

## Planning and Infrastructure Bill – 2nd reading briefing on EV measures

### About the Planning and Infrastructure Bill

This briefing has been circulated on behalf of organisations who share an interest in increasing electric vehicle charging availability, giving more drivers the confidence to go electric. Our briefing relates to the part of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that covers EV infrastructure. We welcome the measures introduced by clause 43, which help to accelerate the installation of public EV charge points by removing the need for licences and allowing chargepoint installations to instead be authorised by permits, a much simpler process.

However, public EV charge points are the most expensive way for drivers to charge. The absence of other planning and infrastructure measures to help more drivers charge at home creates an unfair two-tier system for car owners without off-street parking, jeopardising the success of the switch to electric vehicles. There are a range of solutions that will enable more drivers to access easier and cheaper charging, and this Bill is an opportunity to help promote them, at zero cost to the taxpayer and business.

### Costs of home and public charging

The 60%+ of consumers with off-street parking are able to install a home charger and access cheap EV and overnight tariffs typically at 7p per kilowatt hour, fully charging their EV for around £5. [90% of households with off-street parking will save by buying an EV in 2025](#). An [average UK motorist can save £700 a year in fuel costs](#) by switching to an electric car – if they can access electric vehicle charging at domestic electricity rates.

In contrast, drivers without off-street parking rely on [public charging at 52-80p per kilowatt hour](#), 7-10 times more. [40% of households without off-street parking buying an EV in 2025 would have saved by sticking with petrol](#).

The [price of many public EV chargers are rising, not falling](#), principally as a result of changes to the way daily standing charges are calculated. Unless tackled urgently, the cost difference will prove an insurmountable barrier to EV take-up amongst motorists who don't have driveways.

### Cross pavement solutions and permitted development

**Benefits of cross-pavement solutions** – As well as measures outside the scope of this Bill, (including cutting the rate of VAT on public charging and standing charge reform), a low cost solution for drivers who can park outside their house from time to time are [“cross pavement solutions”](#) – for example a covered gully for a charging cable which can be fitted in 1-2 hours – and allow an EV owner to charge their car off their domestic energy supply whilst parked on the street. It can be achieved safely without trip hazards and is [in use or being trialled by 38 councils](#).

Rather than relying entirely on the rollout of a whole new network of street infrastructure, cross-pavement solutions lower the cost of the transition by utilising the existing network of domestic electricity supplies.

**The cost of bureaucracy (1) – Street works** – Before such solutions – for example a strip less than 1 inch wide – can be installed, they must obtain a “street works licence” from the principal local authority under section 50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 which can cost from £500 to almost £3000. Gas and electricity companies carrying out much more disruptive street works are able to use a much lower cost permitting system, as will in future – thanks to clause 43 of this Bill – public charge point operators. However cross-pavement solutions cannot.

**The cost of bureaucracy (2) – Planning permission** – Despite their silent operation, lack of odour and [unobtrusive scale](#) (many chargers are less than a foot square at the front and less than 6 inches deep), [home chargers require planning permission](#) where they face onto and are within 2 metres of the pavement (in all areas, not just conservation zones). This must be sought from the planning authority, which means that in 2 tier local authorities, prospective EV buyers may find they are permitted to install a gully to convey the electricity to their car but are barred from installing a charger to supply it.

Political commentator Andrew Hunter Murray has likened this process to “[amputating your leg every time you want to cut your toenails](#)” – we agree!

**What Government has done** – It has published [guidance on cross-pavement solutions](#) but this does not simplify any requirements relating to street works and does not require local authorities to permit cross-pavement solutions. The [Sunak administration consulted on extending permitted development to](#) all home chargers more than 1 year ago but Government has yet to respond.

## The right to charge

**The worst rights in Europe** – For the 10–15% of drivers in multi-occupancy blocks and those renting or even leasing, [the UK has the worst legislative provision out of the 6 largest markets in Europe](#). This includes no legal provision regulating the installation of charging points in private environments – all stakeholders, including tenants, landlords, leaseholders and freeholders need to approve the project. No justification is needed to oppose a project, with no legal deadlines or standardised procedures to respond – and no obligation to even answer a request.

There is substantial anecdotal evidence of many landlords and freeholders simply refusing permission to tenants and leaseholders to install chargepoints, even when they offer to pay the upfront costs. Drivers should be able to install home charge points, where reasonable and at a fair price, wherever they live.

**What Government has done** – The Johnson administration made welcome [changes to legislation in 2021](#) to require that new homes, as well as residential buildings undergoing major renovation with more than 10 parking spaces to have at least one EV charge point per dwelling. However no other changes have been made or even consulted since that date.

## Charge point accessibility

**Many charge points are not accessible** – many chargepoints are installed on plinths or high kerbs surrounded by bollards, and have no system for managing cables to assist disabled drivers when connecting cables to vehicle charging sockets. Government should ensure it has the necessary information-gathering powers to monitor compliance with PAS1899 (see below) and backstop powers to make it mandatory where appropriate.

**What Government has done** – The British Standards Institute [Guidance on accessible charging \(PAS 1899\)](#), introduced in 2022, provides good practice guidance for making chargepoints accessible, but these standards are not currently mandatory for any public charge points and [not a single chargepoint installed since the guidance was in place is compliant with the standard](#). [Government is currently working with industry and disability groups to review the standard](#), but has not yet announced either any timescale for moving towards reviewing compliance with the current or revised standard, let alone making them mandatory.

## Suggested interventions

- This Bill contains welcome measures to make it easier for public charge point operators to install new sockets. Electric vehicles are key to achieving the government's economic growth and clean power missions. Can I encourage the Secretary of State to go further and look at measures to make it easier to install home chargers – by ending the ridiculous rules that require planning permission for a small EV home charger when it is within 2 metres of the road, and supporting a right to charge for all home-owners, tenants and leaseholders?
- I welcome the steps that the Secretary of State is taking to support the roll-out of the UK's rapidly expanding public electric vehicle charging network. Would she be willing to consider proposals to go further, and extend street works permitting to cross-pavement solutions, rather than await a future Bill, which might be 2 or more years away?
- This Bill contains welcome measures to remove barriers to economic growth and development, including the bureaucracy that stands in the way of new public electric vehicle chargers. Will the Secretary of State look at proposals to remove planning constraints on home chargepoints so that consumers outside conservation zones are freely able to put noiseless, odourless and unobtrusive installations – smaller than a shoebox – on the front of their homes alongside a cross-pavement solution approved by the Local Highways authority?
- I welcome the measures in this Bill to support the installation of more public electric vehicle charging. But these charge points often have the highest electricity prices. Meanwhile many motorists who rent their homes are barred by their landlords from installing home chargers, even at their own expense, as are leaseholders by their freeholders. Will the Secretary of State commit to support renters by looking at proposals for a right to charge?
- The Secretary of State has outlined how this Bill supports economic growth. One of the biggest growth opportunities is net zero, and motorists can save hundreds of pounds by switching to an EV – if they can charge at home on domestic electricity rates. The measures to promote more public charging are welcome, but without further reform, how does the Government plan to make it financially attractive or even just viable for the 8m households without off-street parking to switch to EVs?
- Can I ask why the Secretary of State decided not to include measures to make it easier for motorists to charge electric vehicles at home? What assessment of the costs to consumers and taxpayers has Government made of restricting access to cross-pavement solutions and limiting the right of homeowners, tenants and leaseholders to charge?
- If everyone is to switch, everyone will need to have a reasonable expectation of being able to turn up at a public charge point and plug in. However many charge points are inaccessible to people with disabilities. Government's work on accessibility standards is welcome, but these are purely voluntary. Does Government have the legal powers to request information from charge point operators on accessibility? Does it have powers to make accessibility standards mandatory? And does it have any timescale over which it will decide whether to use those powers?

## About our organisations



[EVA England](#) is a membership organisation supporting existing and prospective EV drivers, and championing policies that accelerate EV adoption. Our mission is to make England a better place for EV drivers by advocating on their behalf to the Government, local authorities, industry and media.

Dr Vicky Edmonds, Chief Executive, EVA England,

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[Kerbo Charge](#) is a provider of award winning through-pavement channel solutions that residents use to charge safely at home. It is now live with 25 local authorities, and is in trials with 13 more.

Ben Whitaker, Chief Technical Officer, Kerbo Charge,

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[New AutoMotive](#) is a think tank and data consultancy which works to increase the pace of the clean energy transition in road transport. We use analysis to inform the public and influence policy development, publishing regular data and research on the switch to electric and what government needs to do to make this happen.

Ben Nelmes, Chief Executive, New AutoMotive, [ben@newautomotive.org](mailto:ben@newautomotive.org).



[Octopus Electric Vehicles](#) – part of the Octopus Energy Group – has a mission to help more people get behind the wheel of an EV. We offer electric vehicle leasing packages for personal, business and salary sacrifice. Customers' monthly bills cover the car, tyres, servicing, repair, breakdown assistance – everything they need to take to the road. The offer also includes the smartest, greenest and cheapest home/public charging solution.

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[The REA](#) is a not-for-profit trade association, established in 2001. It is a coalition built to be the voice for renewable energy and clean technology in the UK. We are the largest renewable energy and associated clean technology body in the UK, with around 500 member organisations representing every type of renewable energy.

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