Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)
Current Transport Policies

What are the current policies in Northern Ireland regarding environmental aspects and permitting for biofuels and electric cars / charging network?

In Northern Ireland, transport is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (21% in 2011).

Current policies on a UK/National level:

- **EU ‘White Paper Roadmap to a Single Transport Area’**: “halve the use of ‘conventionally-fuelled’ cars in urban transport by 2030; phase out in cities by 2050; achieve essentially CO2-free city logistics in major urban centres by 2030”. This is in addition to mitigation targets in the UK Climate Act 2008.

- **UK Government subsidies** of up to £5,000 for the purchase of electric cars, some now being as low as £13,000. The overall price of alternative fuels and their vehicles is expected to continue to fall as some estimates predict oil prices to rise to around $200 per barrel by 2030.

- **Plugged-In-Places’ programme**: supported by the UK Government, it offers match-funding to consortia of businesses and public sector partners to support the installation of electric vehicle recharging infrastructure across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

- **UK Government** plans to phase out funding for first generation biofuels (currently 5% mix in petrol), having no place in government’s vision for fuel after 2020; instead transferring it to second and third generation research.

- **LPG or ‘Autogas’** requires only retrofitting and can be a very economically efficient fuel option, but which has some significant environmental impact. In terms of Hydrogen cars, the infrastructure, marketing and research need much further development. However, although hydrogen buses are being produced in Northern Ireland, they are not yet being used in the region.

Current policies of the regional and local levels:

- **DRD “A new approach to regional transportation” from 2015**: Includes policy aims to increase the use of alternative fuels in publicly owned vehicles and public transport, advise on vehicle choice and promote the use of alternative and renewable fuels.

- **Northern Ireland** now has some of the most impressive coverage of electric charge points in the world, due to the success of the E-car project and the ongoing ‘TEN-T’ EU project. The infrastructure currently has over 300 public charge points (including 14 rapid charge).
What are the current policies in Northern Ireland regarding intermodality and interoperability of existing transport networks using smart technology and alternative fuels?

**Current policies:**

- ‘Belfast on the Move’ scheme has successfully introduced a number of new bus and cycle routes around the city. There was an increase of over 20,000 Metro passenger journeys in May 2013 compared to May 2012.

- ‘Park and Ride’ project is amongst the best in Europe. Facilities serving Belfast saw an increase in usage, on average 15%, for September and October 2012, compared to 2011.

- **DRD Regional Development Strategy 2035 for Northern Ireland:** Section 3 sets out objectives to improve connectivity in order to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information, “reducing the need to use the car” through “designing neighbourhoods that... will have increased opportunities for walking, cycling or taking public transport.” This strategy is aligned with the **National Spatial Strategy of the Republic of Ireland**. Both encourage the development of an integrated sustainable transport network.

- **Intermodality** could be improved in Northern Ireland through the growth of the fuels, especially in regard to the fixed infrastructure. For example, creating a hydrogen infrastructure in the region would make the supply relevant to a number of different transport modes, such as private cars, buses and trains.

- A vibrant public, alternatively-fuelled transport sector will **contribute massively to economic growth and efficiency**, but the real issue in Northern Ireland is still the huge **over-reliance on private cars** (still used for 80% of journeys). Further investment is required in not just the building of public transport infrastructure, but the **optimising of its coverage, intermodality and environmental impact**.

**Tools:**

- **Translink ‘Journey Planner’** for public transport in Northern Ireland: to find local buses and train services, and plan the most efficient journey.

- **Ecar mobile phone app:** to find charge points across Northern Ireland and to calculate ecar cost (compare the costs and benefits of electric car relative to a petrol or diesel vehicle).

- **Zap-Map:** online map to find the nearest on-street charge point, in the whole UK.

- **BATTERIE ‘Journey Planner’** to plan your EV journey across Northern Ireland and Ireland. Lists all charging points and integrates with public transport: to find local buses and train services, and plan the most efficient journey