

CMA to open up electric vehicle charging competition on motorways

CMA Chief Executive says “Healthy competition is key to ensuring drivers have a greater choice of chargepoints where they need them, and for a fair price”.

Gridserve, which owns the Electric Highway – a major chargepoint operator in Great Britain – has offered the following legally-binding assurances (known as commitments):

- Not to enforce exclusive rights in contracts with Extra, MOTO or Roadchef, after 2026, which currently cover around two-thirds of motorway service stations. In doing so, Gridserve has committed to reducing the length of the exclusive rights in the current contracts with MOTO by around 2 years and Roadchef by around 4 years (the contract with the third operator, Extra, is due to end in 2026).
- Not to enforce exclusive rights at any Extra, MOTO or Roadchef sites that have been granted funding under the UK government’s Rapid Charging Fund (RCF). This means that, where funding has been granted, competitor chargepoint operators will be able to install chargepoints regardless of the exclusive element of the Electric Highway’s contracts.

Each of the motorway service station operators – Extra, MOTO and Roadchef – and Gridserve have also offered commitments not to take any action that would undermine the above commitments.

Andrea Coscelli, CMA Chief Executive, said:

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to getting people to switch to electric cars is the fear that they won’t be able to travel from A to B without running out of charge. Millions of people make a pitstop for fuel at motorway service stations every day, so it’s crucial that people can trust that electric chargepoints will do the same job.

Healthy competition is key to ensuring that drivers have a greater choice of chargepoints where they need them, and for a fair price.

We believe that opening up competition on motorways, while ensuring the sector has greater investment, is the right direction of travel – and good news for current drivers of electric cars and for people thinking of buying one.

We’d now like to hear from businesses and drivers themselves on

these proposed commitments.

In July 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [launched a competition investigation into the Electric Highway](#)'s contracts with MOTO, Roadchef and Extra, alongside publishing the findings of its market study into the electric vehicle charging sector.

The CMA's investigation is looking at the Electric Highway's long-term, exclusive contracts with Extra, MOTO and Roadchef for the motorway service stations they operate. In particular, the concerns are that provisions in those contracts granting exclusivity to the Electric Highway:

- may be preventing competitor chargepoint operators from operating at motorway service areas
- could impede the successful roll-out of the government's anticipated RCF
- may result in drivers losing out on competitive prices and reliable chargepoints as a result of a lack of competition at motorway service areas.

It is the CMA's provisional view that the commitments offered will address its competition concerns and open up competition in the market ahead of the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars. Significant new investments are due to be made by Gridserve ahead of expected demand between 2021 and 2025.

The CMA is now inviting views on the proposed commitments – to be submitted to the CMA by 2 December – and will continue to work with governments, regulators and industry to ensure electric vehicle charging is a success.

The CMA's action in this area is part of its wider work to support the transition to a low carbon economy. The proposed commitments have been offered during COP26, where the Prime Minister named 'cars' as one of his four priorities.

For more information [visit the investigation into the supply of electric vehicle chargepoints on or near motorways casepage](#).

1. Gridserve acquired the Electric Highway from Ecotricity in June 2021.
2. The UK government's [Rapid Charging Fund is due to be rolled out in England](#).
3. Gridserve refers to: Gridserve Holdings Limited

4. Electric Highway refers to: The Electric Highway Company Limited
5. Extra refers to: Extra MSA Property (UK) Limited (and other companies in the Extra group of companies that have entered into the relevant contracts)
6. MOTO refers to: MOTO Holdings Limited and MOTO Hospitality Limited
7. Roadchef refers to: Roadchef Limited

[Amphibious vehicle helping to tackle flooding in Essex](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency has been trialling a new piece of equipment in Essex to help reduce flood risk to homes and businesses.



The Environment Agency recently used the Truxor in Essex.

The vehicle, named Truxor, is designed to work both on the channel bed or whilst afloat. It has recently been trialled at river sections in Kelvedon and Heybridge in Essex having previously been used in Norfolk.

By cutting the vegetation in water channels before the winter, any flood water is able to get away from settlements quicker. Decisions on where to cut are prioritised based on flood risk in a particular area.

The [Environment Agency](#) works all year round to help minimise flood risk. We routinely inspect defences and carry out repairs and maintenance. This includes channel maintenance and involves a range of activities to maintain

conveyance such as weed cutting, removing blockages and where appropriate dredging.

The Truxor in action.

David Simpson, flood-risk supervisor in the Chelmer and the Blackwater rivers, said:

Truxor has proved to be a very beneficial piece of equipment.

It is making a real difference in helping to reduce the flood risk to communities across the area.

Climate change is happening now. We're seeing more extreme weather, with an increase in flooding, coastal erosion and landslips.

That's why we advise people should check their flood risk, sign up for free flood warnings at <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>

You can also call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or follow [@EnvAgency](https://twitter.com/EnvAgency) on Twitter for the latest flood updates.

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[Amanda Spielman at the AoC Annual Conference 2021](#)

Good afternoon, it's great to see you today and it's fantastic to be here in person in Birmingham – after far too long restricted to Teams and Zoom.

I'd like to start this afternoon with some reflections on a very turbulent year in education and a difficult time for colleges. We all talk about 'recovery' these days, but that doesn't mean the challenges are over. I know how much you want to be full-time educators and not part-time COVID managers.

So I want to talk about the road ahead and as part of that I want to explain the role that Ofsted will play along the way. I want to tell you about some changes to our work emerging from the spending review. And I also want to leave a bit of time at the end to listen to what you have to say and I hope answer some questions.

The impact of the pandemic has been, and continues to be the single biggest

issue for the education sector. It's been an astonishing year and I'd like to start by acknowledging the tremendous effort, ingenuity and dedication shown by the whole sector.

And we saw that up close. Although our routine inspections were suspended last year, we maintained a presence in nurseries, schools and colleges.

Whether through research into how the sector was responding to the pandemic, or by visiting establishments and talking directly to leaders, we kept up to speed with developments. And I hope we were also able to provide a useful and constructive sounding board. When the pressure is on, it often helps to discuss ideas and challenges with a sympathetic and well-informed outsider.

I'd like to give credit to colleges for the way you adjusted and adapted in such trying circumstances. Colleges were quick to move to remote learning – perhaps because the concept wasn't a new one for you. You were able to support students with IT and internet access; you provided welfare advice and support to help students manage through uncertainty. At the back end of the year, you navigated the tricky waters around exams and assessments for your students and the uncertainty around admissions for this year's intake.

I think, and I hope you agree, that there's a really strong working relationship between Ofsted and the college sector; a genuinely collaborative relationship that we saw at work during the difficult periods over the past year. I've talked about the visits that took place while inspection was suspended. They laid the groundwork for a return to monitoring visits in the summer, which were themselves the stepping stone back to full graded inspection this term. Throughout, we have been talking to college sector representatives. And as we look to the future, that collaborative approach will help us shape inspection as the sector takes on new duties – which I'll return to shortly. We were under no illusion that the return to full inspection, whenever it came, would have to be handled carefully and appropriately. It was really important to us to listen to your concerns, understand the difficulties you face and make sure that the inspection process takes everything into account. And we needed to do that without watering down the rigour of the process, or undermining the credibility of our judgements. Because soft-peddling inspection would let down the people that we, and you, really work for – the students. They have had their education forcibly abridged by COVID. And it's the responsibility of the whole education system, including Ofsted, to pull together and help this cohort achieve its potential.

Because helping these learners achieve their potential has massive implications not just for individual advancement but for the recovery, development and success of the country as a whole. It's hard to overstate the importance of further education for a country emerging from cycles of lockdown. It's hard to over-emphasize how important upskilling our workforce is, as the country forges new economic and trading relationships. And it's hard to exaggerate, in the wake of COP26, the critical role of colleges in meeting the skills needs of next-generation cleaner and greener industries.

Quite rightly further education and skills remains high on the political

agenda. In the spending review and budget, it was good to see political recognition backed up with some new funding, which is a step in the right direction. The skills bill marks another step, and as ever implementation will be key. Overall though, there is no doubt that this is an busy time for further education and an exciting time to be involved with colleges.

I've spoken about the importance of inspection in the current climate. I think that's because inspection doesn't only provide an assessment of education today, it's also a barometer to help predict the weather ahead. One of our most important roles is gathering and drawing on evidence to advise ministers about the quality of provision in the sector and the impact of policy initiatives. From T levels to boot camps – and across the whole gamut of education recovery, we will be gathering evidence to assess progress. We have 2 thematic surveys planned, on skills boot camps and T levels, but beyond this our inspections provide a wealth of data that we are able to interrogate and aggregate.

In the run-up to the spending review we'd been in discussions with government about how we could provide faster and more comprehensive assurance about education throughout this crucial period of recovery. The government is keen, as are we, to accelerate our inspection cycles – so we can reduce the time it takes to inspect every school and college across England.

For colleges, sixth form colleges and special designated institutes we have had funding confirmed that will allow us to reach every institution between now and 2025. In this cycle we will not undertake short inspections – so every college, sixth form college and SDI [specialist designated institution] will receive a full inspection between next September and summer 2025. I'm confident that this is a positive development and one that will be welcomed by the sector. It followed discussions with the DfE about how inspection can respond to the focus on local skills needs.

I'm in favour of assessing the extent to which colleges have regard to local skills. We've had concerns about mismatches in the past between courses that are popular and courses that really open doors. There is a moral imperative here on two fronts – both to help the economy thrive and to present students with realistic pathways. It's really important that we get a true feel for the local economy so we can properly consider the contribution of colleges. This work clearly doesn't lend itself to light-touch inspection. We need full inspections, with some enhancements, which I'm pleased government has recognised.

I would add that we're already starting to pilot our methodologies for inspecting skills needs, and we'll be seeking your input. That's part of the value of our collaborative relationship with the FE sector.

These changes to the way we inspect colleges will obviously provide greater assurance through the sector. I hope they will also give you the benefits of our curriculum-focused approach, and the professional dialogue between college leaders and inspectors. That dialogue is not only central to the assessment process, it also highlights opportunities for improvement and progress. The response to inspections under the new framework was very

positive before COVID and remains so today – because of the dialogue at its heart.

We were confident that the EIF was supple enough to adapt to the current situation. We piloted extensively last term and we're now seeing the fruits of that in colleges (and in schools too). We talk to leaders about the COVID impact in their colleges; we discuss the adaptations and adjustments the colleges have made, and that helps us understand what success looks like in each individual context.

The first reports from this term's inspections are now starting to be published and they're certainly not giving any cause for alarm. You continue to perform well and to be recognized for doing so.

This term we're also starting to inspect previously outstanding institutions now that the exemption has been lifted. I have been very open about what this will mean. Since 2012 we have had a one-way valve attached to the outstanding grade. So for a decade we have been accumulating outstanding institutions without reassessment. As inspectors return to colleges declared outstanding many years ago, they will inevitably discover that some are now running off the pace. But we are starting to see others moving up the field. And I'm confident too, that plenty of outstanding colleges will have maintained standards over the years and through the pandemic.

In fact, the first published report from our September inspections was of the Sixth Form College Farnborough. An academy converter, its predecessor was inspected in 2007 and found to be outstanding. Fourteen years later it has maintained the top grade.

There are many siren voices who portray the education sector in the bleakest of terms. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has done damage to the education of millions of young people – and it continues to present stark challenges to staff working in our schools and colleges. But as we've returned to full inspection this term, we have not seen a sector that is on its knees. Far from it. There is a resilience and a determination that we recognise and that should be encouraged. I would like to thank you all for the work you are doing and the tremendous difference you make for individuals and communities across the country.

[UK House Price Index for September 2021](#)

In the past 18 months all those involved in the property market have been impacted by the effects of coronavirus (COVID-19); HM Land Registry is no different and as a result, this release of the UK House Price index is not as complete as it could be.

The data is accurate. However, this release may be subject to increased revisions as we add more data over the coming months. See [Reducing delays](#) for further information.

The September data shows:

- on average, house prices have increased 2.5% since August 2021
- there has been an annual price rise of 11.8% which makes the average property in the UK valued at £269,945

England

In England the September data shows, on average, house prices have risen by 2.9% since August 2021. The annual price rise of 11.5% takes the average property value to £287,895.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the North West experienced the greatest monthly rise with a movement of 5.3%
- London saw the lowest monthly price growth, with a fall of -2.9%
- the North West experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 16.8%
- London saw the lowest annual price growth, with a rise of 2.8%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price September 2021	Annual change % since September 2020	Monthly change % since August 2021
East Midlands	£231,318	14.7	4.9
East of England	£327,982	9.3	1.7
London	£507,253	2.8	-2.9
North East	£152,776	13.3	3.8
North West	£203,661	16.8	5.3
South East	£370,886	11.7	3.0
South West	£301,327	11.7	4.0
West Midlands	£231,501	11.7	3.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	£192,354	11.9	4.0

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in July 2021 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in July 2021 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	July 2021
East Midlands	7

Repossession sales July 2021

East of England	5
London	13
North East	13
North West	23
South East	12
South West	9
West Midlands	9
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
England	101

Average price by property type for England

Property type	September 2021	September 2020	Difference %
Detached	£447,617	£394,660	13.4
Semi-detached	£273,470	£243,296	12.4
Terraced	£236,797	£210,491	12.5
Flat/maisonette	£241,884	£228,668	5.8
All	£287,895	£258,155	11.5

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price September 2021	Annual price change % since September 2020	Monthly price change % since August 2021
Cash	£269,903	11.3	3.1
Mortgage	£296,869	11.6	2.9
First-time buyer	£239,659	11.2	3.1
Former owner occupier	£329,229	11.9	2.8

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price July 2021	Annual price change % since July 2020	Monthly price change % since June 2021
New build	£357,759	14.1	1.9
Existing resold property	£263,010	5.4	-5.4

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

London

London shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.9% since August 2021. An annual price rise of 2.8% takes the average property value to £507,253.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	September 2021	September 2020	Difference %
Detached	£1,035,215	£941,153	10
Semi-detached	£658,301	£609,487	8
Terraced	£554,568	£525,821	5.5
Flat/maisonette	£422,054	£425,218	-0.7
All	£507,253	£493,205	2.8

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price September 2021	Annual price change % since September 2020	Monthly price change % since August 2021
Cash	£516,420	0.7	-5.5
Mortgage	£503,133	3.3	-2.3
First-time buyer	£437,511	2.0	-3.0
Former owner occupier	£583,667	4.0	-2.8

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price July 2021	Annual price change % since July 2020	Monthly price change % since June 2021
New build	£532,674	7.2	4.3
Existing resold property	£497,872	2.9	-1.6

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have risen by 2.5% since August 2021. An annual price rise of 15.4% takes the average property value to £196,216.

There were 6 repossession sales for Wales in July 2021.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	September 2021	September 2020	Difference %
Detached	£301,194	£257,516	17.0
Semi-detached	£187,935	£164,718	14.1
Terraced	£153,280	£132,127	16.0
Flat/maisonette	£129,167	£115,579	11.8
All	£196,216	£170,030	15.4

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price September 2021	Annual price change % since September 2020	Monthly price change % since August 2021
Cash	£190,831	15.6	3.3
Mortgage	£199,445	15.3	2.1
First-time buyer	£168,657	15.0	2.2
Former owner occupier	£228,652	15.8	2.7

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price July 2021	Annual price change % since July 2020	Monthly price change % since June 2021
New build	£269,287	19.8	3.5
Existing resold property	£180,109	9.1	-6.1

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

UK house prices

UK house prices increased by 11.8% in the year to September 2021, up from 10.2% in August 2021. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, average house prices in the UK increased by 2.5% between August and September 2021, compared with an increase of 1.1% during the same period a year earlier (August and September 2020).

The [UK Property Transactions Statistics](#) showed that in September 2021, on a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of transactions of residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 160,950. This is 68.4% higher than a year ago. Between August and September 2021, UK transactions increased by 67.5% on a seasonally adjusted basis, following a record level of transaction numbers in June 2021, and the subsequent reduction which followed in July.

House price growth was strongest in the North West where prices increased by 16.8% in the year to September 2021. The lowest annual growth was in London, where prices increased by 2.8% in the year to September 2021.

See the [economic statement](#).

The UK HPI is based on completed housing transactions. Typically, a house purchase can take 6 to 8 weeks to reach completion. The price data feeding into the September 2021 UK HPI will mainly reflect those agreements that occurred after the government measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 took hold.

Reducing delays

Our absolute top priority is to reduce any delays, both those caused by the pandemic and those existing beforehand. To deliver our services while promoting public health, we are:

- adjusting our resources where necessary
- introducing automation where practical
- recruiting and training more than 500 new staff

Background

1. We publish the UK House Price Index (HPI) on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. We will publish the October 2021 UK HPI at 9.30am on Wednesday 15 December 2021. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy ([see calculating the UK HPI section 4.4](#)). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions that require us to create a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. Revision tables are available for England and Wales within the downloadable data in CSV format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency supply data for the UK HPI.
7. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency calculate the UK HPI. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various

sources of data on property price, including HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).

8. We take the [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) from the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series. HMRC presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. We make adjustments for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. The UK HPI reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. HM Land Registry provides information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.

15. For England, we show repossession sales volume recorded by government office region. For Wales, we provide repossession sales volume for the number of repossession sales.
16. Repossession sales data is available from April 2016 in CSV format. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. We publish CSV files of the raw and cleansed aggregated data every month for England, Scotland and Wales. We publish Northern Ireland data on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 26 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

[RSH sets out initial thinking on reshaping consumer regulation](#)

The Regulator of Social Housing has today (17 November) published '[Reshaping consumer regulation: Our principles and approach](#)'. This sets out its initial thinking about how it will put in place the changes to consumer regulation described in the social housing white paper, published a year ago.

The document describes the big picture for reshaped consumer regulation as well as outlining progress on the individual areas that deliver it, many of which depend on legislation. RSH will regulate proactive consumer regulation

using the same underlying principles it applies for economic regulation. These are being co-regulatory, proportionate, and risk- and assurance-based in approach as well as focusing on outcomes rather than being prescriptive. RSH confirms that, in line with the white paper its remit will continue to focus on organisational, rather than individual issues, and sets out high level outcomes it wants proactive consumer regulation to achieve.

In developing revised consumer standards, RSH wants to build on the best aspects of the existing standards as well as incorporating the new expectations set out in the white paper and matters on which it is directed. It has identified six themes the standards will cover: safety, quality, neighbourhood, transparency, engagement and accountability, and tenancies. Details of the standards are still to be developed and will be subject to full consultation.

To support the new standards, RSH will design a new approach to proactive consumer regulation – including the role of tools such as consumer regulation inspections and desk-top reviews – and will collect data from new tenant satisfaction measures. Work on the approach to proactive consumer regulation will continue to develop and the document outlines a number of questions still to be explored with landlords, tenants and other stakeholders. The document also describes progress on the tenant satisfaction measures, with a detailed consultation to follow in early December 2021.

Fiona MacGregor, Chief Executive of RSH said:

We are pleased to share an overview of our early thinking about how we will reshape consumer regulation and implement the changes set out in the social housing white paper. We look forward to working with social housing tenants, landlords, and other stakeholders as we develop our thinking further.

However, delivering all this will take time. Boards and councillors responsible for social housing should not wait for new consumer regulation to look at how they can improve their landlord services and their engagement with tenants.

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.

Notes to editors

The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. Its role is defined in legislation to have an economic regulation objective relating to private registered providers, and a consumer regulation objective relating to both local authority providers and private registered providers. In line with current legislation, RSH regulates consumer standards reactively. For more information about RSH, visit our [website](#).