

CHARGE UK STEERING GROUP MEETING MINUTES – 21.03.2023

IJ opens the meeting and invites introductions from new attendees.

- James Moat (evyve)

IJ thanks attendees for joining and the importance of the meeting. Agenda: Update on meeting with Minister Norman; Discussion of letter; Reliability aspect of consumer regulations; critique of impact assessment; Plan for AGM and formalisation of Charge UK.

IJ recaps meetings with Minister Jesse Norman. The first meeting was in response to a letter on Charge UK's formation. We set out the fact that Charge UK wants to play a key role in talking to Government and the Minister welcomed Charge UK's formation. He sees Charge UK as a good partner for delivery, which seems to be a prime focus of his tenure.

DS introduces tactics of the letter. The Consumer Experience Regulations are close to being laid as an SI. It is in final legal and will be published imminently, possibly next week. Their intent is to publish in draft but not consult on it. There are two aspects available to influence: first is around the mandate for contactless payment devices, and we are influencing for a lead time. Second, new CPOs must be installed at or above 7.1kW. Then we can engage on the reliability requirement. They intend to refer to 99% reliability in the SIs and then more detailed work on guidance. We can influence guidance, but need to ensure what is written in legal text isn't too proscriptive. We see this as a last opportunity to engage on the SIs. The Minister wants to tell a positive story about the rollout and a positive consumer experience. If we take him head on, we will use; but if we give him a win it makes it easier to extract what we want.

DS understands that JN wants to see a real increase in pace in commitment and rollout this year, next year and to 2030. We see this as a clear intent to work closely with Government as long as regulations don't present any additional barriers. DS invites questions or issues with this activity and requests that any significant amends to the letter are sent to him directly by 2PM today, including any updates to numbers. We are looking to submit this letter this afternoon. We know the SI is currently with lawyers being finalised. Once lawyers hand it back, it's impossible to change, so we need to get this in before that. They also don't want to be seen as doing a u-Turn. Looking forward to the submission on reliability, we expect the Government to go into a broader process for drafting guidelines so we are showing that we are committed to their objectives and hope that that will enable us to get involved in the drafting.

IJ invites questions on the meetings. Andreas Atkins asked whether non-compliance was discussed. IJ said no; the first meeting was very top-level and only half an hour that didn't get into policy specifics. The roundtable set out grave concerns on ACPI and that we wanted to come back with suggestions. In the past, a few have been told by OZEV that there is "no teeth" in what's being drafted, and the Government don't know yet who would do it and how it would work. We have been asked to trust that nothing serious on enforcement is coming down the line. However 99% is definitely on the table.

Jarrold Birch agrees with IJ's assessment. But he notes that the maximum fine will be stated in the draft SI, which could be £10,000.

DS said that it presents a reputational challenge and therefore a risk to consumer confidence and therefore EV takeup. We need to give the Government a robust methodology that doesn't look like we are marking our own homework.

IJ moves the meeting on in the letter. IJ noted that in the one-on-one meeting, the Minister doesn't appreciate the level of private investment happening and just sees the lag effect due to the pandemic. He asked to see those numbers so that it can back up the consumer regulations.

Vicky Read said that he also wants to link himself to that progress, giving him a useful exit to align with what we are trying to do, and we need to think about what happens with this letter and are prepared for that.

IJ agrees that JN is looking to use Charge UK for his effectiveness, but also that as an industry we have never put these numbers together.

Tanya Sinclair said she saw JN at an Onward roundtable. JN mentioned Charge UK and talked about the levers he has available to him – regulation, subsidies, and TS was left to make the point that chargers are investing. He was concerned that the charging industry can't keep up and consumer experience will get worse before getting better. She suggests that the letter is as punchy as possible and that the media is giving too much of the narratives around problems.

Dan Riley believes that the letter has to have credibility and is wary of overpromising, and that we must be sure of consistency over the data. We also need to caveat that this is our ambition and there are other factors outside of our control. If we are going to give him a figure that they can use as a stick, we need to be clear that it is ambitious and with your help we can do that, as well as strategic points we want to work with the government on.

VR agrees that we are trying to do an important and difficult thing – giving them a get out of jail free card for the immediate worry. But we also must be happy to see it splashed on the Sunday Times and that we will be defending for years. We need to qualify and give some wriggle room.

DS addresses the point on data. He is using more cautious numbers where they exist to avoid over-inflation. While there are some concerns about inflating figure; but we are also not the whole sector, and not everyone has a figure through to 2030, so we are using the numbers we have. If everyone has vastly overegged their numbers, but if numbers are reliable baseline numbers and take non membership into account.

DR is more concerned about the consistency of the type of data being given and that there is no consistency among operators. DS agrees that we will need to develop our own standards, but that he is not using certain numbers because of variability in the numbers he has received. However on investment and individual number of units there is a bigger degree of confidence.

DR and IJ check that connector level and not unit level. VR suggests that we agree what we are measuring and whether the Government will understand it.

TS agrees. She sees numbers as a false flag and measuring something irrelevant to the network and don't reflect reliability and convenience and plays into cars to charger narrative that can make us look bad. Fine to speak the Government's language on 300k, but is there anything else we can provide to prevent making a rod for our own back – investment, jobs, economic contribution?

DR agrees but thinks we're stuck with chargepoint numbers. But when Charge UK launches, we can define our own success measurements.

VR thinks we should push the investment figure to the front and deprioritise the others.

DS agrees that we have to work with the people we are trying to influence. We have frontloaded the investment number, and that can deliver more or fewer chargers depending on the environment. But with this investment, with current regulation, we can deliver this much.

IJ asks for TS and DS to pick up charge point vs connector point. He has asked for organisations to rethink any bullish numbers.

AA asks whether its worth mentioning that international businesses who want to invest in the UK may have more to invest depending on environment.

James Moat sees the chargepoint number issue as linked to reliability. He asks if there's a better example from local authority procurement – such as SLA requirements – that are more relevant.

IJ said that lots of members are doing this with their landlords already. We are suggesting not to do OCPI, here's our alternative, but if it has to be OCPI please do it this way.

James McKemey said that he'd rather deal with bad PR than shit regs.

DS sends a final call for revised numbers or letter edits by 2PM.

Tom Hurst said that he will send lowball numbers; but that megawatts are a much bigger figure.

DS says he also wants to talk about voltage because it is a meaningful number, but that we are not there yet.

Karl Anders said that he has sent CPO number and asks not to include the fleet operation number. DS confirms he has only used the public number. He also thanks everyone for their cooperation and comparators.

In the chat, TS says: "One more thought on the numbers: double counting. OEM sells to CPO. OEM counts 1000 chargers sold, CPO counts the same 1000. "

Richard Stobart says that his numbers are based on regulation for contactless not going below 7.1. He wants to ensure that the letter says it is just Charge UK members and based on regulations as in. DS confirms this is the case.

IJ moves on to reliability and the impact assessment and invites thoughts. He asks for further comments.

VR notes that impact assessment has three major errors: the number of chargers that will be impacted (1600 vs 25,000); they have identified a benefit of driving up sales but have not analysed increased costs for consumers on ability to use EVs; plug-and-charge has not been factored in. We are giving them the evidence to help them follow through on changing tack.

DS said that the reason it is going separately is to not detract from positivity of the letter.

TS said that the minister defended the impact assessment as a "snapshot" but still need to make the point that the assessment was fundamentally flawed.

James McKemey noted that the document was directly interested. He said that it's very unlikely that will be public, but that it's a legitimate argument well made.

IJ thanks VR for her work and moves to reliability. In an ideal world, we want to give the government how they should measure reliability. However, the idea is to make government aware of the shortcomings of OCPI and to suggest a better approach. But we don't want them to tell us we are too

late. We recognise that short timelines mean that we may not get full agreement as technical teams may want to be involved; in which case we will provide it to the Government and say that this is what we are debating at the moment.

James McKemey is happy with the approach that Charge UK is coming up with a methodology and these are initial ideas.

TS says that her technical colleagues are very black and white and that neither OCPI or OCCP are designed for reliability and won't give the right outcomes or accuracy. However they don't have the context that the government is just trying to do something and find a universal ruler.

DR suggests that the aim is to ensure that whatever minute wording goes into legal regs doesn't put us in an impossible box. We are not trying to achieve a new systems, rather pointing out watch words that can cause negative outcomes. DR suggests caution around technical long term challenge, but just stopping mad wording. However with that in mind, the paper circulated last time – we were happy with the principles but everyone wanted to get straight into the details. He is aware that Government are on the cusp of this and they are chasing for us to send something. How do we present all of our very good work in a sharp way of “don't tie yourself down”.

DS comes in to agree with the immediate objective and that Charge UK has to show willing. We're here to show how we are developing a better future. We need to make sure that OZEV are fully cognisant of technical details they haven't anticipated. Point that this is so complex that we as an industry can't even decide this, so don't do anything ahead of yourselves and we want to work with you to get it right.

DR says that everything coming later and that our recommendation is to not tie us into OCPI and that a lot more technical work needs to be done. We must be clear on that.

IJ supports DS's approach and welcomes Simon Kendrew from EQUANS.

VR agrees with DS and says we need to give them something quick and show we are engaged and perhaps we can provide some suggested text that would be acceptable.

AA notes that the letter does not mention hardware. There are very few producers globally and whether it's worth including a delay if the design has to change.

IJ believes that OZEV is saying 99%, but that really its up time and there are exclusions. James McKemey notes in the chat that “they are not pro-reality”.

DS says that in the meeting one to one, IJ made the point that everywhere else uses 97%. They are not exposed on 7.1 issue, but they are on 99%. They are detached from reality but we need to help bridge that gap and show how we are helping the Government achieve its objective.

IJ asks that if anyone has a significant issue with the reliability issue to speak before 5PM or it will go as is. IJ moves on to his final point of ways of working, ensuring everyone's voices are heard. The AGM will be held at the Fully Charged Live event on 28 April, hybrid. The Connect team will circulate plan and invitations. TS is keen for a press release and use that as the launch. DS says that it's a good opportunity to get buzz before the event. The numbers will be a base for a strong launch story.

As AOB, DS notes live consultation on development rights and that we will circulate a draft response. We encourage individual responses but will also submit as Charge UK.

IJ says that formation of policy groups on DC chargers, LEVI fund, and that formalisation is coming next.