



BRENTWOOD, Essex, 6th July, 2011 – The Transport Minister, Norman Baker MP, today opened a new solar assisted electric vehicle charging facility at the Centre of Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) in Rainham, East London. Ford Transit Connect Electric vehicles were the first users of the facility, known as eTap, installed by Essex-based company Use The Sun Ltd.

Boosted vehicle range

Users of electric vehicles who visit CEME will now be able to charge their vehicles on site. The driving range of current generation pure electric vehicles is significantly lower than petrol- or diesel-engined vehicles and the wider availability of charging points of this sort provides an opportunity to boost an electric vehicle's range.

The eTap provides a mix of solar and mains electric power to charge up to six electric vehicles. It has 45 solar panels, which provide electricity to a central distribution point where it is routed to the car chargers with excess demand being met through the national grid. Users in general will pay for charging by phone, similar to many car parks, on an hourly basis with the charging stopped after the paid-for period.

Transit Connect Electric

The Transit Connect Electric, on sale now, is Ford's first electric vehicle to be made available in Europe. Five electrified Ford vehicles, including a Ford Focus Electric, Ford C-MAX Hybrid and the Ford C-MAX Energi plug-in hybrid, will be introduced in Europe and North America by 2013 as part of Ford's electric vehicle programme.

The Transit Connect Electric was developed in conjunction with Ford's electric vehicle partner Azure Dynamics and it has a proprietary Force Drive™ battery electric drive train powered by an advanced battery pack from Johnson Controls.

With 28kWh of power to call on, Transit Connect Electric can carry a load of 500kg and has a range of up to 80 miles. Its lithium-ion battery pack is charged with a standard power outlet. Fully charging the batteries using standard European 230-volt outlets can be completed in approximately eight hours.

A fleet of Transit Connect Electric vehicles is taking part in the “Ultra-Low Carbon Vehicle Demonstrator” (ULCVD) programme. Based in the London Borough of Hillingdon, a consortium of Ford, Scottish and Southern Energy and the University of Strathclyde has been providing Transit Connect Electric vans and a charging infrastructure for the ULCVD since 2010. The demonstration fleet is being created partly with public funding from the UK Government's Technology Strategy Board (TSB), which promotes innovative industry-led projects that reduce CO2.

CEME

CEME is a public-private partnership between Ford and local education providers, offering opportunities to improve skills, education and employment within the Thames Gateway area. CEME is located next to Ford Dagenham and handles the majority of Ford's training requirements and incorporates the Ford Apprenticeship Programme