An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

zevi Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland

Stakeholder and Public Consultation
Summary Report

June 2022

An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

zevi Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland

Stakeholder and Public Consultation
Summary Report

1. Introduction

The Department of Transport (hereafter referred to as 'the Department') is in the process of developing a national Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Strategy.

The Strategy will serve as a pathway for delivery of electric vehicle (EV) charge point infrastructure to support delivery of the Climate Action Plan ambition of almost a million EVs on Irish roads by 2030, and to ensure that EV charge point infrastructure provision remains ahead of demand.

It considers the different charging needs of urban and rural communities and also takes into account the current trajectory of EV uptake and the increasing demand that will be placed on electricity distribution networks.

The Department published the Draft Strategy at the end of March 2022 and launched a public consultation and stakeholder engagement process in May. The stated aim of the consultation process was to give stakeholders, interested parties and the public an opportunity to give their opinions and ideas on the delivery of electric vehicle (EV) charge point infrastructure such as the preferred locations of chargers and speeds of charging. The views expressed in the consultation will be carefully considered by the Department of Transport before finalising the Strategy in the third quarter of this year.

The public consultation period commenced on the 5th of May and concluded on the 31st of May 2022. Notice of the public consultation was placed on the Department's website as well as through social media and newspaper advertisements. Submissions were invited via the following channels:

- By email to evinfrastructure@transport.gov.ie
- Via an online survey which was published on the Department's website (accessed via the following link: https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/0a579-public-consultation- on-the-electrical-vehicle-charging-infrastructure-strategy/)

In addition to the public consultation exercise, two dedicated virtual stakeholder workshops were held in May 2022. These were aimed at the following key stakeholders:

- Commercial operators, including, amongst others, vehicle manufacturers and retailers, energy suppliers, charge point operators and forecourt retailers.

- Relevant public sector bodies, including Local Authorities.

Both workshops were 3 hours in duration and were chaired by KPMG. Each workshop was also attended by relevant staff from the Department of Transport, who provided a brief presentation on the Draft EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy to contextualise the workshop discussion.

Thereafter, participants were split into a number of thematic breakout rooms to discuss several high-level questions relating to the Draft Strategy. All break out rooms considered three standard questions that were common to all rooms – thus allowing for broad discussion around the Draft Strategy. Following this, a number of thematic questions were posed. Each break out session was led by a dedicated KPMG rapporteur and a supporting note taker. Following each session, all participants re-joined the main session where each rapporteur summarised the key discussion points from their session. This enabled all participants to gain insights into the various thematic discussions. This feedback focused section of the workshop was also attended by the Department of Transport staff.

This document provides a summary overview of the public and stakeholder consultation processes and the key thematic findings stemming from it.

An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

zevi Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland

Public Survey
Facts & Figures

14,124

Individuals responded to the public survey.

3,591

Respondents (25%) indicated that they own a Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV).

67%

Of people said that the primary use of their car was for commuting.

86%

Of respondents said their preferred charging location would be at home.

33%

Of respondents make journeys longer than 300km at least as frequently as once a month.

74%

Of people travel to their place of work by car.

76%

Of people who did not own a BEV but had access to a private parking space saw the absence of a home charger as a deterrent from purchasing a BEV.

67%

Of respondents use their car on a daily basis.

2. Thematic Findings

Both the stakeholder and public consultation exercises produced a range of proposals for the final iteration of the 'Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025'. These are presented in detail in two dedicated reports – one focused on the public consultation process and one on the stakeholder consultation process respectively.

In summary, the following thematic areas were raised across the feedback received:

2.1 Accelerating and enhancing the roll out of EV Charging Infrastructure

Ultimately, there was consensus across the feedback that the Strategy **could be more ambitious and should seek to get ahead of anticipated demand**. The Draft Strategy notes that "the current supply of publicly accessible charge points will likely be adequate for the period out to 2025" (p21). The majority of participants disagreed with this assertion and also queried whether existing charging points are in the right location. **A lack of data on the current numbers of EV chargers on Irish roads and live analysis of availability and queue times were cited as points for consideration.**

There was a clear view that Ireland's rural charging infrastructure is inadequate, with many pointing to the seasonal nature of some rural locations. Specifically, it was felt that some **explicit prioritisation of locations for publicly accessible charge points is required** – particularly for en-route and destination-based charging Many participants suggested that the Strategy should consider the location and placement of chargers in high demand central areas and in locations that already have access to grid infrastructure. Overall, it was clearly felt that **more publicly available chargers are needed to better replicate the experience of travelling and refuelling traditional non-EV vehicles.**

2.2 Promoting Affordability and Incentivisation

It is noted that there are a number of existing grant schemes administrated through various bodies that are aimed at alleviating the cost of EVs and supporting their uptake Yet, the issue of **affordability was cited as a primary barrier to the more widespread adoption of EVs**. The cost of purchasing an EV was described as "***prohibitively expensive***" by some, but others also made reference to consumer concerns over **perceived "*hidden costs*"**. The issue of equitable access to incentives or grants was also raised, with some respondents asserting that home charger grants are only of relevance to those EV owners with particular types of housing. Participants felt that the Strategy should further focus on addressing the **specific needs of apartment dwellers** – an area they feel has not been fully resolved in Ireland.

2.3 Building Awareness and Understanding

Many participants queried the extent of public knowledge and understanding of existing EV charging infrastructure. There is an **"educational piece" missing from the Strategy**, which is needed to realise the aspired uptake, they affirmed. Among the suggestions in this arena is **a national 'one stop shop' or central hub for information on EV charging infrastructure** across the country– including associated mapping resources showing the location and availability of all publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure. Feedback under this theme was strongly linked with that under the "Ensuring Reliability and Ease of Use" theme. Ultimately, it was felt that any incentivisation efforts must be followed by **a national advertising campaign** to encourage the use and promote awareness of the benefits of EVs.

2.4 Ensuring Reliability and Ease of Use

The reliability and ease of use of Ireland's public charging infrastructure was identified as a key issue for the Draft Strategy. A primary concern impacting the perceived ease of use of public chargers was the current array of different charger models and types. **Ensuring that all chargers are compatible with different EV models** should be a key consideration in supporting EV uptake and replicating the user experience of non-EV vehicles, respondents affirmed. Many expressed a strong desire for a **universal payment system** that can be used across different charging operators, **either by way of a single app or a universal card.**

2.5 Managing Energy Demand and Grid Capacity

Many respondents queried the capacity of the national grid to provide electricity to an increasing number of EV users over time and suggested that initiatives to offset increased electricity demand are required. Respondents also suggested that the Strategy should include greater consideration for the source of the electricity that will be used across Ireland's EV network. It was felt that the **Strategy should prioritise the use of renewable energy sources to meet energy demands for charging EV's** in order to reduce costs and achieve a positive sustainable impact.

In addition**, the cost of grid connection was regarded as a primary barrier to the effective delivery of the Strategy**. Accordingly, participants felt that if Government and Local Authorities can subside the initial investment to get power to a given unit or location, commercial markets can subsequently assume operations in the market. An opportunity to "prime the infrastructure while the availability of EV stock is constrained" was also noted.

2.6 Ensuring Clear Roles and Responsibilities

The governance of the Strategy was a key discussion point throughout both workshops. There was strong consensus that a **clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities in the roll out of EV charging infrastructure is required**. In addition, it was felt that Local Authorities should be viewed as an enabler/funder through central government and not an operator/supplier in the market. **Local Authorities don't want to enter into a competitive market with the private market**, some asserted, and this relationship needs to be considered in greater detail.

2.7 Policy Coherence and Joined Up Thinking

Participants welcomed the recognition of the relationship between EV residential chargers, a 'just transition' and sustainable mobility. **However, greater consideration regarding the extent of the 'just transition' within the context of the Draft Strategy would be welcomed**. On one hand, participants noted that it is not equitable if an individual is charged a higher premium to charge their EV if they live in shared accommodation compared to those with a home charger.

In addition, some participants noted that **the Strategy does not clearly demonstrate alignment with existing national policy, such as the Sustainability Mobility Policy (2022) and the Climate Action Plan (2021).**

2.8 Promoting Innovative Solutions

Participant discussion on the topic of co-charging solutions produced a plethora of innovative solutions that could be further developed to improve **residential charging accessibility and uptake**. Participants felt that there might be quick wins for co-charging in other areas such as :

- Utilising existing infrastructure to support EV residential charging (e.g., leveraging public lighting infrastructure)
- Repurposing existing infrastructure to support EV residential charging (e.g., business park car parks, library car parks, etc.)
- Couple sustainability related grants with EV grants (e.g., bundling solar panel grants with EV charging grants, etc.)

2.9 Addressing Varying Charging Needs

A number of submissions stated that commercial vehicles and the logistics sector were not adequately considered under the Strategy. Many workshop participants argued that high mileage commercial vehicles must garner more attention in the Strategy as these are the vehicles **"most likely to make an impact" in terms of climate action**. While the Draft Strategy does refer to catering for "varying charging needs", many participants felt **that the draft does not provide sufficient detail on the varying needs of different vehicle types**. For example, one participant noted that the Climate Action Plan sets the following targets to 2030: 845,000 electric passenger cars; 95,000 electric vans and 1,500 electric buses. Yet, **vans receive "little or no attention" in the draft** as it stands, it was argued. Moreover, there is not yet adequate Government support or grants to achieve the stated target. Ultimately, participants recommended **mapping the different user groups in each sector** as "this will indicate what chargers are needed where".

2.10 Upgrading Commercial Facilities and Pursing a "Hub Model"

Many participants highlighted challenges around the impact of charging solutions on a commercial facility's **Maximum Import Capacity (MIC).** A higher MIC can increase the running costs of a business, participants indicated. Thus, if this is required, participants felt that grants should be made available. It was also suggested that businesses could avail of a hub model used by different fleets all in same area. This could take the form of charging hubs in industrial estates, for example. Ultimately, **EVs are still not currently viewed as the most economical option** for a lot of businesses. A blanket approach to Government supports won't be effective in changing this, many affirmed. Rather, the **Strategy should aim to be sector specific**, showcasing **different use cases**.

Department of Transport
gov.ie/transport

An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport