

Written evidence submitted by ChargeUK (EVS0015)

Introduction

ChargeUK is the voice of the UK's electric vehicle (EV) charging industry. Our 40+ members are the companies that install and operate the UK's charging infrastructure. Together they play a central role in delivering the Government's mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower.

We welcome the opportunity to present our written evidence to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into progress with the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. We also welcomed the National Audit Office (NAO)'s recent report "Public chargepoints for electric vehicles", which recognised the strong growth in public charging infrastructure across the UK and concluded that "the number of public chargepoints being installed is on track to meet the 300,000 chargepoints that DfT estimated is the minimum needed by 2030."

The pace of rollout has indeed been remarkable in the last 18-24 months. Almost one in three public chargepoints was installed in the last year alone, demonstrating the industry's significant and accelerating investment in Britain's charging network. According to analysis ChargeUK published in July 2024 – [Powering Ahead to 2030](#) - a new chargepoint is being installed every 26 minutes and the total network now provides 6.87GW of charging capacity – enough to power every EV in the country for 580 miles each day, far exceeding typical daily journey requirements.

While public sector funding has played important role, the bulk of this rollout has been funded by private sector investment. When ChargeUK launched in April 2023, our members committed to spend £6bn through to 2030. This unprecedented private sector investment has been made possible by a clear policy framework, in particular the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate, in addition to the 2022 EV Infrastructure Strategy.

The charging sector's ability to stay on track for a minimum of 300,000 public chargepoints by 2030 rests on this policy framework remaining stable and its ability to:

- Maximise the impact of private and public investment
- Remove barriers to deployment and commercial viability
- Make owning and charging an EV as easy and affordable as possible

This submission briefly highlights progress made and actions required in each of these three areas. ChargeUK is happy to discuss these points further with the Committee in a private briefing or via an oral evidence session.

1. Private and public investment

The ZEV mandate

The **Zero Emission Vehicle mandate**, which came into force in January 2024 via the Vehicle Emission Trading Schemes and sets out EV sales quotas for car and van manufacturers, is the single most important policy intervention supporting private investment into charging infrastructure. This is because it provides Charge Point Operators (CPOs) with the confidence to continue making substantial long-term investments in charging infrastructure at a stage in the market when demand is still in its early phase and operators are yet to be profitable.

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Details of the mandate are currently being consulted on against a backdrop of significant pressure from some car manufacturers to weaken the mandate. Our message to Government in our response will be simple: any dilution of these targets – either at a headline level or through substantial changes to the mandate’s existing flexibilities, so that the trajectory of fully electric vehicle sales is slowed or altered – will undermine investor confidence and subsequently result in a slowdown in deployment just at the point when the rollout needs to accelerate yet faster.

Public subsidy

As a key plank of the EV Infrastructure Strategy, the previous Government committed £1bn+ to support roll out of charging infrastructure via two main Funds – the Local EV Infrastructure Fund (LEVI) and the Rapid Charging Fund (RCF). Both these funds have experienced significant challenges, and in many respects progress on rollout in recent years has been achieved despite these funds, rather than because of them.

The **Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)** fund aims to accelerate deployment at a local level, by providing all Local Authorities (LAs) in England with Capital Funding with which to procure low power charging, that typically supports households that cannot charge at home. LEVI also provides LAs with Capability Funding to recruit and train EV managers.

The second of these two aims has largely been met, with LAs now much better equipped to procure and manage charging. However, the first has experienced very significant delays, to the extent that the rollout of low power charging has been suppressed by LEVI rather than accelerated, with LAs holding off issuing tenders while they waited for LEVI funding. Without a ready supply of public procurements, CPOs in this part of the market – who had readied themselves to deploy at pace and scale – have experienced a frustrating 18-24 months as they have not been able to deploy as much on-street charging as they would have liked and is required.

The reasons for this are complex, but include the fact that it took much longer than expected to agree the criteria of the Fund and then for LAs to submit project plans that met those criteria, as well as challenges to the procurement routes available to LAs, with the legality of the popular Oxford DPS framework being called into question mid 2024, just as many LAs were planning to launch tenders through that route.

In early 2025, tenders are now starting to flow to the market but we now face the opposite challenge of a market flooded with procurements in one deluge. Key to the success of LEVI going forward will be communication between OZEV, LAs and the charging sector to manage the flow of procurements, so that each tender attracts a competitive number of high quality bids, and then removal of deployment barriers (as per below) so that contracts, once awarded, can be converted into live charge points as soon as possible.

While the Capability Fund has been relatively successful, because of delays to the Capital Fund, there is also the risk that funding for newly trained EV managers will run out before LAs complete their procurements. Extension of Capability Funding is therefore required to maximise the impact of LEVI.

While LEVI is beginning to move forward, the status of the **Rapid Charging Fund (RCF)**, four years after it was first announced, remains unclear. It is stuck at the pilot phase and several months have now passed with limited updates on the fund's status, creating unhelpful

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uncertainty. We would urge the Government to provide clear direction on the status of the fund, to allow the industry to plan investments with confidence.

In the Autumn Budget 2024, the new Government announced that £200m had been made available for charging infrastructure. We have not been informed about how this funding will be used. Well designed and timely subsidy interventions, that support rather than displace or slow down private investment is crucial to make best use of any public investment and so we are looking to Government to clarify its intentions for this funding as soon as possible in 2025.

2. Removing barriers

In November 2023, ChargeUK published [“Accelerating the Installation of Public Charging Infrastructure”](#) which set out the barriers that CPOs face in deploying infrastructure and the impact this has on pace of rollout. While the sector is deploying at record pace, these barriers need to be addressed for the sector to stay on track for 2030 and to maximise the impact of public and private investment.

Recent government announcements show welcome recognition of these barriers. In December 2024, the Government announced three significant changes:

1. Reforms to **streetworks** processes to allow CPOs to access the Street Manager system that is already used by utilities companies, allowing them to use permits rather than licenses. This will mark a significant departure from the current cumbersome licensing system and will be of particular use to CPOs in the on-street space.
2. Changes to **Permitted Development Rights** will give operators much greater flexibility when installing upstands, outlets and equipment housing – essential supporting infrastructure that is currently subject to a range of planning barriers.
3. A review of **grid connections** that sets out clear actions for both network operators and chargepoint operators to accelerate connections, with welcome oversight from government and Ofgem to ensure delivery. This oversight will be crucial to maintaining momentum on connection improvements.

These announcements are strongly welcomed by ChargeUK as clear progress against the EV Infrastructure Strategy and have the potential to lead to an acceleration in the deployment of charging infrastructure. Each announcement requires further steps, however, and so we would urge the Government to ensure that they are followed through as rapidly as possible, to ensure that the benefits are realised. The Government should act with similar urgency to deliver its recent proposals to improve the quality of service offered by grid operators¹, and to require local transport authorities to develop EV charging strategies². Both of these would help deliver better coordination and collaboration between CPOs and their key stakeholders.

In addition to addressing these regulatory barriers to deployment, the extension of the **Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO)** to include renewable electricity used for EV charging could help address some of the commercial barriers. This would be particularly valuable in areas where lower current electric vehicle adoption makes the business case for

¹ Ofgem’s end-to-end connections review sets out a range of ambitious proposals to require DNOs to provide clearer information and a more consistent, high-quality standard of service to connections customers.

² English Devolution White Paper sets out a new expectation on all Local Transport Authorities to develop an electric vehicle chargepoint strategy.

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charging infrastructure more challenging. Allowing CPOs to generate renewable energy credits through EV charging would offer a crucial new revenue stream, which would bolster the business case for further network expansion throughout the UK.

This approach has a strong track record in equivalent schemes in France, Germany and the Netherlands, and will soon be rolled out across all EU countries following recent changes to the EU's Renewable Energy Directive. Extending the RTFO would ensure that the UK remains competitive with its neighbours and ensure that it continues to be an attractive place to invest in charging infrastructure. Finally – and crucially – the extension of the RTFO would come at no additional cost to the Treasury; the scheme operates as a market-based mechanism, with credits traded between suppliers.

3. Ensuring an easy and affordable charging experience

The public charging experience is critical for building consumer confidence and accelerating EV uptake. Our members, who operate charging networks across the UK, are fully committed to the **Public Charge Point Regulations** which came into force in November 2023 and November 2024, and set new standards for reliability, payment methods, and pricing transparency.

Clearly, **affordability** is a key driver of a positive charging experience. The competitive nature of the emerging EV charging sector naturally drives operators to develop affordable pricing models. However, several external factors continue to challenge the costs incurred by CPOs:

- The disparity in **VAT rates** between public charging (20%) and home charging (5%) creates an artificial barrier for drivers without access to off-street parking. This particularly impacts lower-income households, who the Independent Review of Net Zero identified as being 50% less likely to have garage or off-street parking access.
- Escalating **standing and capacity charges** have seen increases exceeding 1000% for some sites over the past three years, with further increases anticipated from April 2025. This poses particular challenges for rapid charging hubs, which incur the highest charges.
- The exclusion of EV charging from the **RTFO** framework places UK operators at a competitive disadvantage compared to European counterparts, denying them of a revenue stream worth [€0.03-10 per kWh](#) to CPOs on the continent.
- Finally, the UK's **electricity costs** remain among Europe's highest, continuing to exceed pre-energy crisis levels despite reductions from 2022 peaks. This places further pressure on operating costs, which ultimately have to be passed onto customers.

Government intervention to address these challenges would help to ease pressures on operators' rising costs, ultimately making it more attractive for us to invest in even more infrastructure over the coming years.

We are also actively engaged in discussions around charging **accessibility**, including participating in the ongoing review of PAS 1899, the BSI's voluntary specification for accessible public charging. While making charging work for all users presents complex challenges, it is important that we offer a positive experience to drivers with different needs. We are working constructively with government, disability organisations and other stakeholders to understand and address these issues effectively.

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Finally, we believe that clearer **signage** would play an important role, both by helping existing EV drivers to find suitable chargepoints and by indicating to would-be EV drivers that charging infrastructure is widely available. Unfortunately, red tape continues to make the installation of signage more difficult than necessary, and we are urging the Government to intervene to resolve this as a priority.