Proposals on changes to regulations to support the uptake of zero emission goods vehicles (ZEGVs) in Northern Ireland

Summary

- Logistics UK support increasing the category B ZEGV weight limit from 3,500kg to 4,250kg in NI.
- Logistics UK recommend full alignment with GB policy, including removing the proposed two-year licence requirement.
- Benefits include greater payload capacity, fewer vehicle trips, and reduced barriers to ZEGV uptake.
- Logistics UK recommend the Department for Infrastructure utilise OZEV safety data to inform final decisions.

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, and the only trade association which represents all of logistics. Our mission is to support, shape and stand up for a safe, sustainable and efficient logistics sector. Our membership of more than 22,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning road, rail, waterways, sea and air freight, in ports, airports and warehousing, as well as the customers of freight services such as retailers and manufacturers. We deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policymakers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole, right across the country.

The logistics sector

Nothing moves without logistics. The sector employs 8% of the UK workforce in good jobs with strong career progression, contributes £170 billion in GVA each year, and underpins the resilience of the everyday economy.

Logistics plans and coordinates the movement and storage of the goods that businesses, public services and households rely on – using ports, airports, roads, railways, waterways, warehouses and smart digital systems to tie it all together.

With the right policies, logistics can drive up UK growth by £8 billion a year.[1] However, rising costs, red tape and poor infrastructure are holding the sector back – putting firms out of business, fuelling inflation, and undermining productivity and supply chain resilience. As a result, the UK has fallen from 4th to 19th in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index over the decade to 2023.

Consultation response

Q1– Do you agree with our proposal to increase the weight limit of ZEGVs that can be driven on a category B driving licence from 3,500kg to 4,250kg, in Northern Ireland?

Yes

Q2 – Do you agree that the proposed change should apply only to drivers who have held their full category B driving licence for at least two years?

[1] Logistics Delivering a solution to the UK's productivity puzzle, Oxford Economics, 2023

No, members believe the proposals should align with GB requirements.

Q4 Should the proposed changes be applied to all ZEGVs?

Yes

Q7 Should a category B licence holder who is operating a ZEGV weighing between 3,500kg and 4,250kg, be allowed to operate a vehicle and trailer combination up to 7,000kg MAM, on passing a B+E test?

Yes, as this would align with current GB policy.

Q8 Can you explain and quantify any advantages and disadvantages (e.g. economic, environmental, safety) of allowing ZEGVs weighing between 3,500kg and 4,250kg to tow a trailer?

This allows for greater payload capacity and therefore better operational efficiency and in turn supports the uptake of ZEGV by avoiding the need for different licensing requirements. Ultimately, vehicles which are able to carry a heavier load, reduces the number of vehicles needed on the road at any given time.

Safety should always be prioritised, especially in light of potential increases in stopping distances for heavier vehicles.

Q9 Is there any relevant data or research in relation to the impact of ZEGVs on road safety that the Department should take into consideration?

Yes – the Department should obtain data from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles