future.□