Essex Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy

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Logistics UK's key asks

- Power supply. There is to be transparency on accessible grid capacity and a common service agreement amongst DNOs for connections. In times of inflated usage, energy support to manage shocks needs to be made available.
- Ensure the Public ChargePoint Network is accessible for commercial vehicles. More needs to be done to ensure public charging is accessible for commercial vehicles. Logistics operators want assurances that their vehicles can use public chargepoint's to recharge vehicles when required.
- Appropriate special accommodations for commercial vehicles. The public charging network has largely focused on electric cars, resulting in chargepoint spaces that will not accommodate electric vans or trucks. The needs of commercial EV's must be recognised and provided for within the public charging network.
- Significantly accelerated roll out of public charging infrastructure that is fully accessible to commercial vehicles.
- The installation of 'Rapid' and 'Ultra-rapid' DC chargers within close proximity to the Strategic Road Network.
- We urge Essex County Council to encourage implementation of the provisions of the draft regulation at the earliest opportunity.

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, supporting, shaping and standing up for safe and efficient logistics. We are the only organisation representing the entire logistics sector.

We represent a sector delivering an increasingly innovative, productive and sustainable system of essential national infrastructure. This system ensures the availability of the products that households, businesses and public services rely on every day, and is supporting the UK's transformation for the future. Our membership of over 20,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning the road, rail, sea and air industries as well as the buyers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers.

Response to consultation

While the commercial electric vehicle sector is still a small part of the total commercial vehicle parc, uptake is increasing rapidly. For most vans and lighter HGVs battery electric technology will enable operators to meet the decarbonisation challenge in the short to medium term, although some use cases will be harder to electrify in the short to medium term, such as sectors that utilise vehicles 24/7 or where operations are conducted in areas that are off-grid.

Electric van battery technology is developing rapidly to meet the demand for greater payload and mileage range. The smallest car-derived electric van batteries start at 20kWh whilst for an HGV they will require batteries with capacities of up to, or even beyond, 600kWh. To charge these much larger batteries found in HGVs, a greater power supply will be required.

To match this advancement in EV battery technology, a centralised and standardised public chargepoint system operating to high reliability standards providing live availability updates and information about chargepoint space size and suitability for use by large electric vans now and for electric trucks in the future, is required. We note the draft Public Chargepoint Regulations 2023 are currently before parliament covering payment methods, payment roaming, reliability, monitoring and review. However, many elements of this legislation do not come into effect for up to 2 years after the regulations have come into force, and we urge Essex County Council to encourage implementation of the provisions of the draft regulation at the earliest opportunity.

As the phase-out dates for the sales of new non-zero emission tailpipe vehicles approach, which start for petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030, more operators will be seeking to electrify their fleets, meaning that demand will build significantly. There is now much greater recognition by fleet operators of the importance of securing adequate power supply and charging infrastructure, with some operators relocating their logistics sites to ensure better energy supply and greater space for overnight vehicle charging.

Whilst the preference for logistics operators is to charge their EV's at depots, the public chargepoint network is a vital element of electrifying fleets. Most operators will seek to undertake the primary charging at depot to manage costs and maximise operational efficiency. However, use of the public chargepoint network will be necessary to top up batteries to ensure routes are completed, in emergencies and potentially during times of adverse weather which can significantly impact battery range. To give the logistics sector the confidence to invest in zero emission tailpipe vehicles, there must be an immediate uplift in the number of public chargepoints that can be used by battery electric vans, and recognition of the future needs of battery electric trucks. As uptake of EVs of all types accelerates, this situation will become more difficult unless the roll out of public chargepoints increases at pace to match EV acquisition and the needs of commercial EVs are recognised and provided for within the public charging network.

Findings from our Electric Vehicle Report 2023 show that operators have concerns about whether the public chargepoint network is fit for use by commercial vehicles.

Where vans are taken home by the driver and charged off-street overnight on a slow to fast charger, a domestic electricity supply will usually be adequate. Where feasible, operators will arrange for chargepoints to be fitted at the driver's home covering the cost of installation as a company expense, using grants if available.

Drivers who do not have off-street parking will need to use on-street public chargepoints, as long as the space is large enough.

With increased usage of the public chargepoint network expected, it is crucial that the payment process and the cost-per-charge is simple to understand, with clear information and instructions given at the chargepoint. Standardised payment options should be agreed as long as appropriate payment methods for commercial vehicle operators, such as centralised billing and RFID cards, are included in the payment standard and are available as soon as possible at all public chargepoints.

Ellis Shelton
Policy Advisor
Logistics UK
eshelton@logistics.org.uk