

## **Response to Electric Vehicles Question from the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council**

*Q. what the Government could do to better support local authorities in developing the electric vehicle agenda.*

Local Authorities would be assisted in developing the provision of electric vehicle charge points if the National Planning Policy Framework gave a stronger steer to local authorities to support them in writing policies in their Local Plans to require electric vehicle charging points to be required in new development. At present the wording refers to air quality mitigation but does not specifically mention electric vehicle charging points. This means that we have to prove that the installation of them in new development is viable – with developers arguing that it is too costly for them. This then creates challenges of affordability as the cost to include such provision during development is much less than having to retro-fit the infrastructure.

Grants to local authorities for installation of charge points could also be reviewed with consideration of extending grant availability to the private sector. Typically electric vehicle users have indicated preference for charge points to be located at locations that offer a range of facilities – such as refreshments, restrooms and shopping. These locations are often owned and operated commercially and are not on land owned or managed by local authorities. If such land owners were able to access funding to install rapid charge points that would be operated on a commercial basis at the sites preferred by vehicle owners, there would be less requirement for Local Authorities to plug this gap, leaving them able to resource other low-emission projects and modal shift programmes.

Further, there remain concerns about the availability, in number, of electric vehicles. As a Local Authority we are seeking to increase the size of our electric vehicle fleet considerably, but the supply of vehicles creates a barrier to this. The government needs to issue a clear signal to vehicle manufacturers through policy - not statements of ambition - that electric vehicles should be the fleet manager's first choice, so that production and supply supports demand, rather than stifles it. At present it is challenging for local authorities to promote electric vehicles when we have uncertainty that businesses will be able to access them on the open market.

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