



## LowCVP's Andy Eastlake Plugging into hybrids

One of the great things about this job is the range of interesting and passionate people I regularly meet. But passionate people tend to have strong opinions, of course, so finding a compromise between varying views is vital in moving things forward.

I think this principle can be equally applied to the application of technology in greening our transport. There are many convincing advocates for a pure electric vehicle solution and I, too, can see the arguments for this option. However, with current technology limitations, the importance of hybrid solutions in meeting the wide range of mobility needs while encouraging the market for plug-ins to develop is critical. In the year to July 2015, for example, around twice as many hybrid plug-in vehicles were sold than pure battery EVs in the UK according to SMMT statistics.

The recent VED changes announced in the Summer Budget left me concerned that the Chancellor doesn't share this view of the need to encourage the introduction of hybrid plug-ins. As a driver of a plug-in range-extended car (which can't be rapid-charged) I can fully understand why plug-in hybrids are outselling fully electric ULEVs. (And, by the way, I feel that the lack of a plug-in hybrid van is one of the major reasons the ULEV van market has not taken off as the car market has.)

The flexibility of this 'compromise' option, is probably even more important in the commercial vehicle market, where electric miles can be hard to come by with the much heavier demands on batteries and infrastructure.

The emergence of several plug-in hybrid buses, together with zero-emission-capable taxis (and along with the recent Geofencing trials) will, I think, enable cities to start to consider full zero-emission zones as a real option.

The path to electric mobility needs a range of increasingly electrified vehicles but I think we need support for the whole of that range at the moment. Full electrification may be the desired end-point but, with current technology, does not yet fulfil all of our varied mobility needs.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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LowCVP on Twitter: @theLowCVP and @aeastlake