OLEV Consultation - Response from the Institution of Engineering and Technology

Consultation description

On 4 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced that government is consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time. This reflects the Independent Committee on Climate Change’s advice on what is needed in order for the UK to end its contribution to climate change by 2050. The proposals relate to new cars and vans - owners of existing petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans will still be able to use these vehicles and buy and sell them on the used market.

Government is therefore seeking views on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, and is asking for views on:

- the phase out date
- the definition of what should be phased out
- barriers to achieving the above proposals
- the impact of these ambitions on different sectors of industry and society
- what measures are required by government and others to achieve the earlier phase out date

Draft Response

The IET supports the aim of bringing forward the date to 2035. There are of course many challenges on transitioning to greater electrification of our transport systems but the IET has focussed on the specific challenges around ensuring a sufficiently robust charging infrastructure and related safety issues and have identified six issues in particular that should be given specific attention.

1. Greater consistency is required from DNOs (Distribution Network Operators) in handling installation issues / requests. There are significant differences in how DNOs deal with installation issues / requests and this has a serious impact on the speed and cost of installations. The Mayor of London launched London’s electric vehicle strategy in the Summer of 2019, which had the buy-in of key stakeholders, including the local DNO. Similar strategies in other areas would be beneficial in driving change forward.

2. As significantly more homes and domestic dwellings are fitted with charging equipment to support the wider use of electric vehicles there is a real need to facilitate and encourage higher quality domestic installations to ensure necessary safety levels.

3. Government funding needs to be reviewed with a greater emphasis on the end user. It is recommended that grants related to charging point installations are simplified and redirected to the end user. Increased funding should be tailored to encourage both private domestic customers and on-street installers to select more advanced charging points that can respond to power demanded by other loads, which would have the advantage of reducing impact on existing networks, giving DNOs more time to deliver upgraded power capability within their networks.
4. As more installations are required to be carried out by electrical contractors, there is a potential skills shortage as regards experienced electrical engineers able to carry out installations to the necessary safety levels.

5. The development of open data standards and platforms should be progressed to ensure that manufacturers, users and public authorities are able to manage the demands for charging and the associated infrastructure effectively, and to ensure that the increasingly rich data that EVs will produce is available to enhance operation of the transport network.

6. A review of the regulatory model of the energy sales and distribution industries should be undertaken to ensure that it is fit for purpose given the challenges presented by our national electric vehicle and energy strategies.

The complexities of the contractual and legislative landscape of the energy and electricity distribution markets present unique challenges for installers and customers alike. This makes managing energy provision, and upgrades to existing installations, potentially very complicated for installers and customers. There are also potential innovative technical solutions to safety provision for electric vehicle charging installations using smart meters, which are rendered impracticable with the existing landscape of energy providers.

31st July 2020