

> 19 March 2026 at 0:00

'Works needed' on huge bus charger at railway station

Fastrack drivers struggling to access site

By Louis Walker
 lwalker@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A huge new charger installed for electric buses is not yet in use - with drivers finding it difficult to access.

Council bosses have denied it has been put in the wrong place - and instead say works are needed to realign the curved kerb at **Dover Priory** railway station.

The zero-emission buses are part of the £34 million new Fastrack service linking Whitfield and the coastal town.

A giant government-funded overhead charger at Dover Priory station is supposed to be lowered onto a section of the bus's roof to quickly top up its battery.

But Stagecoach says the large device is not in operational use, with vehicles unable to be safely positioned close enough

to use it.

Drivers have reported the turning circle at the railway station is too tight to manoeuvre the buses close enough to the kerb.

Now, Kent County Council (KCC) says works will be undertaken to alter the access at the route's endpoint.

A spokesperson insisted that buses can access the charger but "drivers have reported the manoeuvre is tighter than ideal."

"Minor works will therefore be carried out to realign the kerb and make access easier," they added.

"There has been no impact on passenger journeys as the charger is not yet in use and the depot facilities are fully meeting the needs of phase one of the Fastrack route as planned."

They added that with works still ongoing, a final installation cost is not currently avail-

able.

Conversations are underway to make the new chargers operational.

The chargers were paid for using a slice of £9.6 million from the Department for Transport's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme and were installed by an EV charging management company called VEV, according to KCC.

The Fastrack project - a partnership between Stagecoach, KCC and Dover District Council (DDC) - also received £22.9 million from Homes England and £1.42 million from DDC.

A spokesperson for Stagecoach, which invested £1.9 million in the new buses, added:

"We have been in discussions with the relevant parties about how vehicles can safely position close enough to the charger for effective use. Those conversations are ongoing, and we are working collaboratively to

resolve the remaining practical considerations."

The new zero-emission Volvo BZL models, which can take up to 83 passengers, have been in place for less than a month.

The vehicles can travel up to 185 miles on a single charge and be fully powered in approximately 4.5 hours.

It links Dover Priory with the town centre and castle, Burgoyne Heights and Whitfield.

Electric buses were meant to be a key part of the scheme at launch in November 2024, but there was initially a shortage of available vehicles and delays in installing chargers - which meant diesel buses had to be used instead.



The new charger was installed for Fastrack electric buses at Dover Priory station, but drivers are struggling to access it

Picture: Bob Frost



The launch of the first-ever fully electric buses in east Kent took place in Dover last month

Picture: Stagecoach South East