

Shock discovery: electric-car charge points go unused

They may be dotted across towns, parking bays and supermarket car parks, but if the experience of London is anything to go by most electric-car recharging points have never been used.

Figures obtained from Transport for London show that 69% of recharging points installed in the capital have not been used at all over the past six months. Between June to the end of December 2013, just 430 of the 1,396 charging points were used to recharge electric vehicles; 966 charging points were not used at all.

The figures mimic similarly disappointing data for the purchase of electric cars: 406 purely electric cars have been registered so far this year, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, out of a total of 223,298 for all new cars.

The government has championed the electric car with grants and subsidies worth tens of millions of pounds. The little-used infrastructure alone in London has so far cost £8m of taxpayers' money.

Last week the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, announced that he was selling off the charging points to a French company.

"Past predictions by the mayor about electric vehicles have not been met," said Stephen Knight, the Liberal Democrats' environment spokesman in the London Assembly. "We need to ensure that this dismal progress over the last few years quickly turns around."

Sunday Times, Driving, p. 2
23.3.14