

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Gwefru cerbydau trydan yng Nghymru/ Electric vehicle charging in Wales
Ymateb gan Richard Burrows / Evidence from Richard Burrows

I am a business owner based in Newtown, Powys, Mid Wales and we have run electric vans now for the past 3 years. I am a keen EV advocate and campaigner for EV charging infrastructure in Mid Wales.

To understand the current charging infrastructure in Wales, and to what extent it is fit for purpose;

The current infrastructure in Wales especially Mid Wales is currently non-existent. Zap Map states there are hundreds of 'fast' charging points UK wide, however this is not entirely the truth. Most of these EV charging points are not easily accessible to the public (attached to people's houses or to the sides of B&B's in closed and privately owned car parks) so certainly not what I would classify as 'public access' charging infrastructure. The current realisation is that there is very little ways an electric vehicle owner can charge in Mid Wales and it is certainly not fit for purpose by the very nature that it would take hours to get across Wales. I think anyone trying to travel from North to South Wales currently in a 24kWh electric vehicle will find the journey currently impossible by normal vehicle driving standards.

How the infrastructure needs to develop to support an increase in EVs on our roads. How the Welsh Government, private sector and third sector can work together to develop EV charging infrastructure;

There is an urgent need for some key Rapid Charging infrastructure along the main North to South Wales roads – I would suggest approximately every 40 miles. This needs to be developed with local communities and councils so the longer term monies produced by this (as EV's become more popular) are put directly back into the local communities rather than into the pockets of major network operators who will export the money outside of Wales and potentially obtain a monopoly of key EV charging locations to slow the take-up and rate of EV growth in Wales. As an independent business owner I appreciate how important it is to keep money locally and prevent larger organisations exporting money out of Wales, although bringing in larger organisations initially can get things done quicker, the longer term effects are that Wales does not benefit from the new interest in EV's.

Whether the electricity grid in Wales is able to deal with a significant increase in EV infrastructure, particularly in rural areas;

This is an interesting remark. The electricity grid could in fact be helped by the uptake of EV's. Technology such as Vehicle To Grid (V2G) and Smart Metering could mean that EV's can charge during periods excess and particularly 'green' electrical generation and then EV's can themselves give energy back to the grid during times of peak demand when say wind is at its lowest. This can be a major benefit to balancing the electrical grid, especially in areas or rural communities.

To explore the potential for electric vehicles to promote behaviour change, for example in terms of vehicle ownership and car sharing initiatives;

We have been looking at ways to bring full benefit to local rural communities and car sharing schemes such as local car clubs using EV's could certainly help here in encouraging cheap, clean and sustainable travel. One thing that I take from my own experience is how already there is an EV community being formed with EV owners sharing their own experiences and getting behind the technology. It is inevitable EV's will come to Wales and fuel poverty for people living in rural areas having to travel to town and villages could become a thing of the past if the correct initiatives are put in place.

To what extent the Welsh Government has acted upon the recommendations in the Low Carbon Vehicle Report; and examples of best practice from Wales and further afield.

The Welsh Government to date have done very little to act on the needs of sustainable travel in Wales versus England and Scotland. The allocation of £2m is a drop in the ocean to what is needed when EV's become the norm in 2040. I am aware some county councils have some money allocation for infrastructure to be spent this year and next, but it seems EV owners are not currently deemed as high priority. The current situation can be seen just by looking on Zap Map at the amount of charging infrastructure in Wales versus England & Scotland. Scotland are leading the way with EV schemes and collaborations, although I find not all of them have been thought through 100% especially where the involvement of major EV operators have been allocated who will take money away from Scotland and even the UK.

Absolute best practice for me as a local businessman, would be local installers trained for both installation and repair of EV charging points, installing into community lead EV projects supported by local council, grant funding and WG money. This is both sustainable and directly beneficial to local communities. Failure to implement things this way will fail to bring the full benefit of EV's to suffering and declining businesses in Welsh communities.