LESS KERBSIDE Pollution

MORE KERBSIDE CHARGEPOINTS

The Kerbside Taskforce

A coalition of organisations led by TRL keen to stimulate a debate about the need for a fresh look at the issues surrounding use of the kerbside.



Clean kerbside: clean air

By Neil Isaacson, Liberty Charge CEO

We need to decarbonise transport and we need to do it quickly, if we are to achieve Clean Air targets and protect our health and environment.

The switch from petrol and diesel to electric vehicles (EVs) is how we will decarbonise transport – in conjunction with reducing overall vehicle use by encouraging walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport.

There has been some debate as to whether EVs will improve air quality due to particle emissions from non-exhaust sources, such as tyres and brakes. The evidence points to concerns being wildly exaggerated.

While it is true that particle pollution comes from tyrewear in all vehicles, there is no evidence to suggest this is any greater in an EV compared with a 'traditional' vehicle. More importantly, EVs create none of the toxic exhaust emissions of their petrol and diesel counterparts, including nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons.

A paper published from Environment International by <u>Harvard University</u> concludes that the public health benefits of reducing air pollution are significant, especially so in urban areas. The paper recognises that research on the health benefits of moving to electric vehicles is limited, but states that the average petrol and diesel emissions across the US account for 65 deaths per 10,000 miles travelled. This is echoed by Transport & Environment's European Clean Transport group that asserts petrol and diesel car emissions cause tens of thousands of unnecessary, premature deaths each year.

The UK Government has acted to reduce air pollution through its commitment to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles in 2030. It also declared earlier this year that 'the roll-out of the charging network is the single biggest challenge to the decarbonisation of transport'.

And we whole-heartedly agree. The mass adoption of electric vehicles relies on safe and convenient electric vehicle charging infrastructure that is accessible to all. In the UK, however, we are still a long way off achieving that. Indeed, how do we achieve nationwide accessibility when 11 million households do not have access to a driveway to charge from home or have the means to privately charge their car?

The Government's ambition is an infrastructure of at least 300,000 EV charge points by 2030, but we have achieved little more than 12% of that goal so far, and the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) says we have to more than quadruple the speed and scale at which we roll out charging infrastructure if we are to meet continued demand.





EV roll-out barriers

Local authorities have the unenviable task of accelerating the roll-out of public charging infrastructure. They are faced with a multitude of challenges from resident reticence, funding, power supplies, regulations and access to guidance and support in what is a new and complex market.

We commissioned a significant piece of research that sought to uncover how far down the road local authorities in the UK are in their EV infrastructure roll-out plans, and what is hampering progress. The resulting Local Authority Insight Report concluded that just one third of local authorities have a formal EV infrastructure strategy in place, and only 14% had a dedicated resource to manage and implement that strategy.

This simply must change if we are to accelerate the roll-out at a scale and pace that matches increasing EV demand and inspires consumer confidence to make the switch to sustainable transport.

Accelerating the change

To make real progress, the report recommends the urgent need to increase funding to recruit full-time local authority staff dedicated to the EV infrastructure cause. The Government has apportioned £50 million accordingly, but over the course of the next decade and across nearly 400 local authorities, the total which looks good on paper will in fact fall woefully short.

Furthermore, we believe, and local authorities agree, that the £450 million LEVI (local electric vehicle infrastructure) fund needs to be geographically targeted to areas where private investment is not commercially viable, such as in remote, rural or areas of social deprivation. Otherwise, poorer and rural communities will be left behind.

The tax system also needs reforming to support EV adoption and address current inequities. The Government needs to reduce the VAT on on-street charging from 20% to 5%, to achieve parity with the level of tax levied on those who charge from home.

The challenges are vast and vary considerably across the UK's near-400 local authorities, but there is support and solutions are available. Liberty Charge provides a fully-funded solution at zero-cost to the tax payer, offering all charging speeds and underpinned by dedicated support on location planning, regulations and logistics, as well as the on-going maintenance and upgrade of charge points.

We see it as the private industry's responsibility to help local authorities in providing infrastructure that inspires consumer confidence in EV adoption. It is this confidence that will move the needle in decarbonising transport and ultimately deliver clean air for all.



The Author

Neil Isaacson CEO of Liberty Charge

Neil has been CEO of Liberty Charge since it was created in 2020. Prior to that he worked in senior roles at Liberty Global and Drax Group, which re-energised his passion for addressing climate change including through enabling the uptake of Electric Vehicles. Neil's experience lies in helping companies rapidly bring to market new products, services and propositions that help to transform performance. He has worked across the Middle East, Europe and the UK and with companies including Accenture, BT and News International.



Each member of the Kerbside Taskforce will be contributing an article to set out their views from their unique perspective.