

10 November 2023

RE: Draft National En-Route EV Charging Network Plan 2023-2030

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 100,000 people throughout the city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to be a world-leading Chamber of Commerce, delivering on a progressive economic, social and sustainability agenda at the heart of a vibrant business community. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals five of which have been identified by the Chambers Ireland network.

The Chamber has examined the strategy and has a series of recommendations and observations that we believe will improve planning and delivery of a comprehensive electric vehicle charging network. We hope the recommendations will contribute to the immensely important task of creating a robust and future-fit Electric Vehicle Charging Network Plan.

We remain available at all times for further consultation and insights from our member businesses.

Yours sincerely,



Conor Healy
CEO

Grid Capacity

It is positive that that plan takes account of the future impacts on the electricity grid of new EV charging infrastructure and potential risks associated with timeline deliveries. Grid development and investment must continue apace to meet the needs of new charging infrastructure. At present, power generation can barely keep up with demand and it is essential that grid capacity does not inhibit the implementation of this plan, thus risking Ireland's ability to meet targets.

It is positive that the Celtic Interconnector Project is progressing, which will be key to avoiding a situation where supply cannot meet demand and enable the grid to achieve a capacity of 80% renewable energy by 2030. Electricity demand is expected to more than double by 2050. Thus, Cork Chamber urges that throughout construction every opportunity be taken to deliver on timelines for this nationally critical piece of infrastructure to properly facilitate the planned increase of EVs on our roads.

Workplace Charging

There is a distinct lack of measures in this plan to provide workplace charging infrastructure. Whether this be a matter for individual employers to manage, or one for Planning Authorities to provide provision for example, a new factory that is given planning permission may be required to have X car parking spaces with Y charging facilities, it should form part of this plan.

Renewable Energy Sources

This strategy is an opportunity to explore ways in which to integrate renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, to power charging stations and enhance sustainability. Cork city has been designated as Climate Neutral Mission City aiming to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, incorporating a sustainable plan to rollout EV charging will be another key step towards reaching our climate goals.

User Accessibility

It is essential that charging stations developed under this plan are user friendly and accessible to all, including those with disabilities. It is also of paramount importance that they are available on 24/7 basis and that secure payment options are available for those who use them.

Public Awareness

If 30% of the private car fleet is to be electrified by 2030, greater awareness of the benefits of EVs is needed. In addition, an awareness campaign should be rolled out following the development of this plan to inform users, and potential users, about the benefits of EVs and the various charging mechanisms and charging locations that are available.

Incentives

In order to encourage users along this journey the current government incentives available must be publicised and enhanced. With this in mind, it is vital that this plan takes into account scope for future growth. If the correct incentives and infrastructure are in place to support the uptake of EVs, demand is likely to increase. It is therefore important to consider emerging technologies in the EV industry to accommodate long-term growth. Data collection and analysis will be key to the successful implementation of this strategy as usage patterns, performance, and the effectiveness of the charging network will determine the uptake and transition to EVs.

Engagement with communities and stakeholders

In order to successfully implement the ambition of this plan, engagement and collaboration with local communities, businesses, utilities and other stakeholders including local authorities will be essential. Engagement prior to, during and after the development of this strategy will ensure long-term success.