



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
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To whom it may concern,

Meeting the UK's target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 is a priority for this Government. The switch to zero and ultra-low emission vehicles is a vital part of meeting this goal and, as you are aware, we are currently consulting on bringing forward an end to the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible.

I am clear that meeting these ambitious goals requires an extensive electric vehicle charging network across the UK that inspires public confidence.

Drivers expect to be able to charge their vehicles in a straightforward manner and, while there has been good work in this area, progress across the board is not keeping pace with consumer needs. Therefore, as announced by the Secretary of State on 9 May, I am writing to inform you that I intend to consult on improving the consumer experience of using chargepoints through regulations for the following areas.

Debit/credit card payment

In July last year, the previous Government announced that all newly installed rapid and higher powered chargepoints should provide debit or credit card payment from April 2020. It also signalled that it expected industry to develop a roaming solution across the charging network. While I acknowledge the good progress that has been made in this area, I would like to see operators go further and provide debit/credit card payment at all new public chargepoints. I am aware that roaming is widespread on the continent where drivers can travel through multiple countries and charge easily. Ultimately all rapid chargepoints, old and new, must be as easy to use as paying for petrol is today where downloading an app or joining a scheme smartcard is not a pre-requisite for access.

Data availability

EV drivers also need to know where chargepoints are located and whether they are in use or out of service. As recommended by the Electric Vehicle Energy Taskforce, facilitating the use of open data for new apps to help passengers and drivers plan journeys, and to reduce congestion and pollution, is key to improving the consumer experience. As you know, Government is looking at how to make both static and dynamic data about all public chargepoints openly available in a standard format for the first time. I have tasked the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to engage with stakeholders to develop and test options for making data openly available and I expect industry to fully engage with this process while we develop a policy option.

Reliability

We are aware that a significant number of chargepoints are out of action at any one time. This compares with the 99% availability delivered by networks in the Netherlands. Drivers in the UK should expect reliability from the public network. Having a significant number of public chargepoints out of action is frustrating and inconvenient for drivers and, in some cases, can put their safety at risk.

Pricing Transparency

We are also aware that there is no consistent pricing approach to public chargepoints where operators are charging for: the electricity drawn (p/kWh); the time spent charging (e.g. p/minute or £ per 30 min/hour); and subscription and connection fees. This is a confusing landscape and makes it difficult for drivers to compare the costs of charging between different public charging networks. Therefore, I would like to see all operators charging for the electricity they provide in p/kWh, commensurate with how drivers are charged to re-fuel conventional vehicles today.

I would like to understand what steps you may be taking to improve the consumer experience when using the public charging network and identify any barriers that may be preventing progress. Therefore, I invite you to respond to this letter with more detailed written evidence within 21 days to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. Please respond to the following email address: consumerofferconsult@olev.gov.uk.

I look forward to engaging with you further on these matters.

Yours faithfully



RACHEL MACLEAN

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT