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Electric  
Vehicles

# On the charge with FI Real Estate Management

Setting the new workplace sustainability benchmark



# One of the largest commercial property owners in the UK, FI Real Estate Management (FIREM) operates approximately 10 million sq. ft. of office space.

FIREM had its sights set on becoming a sector leader in leasing progressive, future-proofed workplaces. The property management company knew that offering the convenience and reliability of a workplace charging infrastructure would set it apart from its competitors.

But commercial property in general was hit hard by the pandemic. An additional incentive for investing in sustainability was therefore to tempt workers back into their companies' offices. FIREM recognised that it needed to give people reasons to choose managed workspaces over their own living rooms or home offices.

## Bigger picture perspective

FIREM wanted advice and expertise to help shape its estate-wide electrification plan – and then the support to implement it.

Drax was already supplying FIREM with 100% renewable source electricity. However, it was the Drax Electric Vehicles team's wealth of knowledge and understanding of the wider electrification challenge that inspired the property management company to engage them.



We wanted a partner for our entire portfolio rather than just an immediate requirement – Drax stood head and shoulders above everyone else in that regard.



**Ryan Barber**, Head of Offices at FIREM



## Lynch Wood Park

FIREM's 'jewel in the crown', Lynch Wood Park, offers 350,000 sq.ft. of amazing space with landscaped gardens, a lake, a restaurant and an on-site gym.

The property management company selected the site to become the first in its estate to offer EV charging facilities. As part of a £2.5m internal refurbishment of the Peterborough-based premises, FIREM agreed an initial commitment to installing 12 charge points. It hoped the investment would support existing tenants' sustainability journeys, tempt workers back into the office and attract new customers.



## Building solid foundations

Focusing on the initial requirement for EV charging facilities at Lynch Wood Park, Drax carried out a detailed assessment of the car park and its electrical connections and capacity. It recognised FIREM's requirement for charge-point locations that would both be accessible for customers without showing favouritism – and highly visible to prospective tenants.

Drax communicated the projected timings and impact upon FIREM's tenants early on and stuck to the schedule.



Drax gave us a very clear timeline as to when things would happen – which helped us communicate clearly with tenants so they knew what to expect.



Ryan Barber, Head of Offices at FIREM

The energy expert was also aware of the importance of a user-friendly and stable software platform to help control the hardware investment and optimise efficiencies. Being able to identify any operational issues or software-update requirements was key in delivering a future-proof management solution.

Drax often spots problems – and communicates them – before customers are aware of their existence. Its support team responds to these issues quickly, and can even resolve the majority of them 'over the air' to ensure end users enjoy a seamless charging experience.



## Smooth application

Thanks to careful planning and clear communication, Drax was able to install the initial 12 charge points at Lynch Wood Park with minimal disruption to FIREM's 'business as usual'. Of course, the property management's primary concern was the impact on its tenants. So, it came as a huge relief that Drax was able to manage installations smoothly and stick to communicated timelines.



The customer experience has been one that a lot of our tenants have actually praised us for.



Ryan Barber, Head of Offices at FIREM



Drax has now installed approximately 50 charge points across four FIREM sites, most recently at 'The Woods', its Warwick premises. There, the property management company invested in 24 charge points – the largest number it's committed to in any one location – and it's reported a surge in prospective-tenant interest since.

## Implementation details



### Solution

Workplace charging, dual socket charging units



### Payment/authorisation method

Charge Assist mobile app



### Number of charging sockets

52 (October 2023), more planned

## The new standard

FIREM's investment in EV charging facilities has helped drive sales – in its case, new customers committing to long-term tenancy agreements. The property management company, in part thanks to Drax, now sees itself as being at the forefront of sustainable working.

The effective charging solutions that Drax has designed and delivered have given FIREM a distinct advantage over competitors. Starting the implementation in 2020 has enabled the property management company to reach a degree of comfort and confidence with rolling out charging facilities across its estate. It feels that many of its rivals are still either carrying out small trials or working out where to start.



All the assistance and information that Drax has supplied has been worth its weight in gold. We initially didn't know what we wanted – Drax was able to guide us in a way that's delivered clear benefits for both us and our customers.



Scott Worthington,  
Sustainability & Energy Manager at FIREM

## Changing customer attitudes



We had a tenant that was occupying 35,000 sq. ft. – a major part of the building. They were giving serious consideration to leaving us and moving to a different building.

One of the key drivers for them in deciding to stay was what we're doing from a sustainability point of view. As a result of our commitment – including installing the 12 EV charge points so they can offer their employees the ability to charge their cars – the business has signed up with us for another 10 years.



Ryan Barber, Head of Offices at FIREM



## Sustainability for all

Investing in EV charging facilities has enabled FIREM to reduce its Scope 3 emissions and lead the way in sustainable office space. It's also helped the property management company's customers to develop their environmental credentials.

Businesses leasing office space are often limited in how far they can project their sustainability goals. If landlords aren't willing to invest in progressive technology and facilities, companies have a ceiling on their decarbonisation potential. FIREM put sustainability at the top of its agenda for customers and Drax has been able to help convert these objectives into a reality.

Having access to charging facilities not only helps businesses to attract and retain staff, it enables them to transition their executive vehicles to EVs, too.



We're tenant-led, so by installing EV charge points we're assisting in our tenants' and customers' decarbonisation journeys – and we're also enabling them to extend their future sustainability targets.



**Scott Worthington,**  
Sustainability & Energy Manager at FIREM



## Commitment to consistency

The success of FIREM's charging facility rollout at sites like Lynch Wood Park and The Woods has reinforced the property management company's sustainability-development plans. As well as investing heavily in green energy generation, FIREM's planning to introduce charging facilities to more existing sites.

The company will also be building a further three million sq. ft. of tenant space over the coming years. Provisions for EV charging facilities are firmly in place – as are plans to continue working with Drax Electric Vehicles.