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Friday 23rd August 2019

Joint Statement on Optimise Prime – Road to Zero Emissions

Dear Colleagues,

Branches will recall LTB 454/2017 and LTB 641/2017 advising the Introduction of 100 LE2 Peugeot Partner Electric Vehicles across a number of Delivery Offices in the UK. For some considerable time, the issue of vehicle emissions, pollution and the impact on health, the environment and global warming have been increasingly coming into focus and have recently been at the international centre of attention as well as specifically in the UK.

The UK Government have lost two major court cases, firstly in the Supreme Court in 2015 and subsequently in the High Court in 2016 on its failure to clean up air pollution across the UK and the Environment Secretary's failure to take measures that would bring the UK into compliance with the law, following legal challenges by the Environment Group 'Client Earth'. The High Court ruled that the government's Air Quality Plan failed to comply with the Supreme Court ruling and relevant EU Directives on pollution level targets.

As previously reported, Royal Mail Fleet have also successfully bid for £90m funding for new vehicles which equates to approximately 25k new vehicles in their 5-year plan (which is higher than the £55m that is normally provided). The clear intention of Fleet will be to address the rise in Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and increased costs of vehicle access across the UK. Royal Mail is now involved in what is considered the world's biggest trial of commercial EVs that brings together leading companies in Hitachi technology giants, UK electricity distribution partners and key household operators Centrica, Uber and Royal Mail with £16m of Electricity Network Innovation Competition (NIC) funding awarded by Ofgem to the project.

The purpose of the trial is to understand what impact a mass migration of EVs will have on the grid infrastructure and its capacity, including software management utilising a smart charging interface and management tool. The consortium-led trial covers the following streams; Public Charging, Home Based Charging and Depot Based Charging. Royal Mail will participate in the Depot Based Charging.

The key data that Royal Mail requires to be provided daily from the Electric vehicles is the battery state of charge and fluctuations in the current draw along with distance travelled for the route to build the smart charging depot optimisation tool. Peugeot will provide their own telemetry connect box for a 3-month period that will be retro fitted into the new 60 EV Peugeot Partners that are part of the 190 vehicles. The 130 Mercedes eVitos will also have their own telemetry devices installed on the production line as part of their standard specification. These telemetry boxes will be a standard specification on all future vehicle productions. Royal Mail will obtain the daily battery life status and current draw profile to enable Hitachi to build the smart charging depot tool.

For this project, the data from these vehicles will be recorded and shared with drivers if required, for coaching purposes only. As such, driver performance data will remain confidential to the individual and will not be displayed on notice boards or in league tables, nor will it form part of performance management. It is also reaffirmed that this technology is not being deployed for use as a disciplinary tool or a source of information to be used in conduct cases.

There will also be full CWU ASR involvement to determine and agree safe installation of charging posts including all relevant documentation, Risk Assessments and subsequent Safe System of Works. In addition, all data collated from Royal Mail systems and any operational issues that arise due to the introduction of these vehicles will be jointly resolved with the full involvement of the relevant CWU Representatives and in line with the IR Framework where necessary.

Part of the trials and introduction of Electric Vehicles will include a training package for Royal Mail Fleet Workshop Technicians on the vehicles including the HV (high voltage) components and safety precautions. Drivers will be trained via 'change-over' vehicle appreciation and awareness training sessions along with ongoing support. Volume and locations may vary slightly subject to survey results.

Alan Tate, Postal Executive Member has been leading on this initiative on behalf of the Outdoor Department, accordingly we would like to place on record our thanks to Alan for his work in relation to this issue.

Any queries to the content of the above please contact the Outdoor Department reference 300, email address: outdoorsecretary@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Baulch
CWU Assistant Secretary