George Osborne recently announced £600 million up to 2021 to support uptake and manufacturing of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) in the UK.

This support is vital if we are to maintain our position in the global electric car market. Currently 1 in 4 of all European electric vehicles are built here, providing jobs, investment and up-skilling the next generation of UK motor manufacturers.

Britain is poised to become a world leader in electric vehicles but to make the most of the opportunity, we must make sure that as well as government funding, the right infrastructure is in place for the sector to flourish.

Many of the component parts are already in place. The Government has already invested significantly in the industry, with financial support to help boost the market. The public are becoming increasingly interested in electric vehicles, with recent IMI research demonstrating that around 50% of consumers are considering purchasing an electric vehicle within the next two years.

However, there is one area that we believe needs more focus in order to help facilitate this growth and success. It’s an area you would expect us, as the body representing those who work in the motor trade to be passionate about. It’s about the people we need to keep our cars serviced and safe, and who fix our cars when they go wrong.

By September 2015 there were 45,000 plug in electric cars registered in the UK - excluding hybrid cars which are also growing in number.

Yet there are just 1000 mechanics in the UK who are qualified to work on these vehicles – less than 1% of the total ‘mechanic’ workforce.

By 2018 only 1000 more technicians, to give them their correct name, will qualify.

The skills gap is clear. Sales of hybrid and electric vehicles will grow faster than we currently expect newly trained technicians to enter the marketplace to service them.

So there is a need for government and industry to work together to fill this skills gap, and to ensure that we have a workforce that’s fit for the future.

We need a comprehensive 10-year plan to transition the UK market to future technologies, with extra help for the motor industry’s independent sector, micro-businesses, and the self-employed to enable them to shape their workforce for the future.

The Government rightly insists on a basic level of continuous training for MOT testers. We believe we need the same rigour for those who maintain electric and hybrid cars. There is no place for an enthusiastic amateur maintaining these hi tech vehicles, they have complex systems with three times the voltage that you would expect to find in your home.

We hope to work with politicians of all parties to create the right conditions for this important market to flourish. A highly skilled workforce regulated with a government licence.

The opportunity for significant growth in the electric car market is already here. Let’s ensure we’re ready to make the most of it.