

Saltford Parish Council: Report on Freedom of Information findings regarding WECA EV Charging Infrastructure Funding allocated to B&NES Council (Including the Proposed Wedmore Road Car Park EV Charging Hub, Saltford)

Purpose of Report

This report summarises information obtained by Saltford Parish Council (SPC) through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), together with information previously received through SPC's formal complaint to B&NES Council.

The report is intended to:

- Inform Saltford's B&NES Ward Councillors of the findings;
- Assist Ward Councillors with further enquiries with B&NES Council and WECA;
- Provide transparency for residents regarding the proposed electric vehicle (EV) charging hub at Wedmore Road car park, Saltford; and
- Support publication of the findings on SPC's website.

Executive Summary

Information obtained through SPC's FOI requests confirms that WECA allocated £932,813 to B&NES Council to deliver rural EV charging infrastructure, including community charging hubs and destination chargers. This included public EV chargers at B&NES Council's Wedmore Road car park, as proposed in 2023.

The funding formed part of a regional EV charging programme approved by WECA in 2023, with B&NES Council responsible for delivering the project and reclaiming eligible expenditure from WECA.

Despite the funding allocation and planned delivery milestones, B&NES Council has confirmed that no publicly accessible rural EV charging infrastructure has been delivered using the funding, no funding has been spent or allocated, and no claims have been submitted to WECA.

The information follows several years of engagement by SPC regarding the proposed installation of public EV charging facilities at Wedmore Road car park in Saltford, together with a formal complaint regarding a lack of communication and project updates from B&NES Council.

The findings raise important questions regarding B&NES Council's project delivery, programme management, stakeholder communication and the future provision of public EV charging infrastructure in Saltford and other rural communities in B&NES.

Key Findings at a Glance

- **£932,813** allocated by WECA to B&NES Council for EV charging infrastructure.
 - Funding intended for **on-street chargers, community charging hubs and destination chargers**.
 - **No publicly accessible rural EV charging infrastructure delivered** using the funding.
 - **£0 spent** by B&NES Council from the allocation.
 - **£0 claimed** from WECA under the reimbursement arrangements.
 - Proposed EV charging facilities at **Wedmore Road car park, Saltford, were not delivered**.
 - B&NES Council attributed the failure of the programme to issues affecting the **Revive Network** delivery model.
 - B&NES Council identified **no alternative use** for the funding.
 - SPC's complaint regarding communication failures by B&NES Council was **upheld in part**, with B&NES Council issuing an apology.
 - Only **£243,485** of the original funding allocation remains potentially available under the grant profile at the time of the FOI responses (summer 2026).
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Chronology of Events

February 2023

SPC was informed that WECA Green Recovery Fund funding would be used by B&NES Council to install EV charging infrastructure at a number of rural locations, including Wedmore Road car park in Saltford.

July 2023

SPC was advised that WECA funding had been allocated to support the programme.

January 2025

SPC received its last direct communication from B&NES Council's EV Officer regarding the proposed installation.

February 2026

Following repeated unsuccessful attempts to obtain updates, SPC formally complained to B&NES Council regarding the lack of communication and uncertainty surrounding the project.

March 2026

SPC followed up its formal complaint to B&NES Council after receiving no response.

May 2026

B&NES Council responded to SPC's complaint, acknowledging significant communication failures and partially upholding the complaint.

June 2026

Due to B&NES Council having not provided information requested, SPC resolved to submit Freedom of Information requests to both B&NES Council and WECA seeking detailed information regarding funding, expenditure and project delivery.

2026 FOI Responses

WECA and B&NES Council provided information confirming that no publicly accessible rural EV charging infrastructure had been delivered under the programme and that none of the allocated funding had been spent or claimed.

Background

In February 2023, SPC was informed that funding from WECA's Green Recovery Fund (GRF) would be used by B&NES Council to install public EV charging infrastructure at a number of rural locations across Bath & North East Somerset, including Wedmore Road car park in Saltford.

The programme was presented as providing off-street community charging hubs available for public use, helping support the transition to electric vehicles in rural communities.

SPC consistently supported the proposal and sought to engage constructively with B&NES Council regarding delivery of the project. Despite multiple requests for information, however, SPC received no substantive updates. The last communication received was in January 2025.

Following continued lack of communication and uncertainty regarding the status of the project and associated funding, SPC resolved in February 2026 to submit a formal complaint to B&NES Council.

The complaint requested:

- An update on progress of the B&NES-wide EV charging installation programme, with specific reference to Wedmore Road car park; and
- Clarification regarding how WECA Green Recovery Fund funding had been allocated or spent in relation to community EV charging installations.

The complaint was subsequently upheld in part by B&NES Council, which acknowledged significant communication failures and apologised for shortcomings in correspondence and stakeholder engagement.

As the complaint response did not provide the detailed information requested regarding project delivery and funding, SPC subsequently submitted Freedom of Information requests to both WECA and B&NES Council.

Findings from WECA

Funding Allocation

Information supplied by WECA confirmed that:

- A regional EV charging programme had been approved through a Full Business Case in June 2023.
- B&NES Council had not been required to submit a competitive bid for funding.
- WECA had allocated £932,813 to B&NES Council for delivery of:
 - On-street charging infrastructure;
 - Community charging hubs; and
 - Destination charging facilities.
- A formal Grant Offer Letter had been issued by WECA in August 2024 and accepted by B&NES Council in December 2024.

Under the agreement, B&NES Council was responsible for delivering the project and was required to initially fund eligible expenditure before reclaiming costs from WECA.

Project Milestones

The grant agreement established delivery milestones including:

- Installation of 13 charge points by March 2026.
- Installation of 23 charge points by March 2027.

The agreement also envisaged expenditure claims being submitted during the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

Funding Availability

The maximum grant allocation was split across two years:

Financial Year Maximum Funding Available

2025/26	£689,328
2026/27	£243,485
Total	£932,813

No Claims Submitted

WECA confirmed that, at the date of its FOI response:

"No reimbursement claims had been received from B&NES Council under this project."

As the grant operated on a reimbursement basis, this meant that B&NES Council had not recovered any expenditure from the £932,813 allocation.

WECA also confirmed that the agreement contained monitoring requirements, audit provisions and powers allowing funding to be withheld or recovered if delivery conditions were not met.

Findings from B&NES Council

The response received from B&NES Council aligned with the information supplied by WECA but provided further clarification regarding delivery of the programme.

No EV Infrastructure Delivered

B&NES Council confirmed that:

"No publicly accessible rural EV charging infrastructure has been delivered within Bath & North East Somerset using Green Recovery Fund (GRF) funding."

No Funding Spent

B&NES Council also confirmed that:

- The total allocation available was £932,813.

- None of the funding had been spent.
- None of the funding had been allocated.

Reason for Non-Delivery

B&NES Council stated that:

"Due to issues affecting the Revive Network, the programme has not progressed as originally anticipated and, consequently, no alternative use has been identified for the remaining funding."

The response indicated that the programme's original delivery model depended upon the Revive Network and that difficulties associated with that delivery model resulted in the programme effectively stalling.

No evidence was provided that an alternative delivery partner or alternative implementation route was successfully identified.

Findings from SPC's Formal Complaint

The FOI responses provide important context to the complaint response previously received by SPC.

In May 2026, B&NES Council acknowledged:

- Significant communication failures;
- Delays and misrouting of correspondence;
- Failure by B&NES Council officers to keep SPC informed of programme changes;
- That the original delivery model had encountered unforeseen issues; and
- That there were no confirmed timescales for delivery at Wedmore Road car park.

B&NES Council further advised that it was exploring potential future opportunities, including the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme, but that no commitments, locations or delivery timescales had been agreed.

As a result of SPC's complaint, B&NES Council stated that it had reviewed internal correspondence processes, reminded officers of the need for timely communication and committed to providing clearer updates where delivery timescales remained uncertain.

The FOI responses now demonstrate that:

- No public rural EV charging infrastructure was delivered through the GRF programme.

- No GRF funding was spent.
 - No claims were submitted to WECA.
 - The programme did not progress beyond the original delivery difficulties.
 - The proposed Saltford installation at Wedmore Road car park did not proceed under the GRF-funded programme.
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Implications for Saltford and Rural Communities

The findings are particularly significant for Saltford because Wedmore Road car park was specifically identified as a proposed location for a community EV charging hub.

For more than three years, SPC sought updates regarding the project and consistently expressed support for the installation.

The information now available indicates that:

- The proposed Saltford charging hub was never delivered.
- No GRF funding was spent on delivering charging infrastructure in Saltford.
- No publicly accessible rural charging hubs were delivered anywhere in B&NES through this funding programme.
- Opportunities to utilise almost £1 million of allocated funding were not realised.

More broadly, the findings indicate that a significant publicly funded programme intended to improve EV charging provision in rural communities did not result in the delivery of any publicly accessible charging infrastructure within Bath & North East Somerset.

Key Questions Arising from the FOI Responses

The information received raises a number of important questions which SPC believes warrant further investigation by Ward Councillors and B&NES Council.

These include:

1. Why was delivery of the programme so heavily dependent upon a single delivery model associated with the Revive Network?
2. When issues first emerged, what actions were taken to identify alternative suppliers or delivery mechanisms?

3. Why were Parish and Town Councils in B&NES, including SPC, not informed of the programme's difficulties?
4. What steps were taken by B&NES Council to protect the funding allocation and maximise delivery of charging infrastructure?
5. What are B&NES Council's current plans for public EV charging infrastructure at Wedmore Road car park and elsewhere in rural communities?
6. Will Saltford remain under consideration for future EV charging infrastructure through alternative funding programmes such as LEVI? What updates are available on future schemes?

Recommendations

SPC recommends that Ward Councillors seek further clarification from B&NES Council regarding:

- The specific issues that affected the Revive Network delivery model.
- Why alternative delivery arrangements were not implemented.
- Whether any extension, amendment or replacement funding arrangements have been agreed with WECA.
- The status of the remaining £243,485 funding allocation.
- Whether Saltford remains a priority location for future EV charging infrastructure.
- The potential use of LEVI or other funding programmes to deliver public EV charging infrastructure in rural communities.
- Lessons learned from the programme and measures introduced to prevent similar outcomes in future.

SPC further recommends that B&NES Council provide a public update on its future strategy for rural EV charging infrastructure and identify any locations being considered for future investment.

Conclusions

The FOI responses provide a clear picture of the outcome of the Green Recovery Fund EV charging programme within Bath & North East Somerset.

WECA had allocated £932,813 to B&NES Council to deliver on-street charging, community charging hubs and destination charging facilities. The programme included

defined milestones and opportunities to claim funding across the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

However, B&NES Council has confirmed that no publicly accessible rural EV charging infrastructure was delivered using this funding, no funding was spent or allocated, and no claims were submitted to WECA.

The programme did not progress as anticipated due to issues associated with the Revive Network delivery model, and no alternative use for the funding was identified.

For Saltford residents, this means that the proposed EV charging hub at Wedmore Road car park was not delivered despite several years of expectation, engagement and support from the Parish Council.

SPC welcomes the transparency provided through the FOI process but considers that significant questions remain regarding project management, communication, delivery decisions and the future of EV charging provision in rural communities across Bath & North East Somerset.

The Parish Council therefore requests that B&NES Council's Saltford Ward Councillors seek further clarification from B&NES Council on the matters identified in this report and continue to press for a clear strategy and timetable for future EV charging provision in Saltford and other rural communities.

A copy of this report will be made available on SPC's website.

Resolved - September 2026