

UK ranks among Europe's most EV-eager markets, but drivers still need more confidence to buy

HERE-SBD EV Index 2026 finds British motorists increasingly open to electric vehicles as confidence in charging infrastructure grows, yet a significant gap remains between interest and purchase intent

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LONDON – British drivers are among the most interested in EVs, but the interest is not yet translating into purchase intent, according to the HERE-SBD EV Index 2026. While 38% of non-EV drivers say they are much more likely to consider an EV than a year ago, only 18% say an EV is the vehicle they are most likely to purchase or lease next, the largest gap across all markets surveyed.

Developed by HERE Technologies and SBD Automotive, the HERE-SBD EV Index 2026 combines market maturity data with a survey of more than 4,000 drivers across the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the US, India and Australia. The UK findings show the conversation is shifting from whether drivers are interested in EVs to what is stopping them from buying one.

The report identifies the UK as one of the most eager markets surveyed when it comes to EV uptake.

Among owners of gasoline and diesel vehicles, 38% of UK respondents say they are much more likely to consider an EV than they were a year ago. However, only 18% say an EV is the vehicle they are most likely to purchase or lease next. This 20-percentage point gap suggests that consumer openness is increasing faster than purchase commitment.

UK drivers are increasingly positive about EVs

The UK recorded one of the strongest EV interest signals among all markets surveyed in the study. More than seven in ten UK respondents overall say they are more likely to consider an EV than a year ago, showing that electric mobility has moved further into the mainstream for British drivers.

UK drivers cite practical improvements as the main reasons for their growing interest. Among respondents whose likelihood of considering an EV has increased, 44% point to better charging speed and driving range, 39% cite the cost of charging an EV and 32% highlight the wider choice of electric models now available.

The findings show EVs are increasingly viewed as everyday vehicles, with consumers focused on usability, convenience and ownership value.

Confidence in charging is improving

The research also shows confidence in public charging is improving, with 74% of surveyed EV owners in the UK stating the EV charging experience have matched their expectations. Across all markets surveyed, 50% of respondents now rate local public charging availability positively, up from 41% in 2025. The UK ranks as the market with the strongest satisfaction with local charging provision, suggesting that visibility, access and reliability are becoming more important than charging availability alone.

The availability of charging infrastructure remains the largest barrier to EV adoption, cited by 40% of respondents across all markets. However, that represents a seven-percentage point drop compared to last year's survey. More than half of EV owners have avoided a journey because of charging availability concerns and 58% have found a charging station unavailable due to faults.

"The UK has moved beyond awareness of EVs. Many drivers are now actively considering electric, but the purchase decision still depends on confidence," said Denise Doyle, Chief Product Officer at HERE Technologies. "Drivers need to know charging will be easy, reliable and part of everyday journeys. Real-time location intelligence and charging information will be critical to helping them make the switch with confidence."

"The pace of EV adoption is now driven by driver confidence more than by vehicle and charging technology," said Robert Fisher, Senior Consulting Manager, SBD Automotive. "Markets gain momentum when infrastructure, vehicle availability and the ownership experience develop together. The UK is a clear example of why these factors need to be measured side by side."

Value now outweighs sustainability

The research highlights a broader shift in consumer priorities.

For the first time, environmental benefits are no longer the leading reason consumers consider switching to an EV. Better value for money ranks as the top motivator globally, cited by 36% of respondents, followed by lower running costs at 34%. Environmental benefits now rank third at 33%.

The findings indicate that consumers increasingly evaluate EVs through a practical lens, focusing on affordability, ownership costs and convenience rather than sustainability alone. At the same time, fuel prices continue to influence attitudes: seven in ten respondents say rising fuel prices have increased their interest in EVs.

Turning interest into adoption

The report shows the UK has reached a new phase in its EV transition. While vehicle choice and consumer awareness have improved, the next wave of adoption will depend on affordability, infrastructure readiness and a better everyday ownership experience.

Methodology

The HERE-SBD EV Index 2026 combines two complementary analyses:

- **Index rankings:** An assessment of EV infrastructure and adoption maturity across 30 European countries, 50 US states and Washington, D.C., 34 Indian states and union territories and 8 Australian states and territories. The index uses an innovative methodology for analysis of HERE proprietary EV charge point data and other government and automotive data sources between June 2025 and June 2026.
- **Consumer survey:** Insights from more than 4,000 drivers across the US, Europe, India and Australia exploring EV perceptions, purchase motivations, ownership experiences and infrastructure readiness. SBD conducted the survey online during June and July 2026.

The complete findings from the HERE-SBD EV Index 2026, including the consumer survey are available at: here.com/ev-index-2026.

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About SBD Automotive

For nearly three decades, SBD Automotive has combined deep automotive expertise, research and consulting to deliver insights that enable better decisions - helping clients grow appeal, optimize cost and risk, and create lifetime value for safer, more secure, sustainable and seamless mobility outcomes worldwide.

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