

LACK OF EV CHARGE POINTS IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN REGION

The number of publicly available electric vehicle charge points is notably low in rural counties, according to research released by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA). The study revealed that the target of one million electric vehicles by 2030 is not achievable without proper charging point infrastructure.



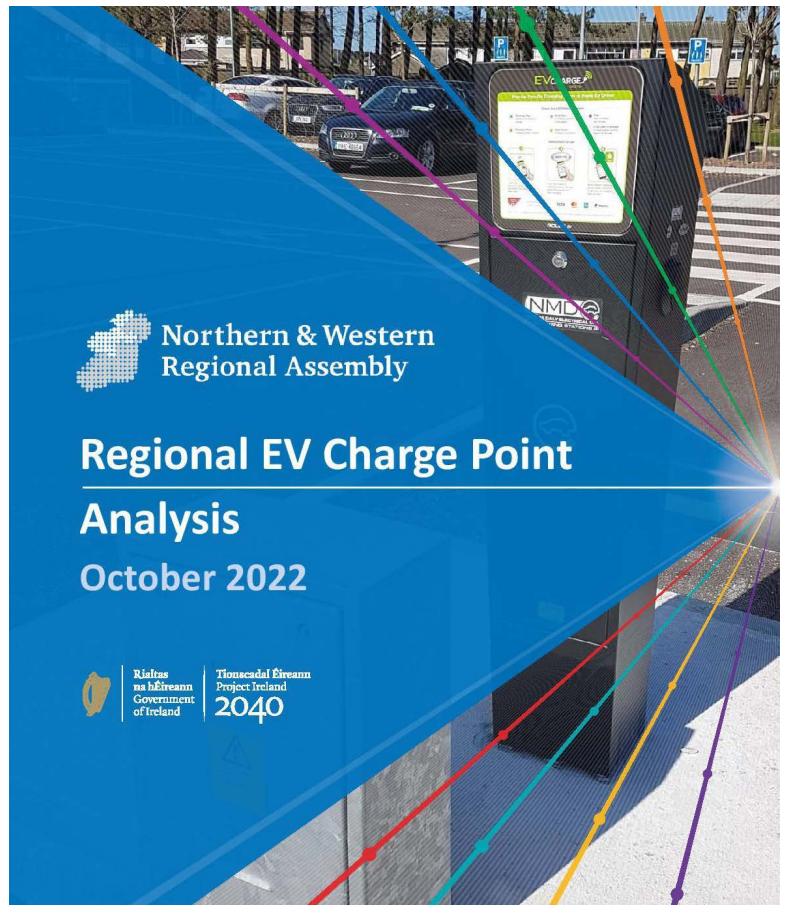
The lack of adequate EV charge point infrastructure in rural Ireland raises serious doubts about the Government's ability to deliver on the Climate Action Plan's commitment to roll out almost one million EVs on Irish roads by 2030.

Research undertaken by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) examined the number of publicly available EV charge points for each county on the island of Ireland. And in collaboration with survey company Ireland-Thinks, the NWRA also carried out a survey of residents based in rural and urban areas of the region for their opinions on EVs and EV charge point infrastructure.

It found that the Northern and Western region has only 488 publicly available EV charge points, compared to 529 in Northern Ireland, with 920 in the Southern region, while the Eastern and Midland region has 1,261.

The regional analysis outlines to policymakers what is needed to encourage a greater uptake of EVs and reduce dependence on fossil fuel-powered vehicles in rural regions.

With the Climate Action Plan setting targets that require a transformation in travelling and connecting with communities, the NWRA study notes that electric vehicles can help meet these targets, with improvements in battery technology and market offerings making EVs a viable low-carbon alternative for rural residents who typically lack access to public transport.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Survey of 559 residents of the Northern and Western region found that:

- * 79% were “very unlikely” to buy a new EV within the next 12 months, with only 3% “very likely” to buy one in the same period.
- * If the government increased the maximum grant rate for EV purchases from €5,000 to €10,000, the percentage of respondents “very likely” to purchase an EV within the next 12 months rises from 3% to 12%, while those “very unlikely” to purchase an EV within a year would fall from 79% to 49%.
- * If more “fast” EV charge points were provided, the percentage of respondents “very unlikely” to buy a new EV in the next 12 months drops from 79% to 57%, while those that were “very likely” to purchase an EV within the next 12 months rises from 3% to 11%.
- * 31% felt that every village and town should have at least two EV charge points to encourage a greater uptake of EVs and to reduce “range anxiety”; 20% of respondents felt that at least two EV charge points was needed for every 5 kms, while 18% of respondents felt that at least one EV charge point was needed in every petrol station.

DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

According to John Daly, Economist with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly:

“The roll out of publicly available EV charge points needs to be dramatically improved across Ireland if the government is to deliver one million EVs on Irish roads by 2030, particularly in rural regions such as the Northern and Western Region.

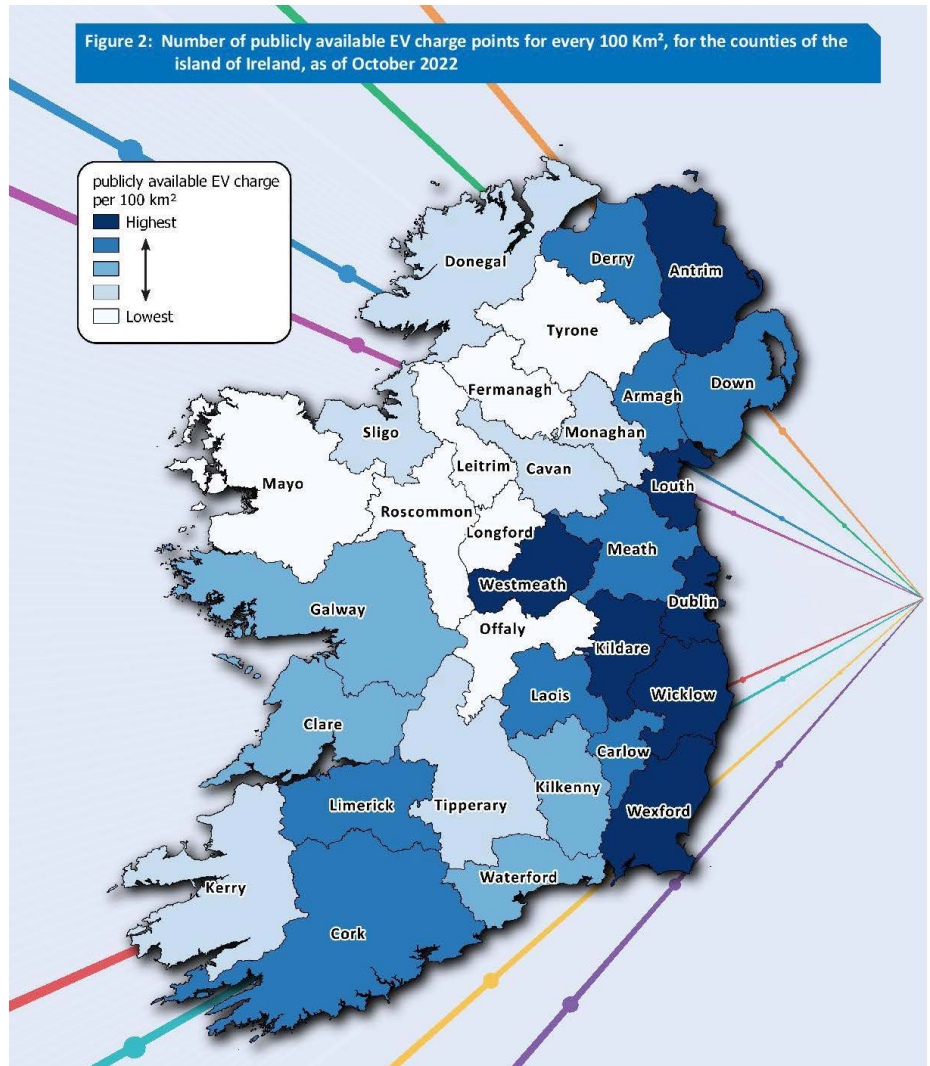
“Our research found that the lack of publicly available EV charge points is one of the key factors discouraging people from the region in switching to EVs, with this type of infrastructure central to overcoming challenges such as ‘range anxiety’, namely an EV driver’s fear that they will run out of power before reaching their destination.

“Policymakers may also consider enhancing EV grants as the high price of EVs was seen as the greatest barrier to purchasing an EV, while the provision of regionally targeted grants could improve the uptake of EVs in rural regions with low levels of disposable income.”

Main NWRA recommendations to address the issue include:

- * Enhance provisions under the Climate Action Fund so more EV charge points can be installed in the Northern and Western Region, particularly fast and high-powered EV charge points.
- * Ensure EV charge points are deployed in accessible locations – there should be at least two publicly available EV charge points for every village and town in the region.
- * Remove the co-financing requirement for the Electric Vehicle Public Charge Point Grant for local authorities based in the Northern and Western Region.
- * Implement regionally targeted grants for EV purchases valued between €20,000 and €60,000 so residents of rural regions receive higher grant rates than their urban counterparts.
- * Explore increasing the maximum grant of €5,000 for EV purchases valued between €20,000 and €60,000 and examine the merits of enhancing other financial reliefs.
- * Launch a regional promotional campaign across the NW region to highlight government supports and grants available to purchase an EV.

Figure 2: Number of publicly available EV charge points for every 100 Km², for the counties of the island of Ireland, as of October 2022



* The counties with the highest number of publicly available EV charge points were Dublin (639), Antrim (240), Cork (239), Kildare (174) and Galway (172), with the lowest number located in Leitrim (8), Longford (19), Monaghan (24), Offaly (27) and Fermanagh (29).

* As the most rural-oriented region under Project Ireland 2040, it registered the lowest concentration of publicly available EV charge points per km² on the island of Ireland.