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Electric vehicles will 'dominate' despite low take-up

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Technology advances will lead to electric and hybrid vehicles "dominating" Irish roads in the future, an engineering expert has said — despite a survey showing uptake among drivers still remains low.

A Liberty Insurance survey found just one in 10 Irish

motorists had driven a plug-in hybrid vehicle, and just 8% would consider buying one in the next year.

A plug-in hybrid is a car that can be powered by a rechargeable battery or a standard petrol or diesel engine.

The survey found three in five motorists thought a plug-in hybrid was too expensive, while the same

figure had concerns about the range they could travel before the battery ran down.

A Government grant of €600 for home charging kits for plug-in hybrid cars has made little impression on drivers, the survey found, with four out of five unaware of the scheme.

Deirdre Ashe, of Liberty Insurance, said despite the

ESB investing €40m on 1,200 ESB charging points around the country, motorists are still wary of the lack of charge points and the time it takes to re-power the car.

However, a report on autonomous and electric vehicles by consultant engineering firm Arup said the move to electric and hybrid cars was inevitable.

The report, authored by Arup leader of intelligent mobility John McCarthy, acknowledged electrification of vehicles has not taken place to date due to ongoing concerns about mileage, the length of time it takes to

power the vehicles and the lack of charge points.

"However, with the upsurge in advancements

around this technology, in both the development of superfast charge points and the efficiency of the engines themselves, it is clear that electric vehicles will begin to dominate our road network in the near future," the report said.

The power requirements for the electric vehicle network will have to be "care-

fully weighed against the existing use of power networks" and supplementary power from sources such as wind, according to Arup.

"This will require policy, strategic direction and investment in alternative power sources that could position Ireland at the forefront of this environmental revolution," the report said.