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THE BIG PICTURE

Next year, *Fleet News* will be publishing a mix of digital-only and print/digital issues.

There are several reasons for this decision, which follows a period during 2020, where we went digital-only for a four-month period, and 2021, where we enjoyed a surge in interest in our digital issues.

Reader research carried out this year showed the magazine was the primary source of information for fleet management best practice, case studies, interviews, news insight and vehicle reviews, with around half of fleet decision-makers preferring the printed magazine and a third opting for the digital magazine.

This has given us the confidence to introduce a mix of magazine options next year. Every quarter we will publish two print/digital issues and one digital-only issue.

We have also taken into consideration market conditions caused by Covid which have resulted in supply chain issues and significant shortages in new vehicle supplies. These commercial conditions also informed our decision to reduce the number of print issues we publish next year, lowering our cost base, while we wait for the automotive industry to rebalance.

However, it was important for us to continue to produce a monthly magazine, with 73% of our fleet readers telling us it was their main form of interaction with the brand (26% said newsletters or the website).

And with 44% of those readers saying that their main interaction was with the digital issue, and 56% print, we are confident that our 2022 plan will consolidate our position as the fleet sector's most read and most highly valued media brand, as underlined by the fact that 100% of survey respondents believe *Fleet News* offers them content of value to their job, 96% say we are unbiased and accurate and 92% say we help them to make better business decisions.

Like fleet operators themselves, we are resilient in the face of myriad challenges and will continue to bring you the trusted, useful and accurate information you expect from *Fleet News*.

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and happy and healthy New Year.



Stephen Briers,
editor-in-chief,
Fleet News



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Burning question:

Have you ever taken back or 'recycled' an unwanted Christmas present?

EDITORIAL

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No, although the kids occasionally receive gifts that we pass on, such as fairy socks for a teenage girl

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No, because I'm very easy to buy for and always need the socks that I get...

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I regifted an unwanted present to my sister forgetting she had given me it the previous Xmas

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Yes. The local charity shop has benefited from some jumpers/fleeces I've been given

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No. But I once got back a book on my birthday in March from someone I'd given it to at Xmas

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Last year, my friend gifted me a Minnie Mouse blanket. We are no longer friends.

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Doesn't everyone keep a stash of 'gift' wine to re-gift?

Photos istock, Chris Lowndes

PRODUCTION

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I have a box full of presents bought for my kids for re-gifting

Production editor

David Buckley

Fairly lucky in this respect. But, this year, I lost a jumper bought by my son on his first outing!

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Chris Stringer

I don't usually get any, but my wife has no problem recycling some of my 'useless' gifts to her into the black bin

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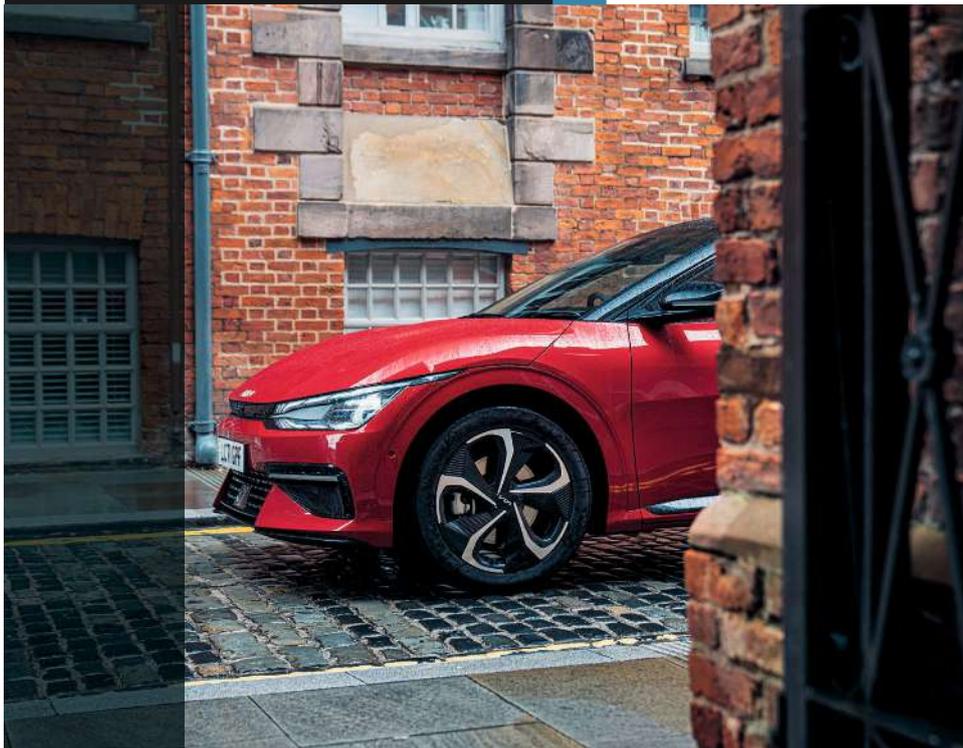
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New rules on mobile phone use while driving a 'missed opportunity', say road safety experts

Standardised testing of infotainment systems would help reduce risk of distracted driving, while allowing drivers to use phones in a cradle sends 'wrong message'

By Gareth Roberts

New rules on the use of mobile phones while driving, do not go far enough and have been labelled a "missed opportunity", by road safety experts.

The Government has announced it will be illegal to use a hand-held device under virtually any circumstance while driving, but hands-free calls will still be permitted and the potential risks around distracted driving from infotainment systems remains unresolved.

Fleet risk director at Drive Consulting and former fleet manager, Alison Moriarty, said: "While I welcome any changes that reduce distractions to drivers caused by mobile phone use, the proposal does not go far enough.

"It is proven that the physical effects of holding a device are not as much an impairment to concentration as the mental distraction of holding a conversation and this is the same when using hands-free.

"In fact, you are four times more likely to be involved in a collision, resulting in injury, if you are on a call including using hands-free options."

Shaun Helman, chief scientist for behavioural and data sciences at TRL (Transport Research Laboratory), welcomed the legislation being updated, but believes it could be construed as a "bad thing" by retaining the focus on hand-held devices.

"It reinforces the myth that's the most important thing," he said.

There are four types of distraction: manual, visual, auditory and cognitive. Helman explained: "What this law still does is focus on just one of those.

"In that sense, it's a missed opportunity and it's maintaining this flawed narrative that, as long as you're not holding something, you're safe."

It was already illegal to text or make

a phone call (other than in an emergency) using a hand-held device while driving. The new rules, which will come into force next year, will specifically ban drivers from using their phones to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or play games (fleetnews.co.uk, November 19).

MOBILE PHONE LAW LOOPHOLE

The Government launched a consultation on mobile phone use while driving in October 2020 to close a loophole in the original law.

The law referred to "interactive telecommunication" reflecting how, when it was written in 2003, smartphones were not in existence and mobile devices were used for sending texts or making calls.

It has enabled lawyers to successfully argue that using a phone's camera while driving does not constitute "interactive telecommunication".

It was brought to a head in 2019, when a driver had a conviction quashed for filming a crash on his mobile phone.

His lawyers successfully argued that the law only

banned the use of mobile phones to speak or communicate while behind the wheel.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said: "By making it easier to prosecute people illegally using their phone at the wheel, we are ensuring the law is brought into the 21st century."

Anyone caught using their hand-held device while driving will face a £200 fixed penalty notice and six points on their licence.

The Government says drivers will still be able to continue using a device 'hands-free' while driving, such as a sat-nav, if it's secured in a cradle.

However, if police deem that they are not to be in proper control of their vehicle, they can be charged with careless driving.

Moriarty says allowing drivers to still use phones in a cradle, sends the wrong message. "You are condoning them to take their eyes off the road, which can be lethal even for a few seconds," she said.

"Drivers will, inevitably, continue to scroll through messages and music choices and fail to be in full control of their vehicles."



“WHILE I WELCOME ANY CHANGES THAT REDUCE DISTRACTIONS TO DRIVERS CAUSED BY MOBILE PHONE USE, THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH”

ALISON MORIARTY, DRIVE CONSULTING



DEFINING DISTRACTION

Helman says that one of the problems is that "we don't really know what's safe enough".

A report he co-authored explains that there are rules of thumb, and specific studies that it can cite guidance from, such as research from the National Highways Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) around distractions in the vehicle.

It suggests that any task requiring individual glances away from the road of two seconds or more should not be allowed.

Work from TRL, meanwhile, has shown that response times to sudden events when driving in a simulator are slower with a task that mimics even a hands-free conversation on a phone.

The study found that the slowing of reactions was even greater than that seen when drivers were at the legal alcohol limit for driving.

Helman explained: "There's an acceptable level (of distraction), but I suspect it probably should be below hands-free phone conversations."

He also acknowledges that infotainment systems, which provide



ISTOCK/GORODENKOFF

drivers with increased connectivity and access to apps, are part of the problem.

"There's a clamouring for the driver's attention," he explained, with poor design being a particular problem. "Badly designed interfaces will jar and cause attentional refocusing."

Research from IAM RoadSmart, published last year, showed that infotainment systems impair reactions times behind the wheel more than alcohol and cannabis use (see graph).

The study – undertaken by TRL on behalf of IAM RoadSmart, the FIA and the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund – found that reaction times at motorway speeds increased average stopping distances to between four and five car lengths, drivers took their eyes off the road for as long as 16 seconds while driving, and using touch control resulted in reaction times that were even worse than texting while driving.

OTHER LEGAL ROUTES

Paul Loughlin, a solicitor specialising in motoring law at Stepsons, told *Fleet News* that the new legislation does not consider other distractions

within the vehicle such as infotainment systems or sat-navs or even phones being used as sat-navs.

However, he said: "Taking your attention away from the road for too long while engaging with technology that is fixed to the vehicle in some way can still be extremely dangerous and can still be considered an offence."

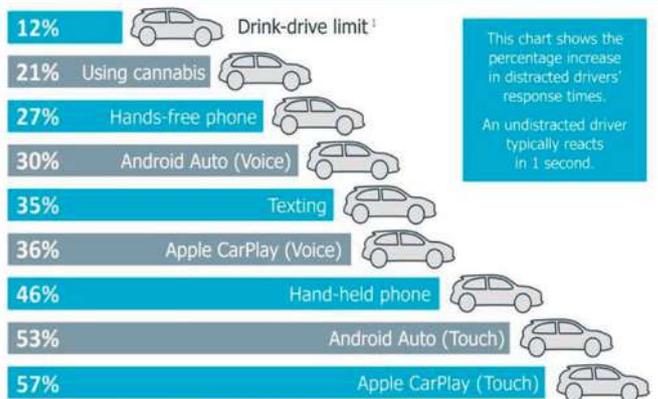
The law does not have a specific offence for those instances, but the offences of careless driving and dangerous driving are often applied where there is clear evidence that a driver is unduly distracted by an in-vehicle function that can lead to the standard of driving falling below that of a competent and careful driver, he explained.

"Careless driving can give rise to a penalty of between three-to-nine penalty points or even a ban from driving," he added.

"A conviction for dangerous driving carries with it a mandatory minimum ban of 12 months together with the risk of a prison sentence."

Those offences are generally used where there is evidence of bad driving that may or may not lead to an acci-

HOW DRIVERS' REACTION TIMES SLOW



Source: IAM RoadSmart study www.iamroadsmart.com/infotainment © Transport Research Laboratory ¹ Drink-drive limit in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2020

dent, but the police do have the option of deterring a driver from being unduly distracted by an infotainment system by charging them with an offence of 'not being in proper control of a vehicle'.

"There does not need to be evidence of bad driving in this scenario," said Loughlin. "This carries a penalty of three points and a fine."

TESTING OF IN-CAR DEVICES

TRL says what is needed is an approach to policy based on an agreed metric of attention, probably arrived at through a standardised testing approach for any new technologies.

It believes 'attention testing' should be akin to 'emissions testing' for personal, vehicle and roadside technologies.

By developing attention standards ↻

or guidance that manufacturers and software developers can follow when developing in-vehicle technologies and interactive elements, it could encourage a structured approach to assessing interface design.

Similar to Euro NCAP standards for vehicle design, this would encourage the development of safer infotainment systems, it says.

Moriarty agrees. "I think that there needs to be a holistic industry working group set up to mitigate the risks associated with distracted driving. This needs to include the vehicle manufacturers who are including increasingly more infotainment options in vehicles," she said.

"Any of these systems need to include rigorous safety features to stop drivers accessing them while driving."

Jason Wakeford, head of campaigns at road safety charity Brake, urged fleets to tighten up their road risk policies. "We hope fleet managers will now do even more to educate drivers about the risks of using mobile phones," he said.

ROBUST FLEET POLICIES

Moriarty says fleets need to have robust policies in place so that drivers understand their responsibilities.

"Fleet managers should educate drivers and companies should allow drivers to feel comfortable to not take calls while driving," she said.

Simon Turner, campaign manager for Driving for Better Business, believes the change in the law will force many

businesses to look again at their policies for mobile phone use while driving.

"To be compliant, and to ensure the safety of staff, other road users and pedestrians, it's essential that leaders integrate information surrounding the use of mobile phones into their driving for work policy," he said.

"Regular checks should be carried out to ensure that all employees have read and understood the guidelines and are complying with them."

MONITORING DRIVERS

Technology can help. Driver behaviour can be monitored by equipment such as dashcams with a driver-facing camera, says Saul Jeavons, director of road safety consultancy, The Transafe Network.

"The key is to win hearts and minds by educating drivers alongside any technological measures such as blocking apps or dashcams," he said.

"If drivers understand the dangers, and how things which feel safe can actually be dangerous, they will be less likely to offend.

"As with everything in road safety, there is no single magic bullet, but a combined toolkit of approaches can yield results."

Brake supports the families of road crash victims, including those who have had lives "torn apart" as a result of someone not paying proper attention when driving, says Wakeford.

"The temptation of using a phone can never be worth someone's life," he added.

Distracted driving should be as much of a taboo as drink-driving



REBECCA NEEDHAM
ROAD SAFETY
OFFICER (ENGLAND),
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR
THE PREVENTION OF
ACCIDENTS (RoSPA)

Do you remember what your mobile phone looked like in 2003? It probably allowed you to text, call and maybe play Snake II. That is, if you had one at all.

These days, our phones offer endless entertainment opportunities which can be fun, but dangerous in the context of driving a vehicle.

Drivers who pick up their phones when behind the wheel are gambling with their own lives and the safety of others – as they are four times more likely to crash.

Last year on Great Britain's roads there were 368 collisions, of all severities, where use of a mobile phone was assigned as a contributory factor.

The UK Government has recently announced that it will tighten the rules around mobile phone use while driving.

It will now be illegal to hold a phone and use it for virtually any purpose when behind the wheel. This change is hugely welcome, as the initial legislation which banned mobile phone use while driving was passed in 2003, well before the age of the smartphone, and focused on interactive communications only.

Of course, distracted driving is a problem that expands beyond mobile phones. Playing loud music, eating or drinking, having a conversation with a passenger, reaching into the glove box or lighting up a cigarette could all divert a driver's attention away from the road.

People cannot always safely multi-task while driving, especially if the second activity is time-consuming or complex.

Any secondary activity puts extra demands on the driver, which may reduce their driving standard. For example, it may cause the driver to become less observant or to make poor decisions about how to control the vehicle safely. This lower standard of driving means a driver is more likely to fail to anticipate hazards and this can, of course, result in accidents.

Distracted drivers can:

- Be less aware of what's happening on the road around them.
- Fail to see road signs.
- Fail to maintain proper lane position and a steady speed.
- Be more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front.
- React more slowly and take longer to brake.
- Be more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic.

Distracted driving is by no means a trivial matter, it can lead to serious and fatal collisions. Road accident data suggests that in 2020, 'distraction in vehicle' contributed to 2,034 accidents and 'distraction outside vehicle' contributed to a further 914 collisions.

Alarming, research undertaken by Ipsos Mori shows that using a mobile phone while driving is often indicative of a deep-seated and irresponsible attitude towards the road.

In order to make our roads safer for all, we need to instil the notion that distracted driving is as much of a taboo as drink-driving. To achieve this cultural change, we should use a range of tools, tougher penalties, consistent enforcement and targeted campaigns aimed at shifting attitudes.



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New charge point regulations 'don't go far enough', says fleet manager

Developers of new homes, supermarkets and workplaces obliged to install chargers

By Gareth Roberts

The fleet industry has welcomed new requirements forcing developers to install electric vehicle (EV) charge points, but say they fail to help employees who don't have a driveway.

The legislation will apply to new homes, supermarkets and workplaces as well as buildings undergoing major renovation from next year.

The Government estimates that up to 145,000 extra charge points will be installed across England each year thanks to the rules.

However, while welcoming the move, Duncan Webb, head of fleet for UK and Ireland at ISS, told the *Fleet News* at Ten webinar the Government missed a trick by not getting developers to invest in kerbside charging.

"It would have made a difference to far more people than just the new home-owners," he said.

"If, for every house you built, you had to build three kerbside chargers, you'd have four million chargers in the next 10 years and that would be really transformational."

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), added: "We've got a fundamental issue, particularly with vans, on kerbside charging, we just need more infrastructure."

The AFP estimates that, while 40% of drivers do not have a driveway, for commercial vehicle drivers, the figure is closer to 70%.

Hollick wants to create a national corporate database of postcodes for staff without the ability to install a home charger and then work with charging



145,000
extra charge points in England each year

providers and local authorities to ensure that kerbside charging solutions are made available where required (fleetnews.co.uk, November 15).

However, the Department for Transport (DfT) response to its four-month consultation on charge points in residential and non-residential buildings, published last month, only focuses on properties with off-road parking.

The Government says it will introduce legislation requiring every new home with off-road parking, including those created from a change of use, to have a charge point.

Residential buildings undergoing major renovation, which have more than 10 parking spaces after the redevelopment is complete, will also be required to have at least one charge point for each dwelling and cable routes in all spaces without charge points.

All new non-residential buildings, with more than 10 parking spaces, meanwhile, will need to have a minimum of one charge point and cable routes for one-in-five of the total number of spaces.

All non-residential buildings undergoing a major renovation, which will have more than 10 parking spaces once the renovation is complete, will also be required to have a minimum of one charge point and cable routes for one-in-five spaces.

The Government says that charge

points installed as a result of these regulations should have a minimum charging power of 7kW, be at least Mode 3 (smart) or equivalent and be untethered.

Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at the National Grid, says she and a lot of fleet industry colleagues were "disappointed" with the scope of the announcement.

"What we all wanted was EV-ready," explained McAtear. "The cables are in, but you get to choose (the charge point)."

She is concerned that developers will choose the "cheapest" devices, not the 'smart' infrastructure people really want. "I think it's a great step in the right direction, but it didn't go far enough," she said.



For more on this story and the latest industry topics, scan the QR code to watch *Fleet News* at Ten.



WE JUST NEED MORE INFRASTRUCTURE

PAUL HOLLICK, AFP

ELECTRIC ADVISORY RATE INCREASE

HMRC has increased the advisory electricity rate (AER) for electric vehicles (EVs) by 25%, from 4 pence per mile (ppm) to 5ppm, after it had remained unchanged since its introduction in 2018.

Gerry Keaney, chief executive of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), told *Fleet News* he was pleased to see HMRC respond to the lobbying from the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) and his association.

"This uplift is a positive move and shows that the Government is serious about providing a supportive environment for the push to zero emission motoring," he said.

The previous AER specified was just 4ppm which, added Paul Hollick, AFP chair, failed to cover reimbursement of fuel costs when most drivers are now paying closer to 18 pence per kWh even when charging at home.

"In truth, 5ppm is probably still too low – recent research among our members saw 6-7ppm mentioned as an appropriate rate – but it does represent an increase of 25% in one step, which is quite substantial," he said.

Alphabet eyes expansion among small firms making switch to EV

'Same consultancy as for large corporates' approach aims to win business in the SME sector

By Gareth Roberts

Alphabet is expanding its consultancy team to help small fleets switch from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to electric.

The vehicle leasing company says it wants the SME (small- to medium-sized enterprise) market to have access to the same level of expertise as its larger corporate customers.

Spencer Halil, chief commercial officer at Alphabet, told *Fleet News*: "We see that as a huge opportunity, because, as things stand, for most of our SME relationships, it's almost a vehicle-by-vehicle transaction."

Halil believes, with the right support, that can instead become a fully fleet-managed service.

"It's great for us as a business as well," he added, "because, as we diversify our corporate portfolio – so it's not all 300-, 500- or 700-car fleets and it's spread across a larger number of smaller fleets – then it's a much more sustainable proposition."

Alphabet did not disclose how many people it will be recruiting to its dedicated consultancy team, but said it had started the search for the person that will lead the new division and will be hiring a number of new people throughout 2022.

Halil explained: "It requires a few more people, but ultimately it's a people business and we're willing to make that investment."

Alphabet has an SME direct team, but Halil says that the vast majority of its business comes through its broker introductions.

"We're not going to move away from that channel as a source of SME business," he said. "It's really important to our volume."

"We've got some long-term relationships and we will support them with that consultancy offering, but we're going to look at ways we can scale up our SME direct (business) as well."

Halil suggests that could involve a partnership approach with aggrega-



ULTIMATELY
IT'S A PEOPLE
BUSINESS
AND WE'RE
WILLING
TO MAKE
THAT
INVESTMENT

SPENCER HALIL,
ALPHABET

tors, drawing on his experience with Alpha Financial Services.

"The hardest thing is the acquisition of that relationship," he said.

Having worked in motor finance for 26 years in the retail sector, Halil is a newcomer to the world of fleet and leasing. He joined the BMW Group in 2006 to start Alpha Financial Services, before joining Alphabet as chief commercial officer in February, replacing Simon Carr.

He said he was both surprised and impressed by the sector's dynamism.

"There's so much change going on," he said. "Electrification, digitali-

sation of the sale and just the sheer complexity and amount of customer touch-points, and different types of customers – there's a lot to get your teeth into."

Operating in many different channels, both direct and indirect, and offering products from personal contract hire (PCH) to salary sacrifice, Halil says the challenge for Alphabet is making sure the journey is simple, easy and as seamless as possible.

Digitalisation of services and a consultancy-based approach for complex subjects such as electrification will help.

He also acknowledges an expectation in the fleet and leasing sector that the driver will become more engaged.

Halil explained: "It's become more and more important for the lease company to better understand how the drivers feel, what's their experience of working with us, not just the fleet manager."

"As we have more self-service, more digitalisation, more complex product offerings, it's really important that we have a good communication channel with the people who use our products and services."

For Alphabet, says Halil, it is also about making sure the products it offers to its customers are the things they want and the things that they need.

"That also means cutting through the noise to some extent," he said. "Just because everybody thinks mobility-as-a-service solutions like subscription are the new, most sexy topic to talk about, is it what our customers really want at this time?"

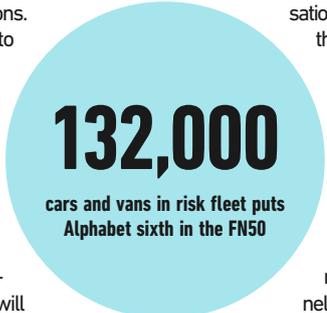
"Maybe it's what they'll want in five or 10 years' time, but let's make sure we've got the basics right first."

Sustainability and technology

Alphabet recently refreshed its branding with a redesigned logo and corporate identity to reflect a new strategic focus of the company – sustainability and technology (fleetnews.co.uk, October 26) see QR code below.

The leasing company's UK division, which was ranked sixth in this year's FN50 with a risk fleet of more than 132,000 cars and vans, will also have a new man at the helm from January 1, 2022.

Mike Dennett, CEO at BMW Financial Services (GB), will also become CEO of Alphabet (GB). Current CEO, Nick Brownrigg, who has held the role since 2016, will take up a new position as CEO of BMW Group Financial Services in the Netherlands.



Aurelius seeks more acquisitions to further improve fleet capabilities

IT development is being tailored to make journey between its providers seamless for fleets

By Gareth Roberts

Aurelius could be adding to its portfolio of fleet-related providers after revealing talks are “well-advanced” with several companies.

The private equity company bought BT Fleet Solutions a little more than two years ago and later rebranded it Rivus Fleet Solutions.

Subsequently, it bought Pullman Fleet Services from Wincanton a year ago following the acquisition of GKN Wheels and Structures from GKN, before buying AutoRestore from Belron International, earlier this year.

Recently, it has been busy nurturing further potential acquisitions.

REACH IN EUROPE

Over the past decade, Aurelius Group has invested in more than 100 companies across Europe, with its current portfolio employing more than 12,500 people, generating combined annual revenues in excess of £3 billion.

Tristan Nagler, a partner at Aurelius UK, told *Fleet News* he is excited at being able to bring “strategically interesting” businesses together.

“The couple of deals we’ve done won’t be the only ones, we hope there’ll be many more,” he said.

In an ideal world, that could be one or two a year in the future, but he said talks were already “well-advanced” on a small number of prospects.



“THE COUPLE OF DEALS WE’VE DONE WON’T BE THE ONLY ONES”

TRISTAN NAGLER,
AURELIUS UK



Aurelius is keen to ensure the components of its portfolio combine well in the fleet offering

However, he stressed: “We’re not just collecting badges, we need to prove this as a group.”

Operationally, the challenge is making the journey between the different service providers acquired by Aurelius a seamless one for the end-user fleet.

As CEO of Rivus Fleet Solutions and managing director of Pullman Fleet Services, that is the responsibility of David Myers.

He was appointed CEO of Rivus in November 2020, before also taking on the role as MD of Pullman.

Strategically, the business is employing three development strands: electric vehicles (EV), the target operating model and its IT systems.

The target operating model is important for future acquisitions as it links the flow of information into the business and how the support team uses that information.

Development of IT systems will be crucial to allowing this and Myers acknowledges that, when completed, it will make Rivus a “very different organisation” from where it is today.

The IT platforms, which will allow the businesses to work together “beneath the covers”, is gradually being implemented, he said. However, he admitted:

“There are a lot of dynamics that have to be thought through.”

In 2020, Aurelius announced it would close ‘loss-making garages’, reducing its garage network from 65 to 54, but during the past year, the garage network has been rebranded and upgraded, with workshops in Cardiff and Southampton, for example, now offering increased support for HGV operators.

TECHNICIAN TRAINING

Furthermore, to achieve EV-readiness, technicians have undertaken training programmes to IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) standards and have been supported by new diagnostic equipment for EVs, tooling and charging facilities.

Diagnostics have also been upgraded for non-EVs.

It has already upskilled more than a quarter of its technicians, providing an EV capability in all its locations, and intends to retrain a further half of the team next year.

Rivus was also announced by electric van manufacturer Arrival as one of four service network partners in Europe.

Arrival will give Rivus, which was named Fleet Supplier of the Year at the

2021 Fleet News Awards, access to repair and maintenance documentation, in person and online training, predictive and automated diagnostics, and the distribution of spare parts, helping to further upskill technicians.

Speaking to *Fleet News* at the start of the year, Myers said Rivus, which has 85,000 vehicles under fleet management, with BT Group accounting for around 32,000, was plotting to become “the strongest player in the market”.

A year later, that ambition has not waned: Myers said: “Our primary objective is to be a specialist outsourced provider in fleet.”

“The label of fleet management is not wide enough for us now, because we’re not just managing your fleet.”

For example, Myers says one of the areas that it specialises in is custom engineering vehicles, such as fitting lightweight racking for vans.

He explained: “Where that’s really come into its own now is EV, because the weight of the battery is taking up to a third of the payload.”

“We’re re-thinking a lot of things to enable customers to achieve their sustainability objectives. The innovation we’re bringing is enabling customers to work differently.”

Get nominations in now to celebrate the leading women in automotive

Prestigious Cox Automotive's Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award now in its fourth year

By Stephen Briers

Nominations have just opened for Cox Automotive's 2022 Barbara Cox Woman of the Year award, run in partnership with Bauer Media's B2B titles *Fleet News*, *AM* and *Smart Transport*.

The prestigious award, now in its fourth year, honours inspirational women within the UK automotive industry who demonstrate a commitment to innovation and leadership.

There have been some exceptional winners of the award since it was launched in 2019 including inaugural winner, Beryl Carney, JCT600 head of commercial vehicles; Alison Jones, senior vice-president & Stellantis country manager UK in 2020; and, most recently, Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at National Grid, who picked up the award earlier this year.

The award is named after Barbara



Cox, who served as director of Cox Enterprises, Cox Automotive's parent company in the USA, and recognises an inspirational female leader and role model in the automotive industry.

The winner of the award receives £5,000 to invest on her own personal development.

Alison Fisher, HR director at Cox Automotive International, said: "It's

fantastic to see the Barbara Cox Woman of the Year award reaching its fourth year in the UK.

"There are so many women doing great things within the automotive industry and it is important to recognise their achievements.

"The Barbara Cox Award is our chance to celebrate their impact within the industry and inspire other

women to join the automotive sector too.

"As a company, Cox Automotive is firmly committed to promoting inclusion, diversity and equity. We are already supporting many strands of activity in this area which have an emphasis on gender balance. This includes our rapidly growing 'Women with Drive' network and becoming patrons of the Automotive 30% Club, which aims for 30% of leadership roles to be filled by diverse

women by 2030."

Lorna McAtear, current holder of the award, added: "Winning the Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award was a major personal accolade. There are so many skill sets needed in this industry now and women have so much to offer. It's great to see organisations such as Cox Automotive leading these initiatives and recognising the crucial role of women in automotive."

This year's judging panel for the Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award will see Fisher joined by Liam Quegan, the board sponsor for 'Women with Drive' at Cox Automotive Europe, previous winners Alison Jones and Lorna McAtear, plus Lynda Ennis of automotive and mobility executive search firm Ennis & Co, and Lindsay Greatbatch, head of B2B Memberships at Bauer Media.

Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief of *Fleet News*, *AM* and *Smart Transport*, said: "We're delighted to once again be partnering with Cox Automotive to highlight and honour the important role women play across the automotive industry.

"We hope that, by raising the profile of inspiring women, we will help to encourage more to consider automotive as a career choice."

Nominations for the award are invited from across the automotive industry and should be entered via <http://womenwithdrive.co.uk/barbara-cox-award/nominate-here> by January 21, 2022. The winner will be announced on March 8, 2022 – International Women's Day.

THE JUDGING LINE-UP



Alison Fisher, HR director at Cox Automotive International



Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at National Grid and 2021 winner



Lindsay Greatbatch, head of B2B Memberships at Bauer Media



Alison Jones, senior vice-president & Stellantis country manager UK, and 2020 winner



Lynda Ennis, founder of Ennis & Co



Liam Quegan, the board sponsor for 'Women with Drive' at Cox Automotive Europe

Robo-taxis last in line

Self-driving vehicle technology is advancing rapidly, but passenger cars are likely to be at the back of the queue when the technology becomes mainstream. *Andrew Ryan* reports

When the concept of self-driving cars was first mooted, a popular image was of a robo-taxi that could, on-demand, arrive at someone's house to give them a lift to their destination before going to perform the same service for other people.

But, while the advancement in autonomous vehicle technology has been rapid, that is likely to be one of its last applications.

There are still legal hurdles to overcome, while the technology must be proven to be safe to mingle with human-driven vehicles, as well as in areas which are busy with pedestrians and cyclists.

But there have also been a number of successful trials, such as the Oxbotica-led Project Endeavour, which have shown how safe the technology can be.

"When we were running our cars in central London over six weeks in the summer, our autonomy there was 98.75%," says Paul Newman, founder and CEO of the autonomous vehicle software company.

"We switched to working in Germany for four weeks and it took us just a day to configure the system to work on the other side of the road on a completely different road network."

However, Newman – like many observers – feels passenger cars will be last in line when it comes to self-driving technology becoming widely available.

"For us, the order of autonomy will be mining, industrial autonomy, logistics and delivery, shuttles, and further out will be robo-taxis," he adds.

Newman has been involved in developing and operating autonomous vehicles in mines for around 20 years, and this sees them used in a controlled environment with no unpredictable safety risks such as human-controlled vehicles or pedestrians.

INDUSTRIAL AUTONOMY

"With industrial autonomy, we know there are a lot of roads out there that are not public highways where stuff needs to be moved," he says.

His company, for example, has been working with

BP to introduce autonomous vehicles at petrochemical plants.

An initial trial at the Lingen refinery in Germany, which has almost 20 miles of roads, saw a self-driving vehicle travel more than 100 miles fully autonomously, safely navigating the extensive and complex environment.

BP now hopes to deploy its first autonomous vehicles for monitoring operations at the refinery.

It says the self-driving vehicles will enhance human operations and improve safety by increasing the monitoring for irregular conditions, faulty equipment and security threats, making it more frequent and around the clock.

The autonomous vehicles' enhanced analytics will also help the site reduce the size of its current fleet.

Other industrial sites which are already trialling autonomous vehicles are airports, where the technology is being used to transport baggage between the terminal building and aeroplane, while a £4.9 million project is being developed in the north-east of England to determine whether driverless trucks can be used to deliver parts in the area's automotive supply chain.

One of the partners in this is StreetDrone and CEO Mike Potts says: "The reality is that autonomous cars are still many years from widespread adoption."

"However, the technologies that we've already developed can be used in an industrial logistics setting and will quickly scale to many other similar contexts where reducing cost and increasing safety are critical factors in profitable organisation."

AUTONOMOUS DELIVERIES

StreetDrone is also targeting the autonomous delivery sector and aims to have its driverless vehicles on UK roads by 2023.

In September, it announced a £3m investment from high street retailer Wilko, with CEO Jerome Saint-Marc saying autonomous vehicles were "the future of automated logistics".

THE REALITY IS THAT AUTONOMOUS CARS ARE STILL MANY YEARS FROM WIDESPREAD ADOPTION

MIKE POTTS, STREETDRONE



The aim is to replace the company's delivery vans with Pix-e, StreetDrone's first autonomous delivery vehicle, which is fully-electric and roughly the same size as a Renault Twizy. It will have a maximum speed of 20mph and eight lockers for cargo.

Another retailer, supermarket Asda, has partnered with autonomous mobility start-up Wayve to trial autonomous delivery vans in London as part of the retailer's last-mile operation.

The 12-month trial is due to begin early next year, with the vans operating under the supervision of safety drivers. It aims to discover how to integrate autonomy into the online grocery space and how the technology can shape last-mile delivery.

In October, Ocado also announced it was partnering with Wayve and had made a £10m investment in the company.

Its technology will be used in a number of Ocado vans on urban routes in London as part of a trial.

A portion of Ocado's existing delivery fleet will also be fitted with data collection devices to

SELF-DRIVING VEHICLES TO CHANGE ROLE OF A FLEET MANAGER

The dawn of self-driving vehicles will change the responsibilities and roles of a fleet manager, says Becks Posner, social behavioural research and evaluation lead at Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV).

The development of the technology will lead to an increase in the number of fleets which operate autonomous vehicles and will likely lead to a reduction in vehicle ownership and, in turn, an increase in the use of shared mobility or on-demand transport.

"There's actually potential in the long term for all vehicles to be part of a fleet, which in itself is quite a huge change in terms of the implications for fleet operators and the roles required around that," says Posner.

"We're also likely to see a change in the responsibilities and roles of fleet managers.

"Potential changes include legal responsibilities, but there will also be other ones including the maintenance of the vehicles.

"Without an end-user in charge, in essence, the fleet operator will be responsible for all aspects of the maintenance, including refuelling or recharging, ensuring the roadworthiness and the insurance of the vehicle. There will also be changes in the skillset required to ensure the safety and the cyber resilience of the software systems.

"And there will be more focus on ensuring the integration of the journey. How would you manage downtime, and ensure the vehicles are able to navigate the environment?"

Pix-e is StreetDrone's first autonomous delivery vehicle



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Asda has partnered with autonomous mobility start-up Wayve

provide information on how humans deal with traffic, with the findings feeding into the research.

Ocado is also partnering with Oxbotica to develop new systems for self-driving vehicles and robots, including potential future machines that could deliver groceries from 'kerb to kitchen'. It also invested £10m in the company.

HUGE OPPORTUNITY

"There's a huge opportunity in logistics for automation, not only in terms of reducing costs, but also providing even tighter timescales for delivery and being able to deliver exactly where you want to," says Alex Harvey, chief of advanced technology at Ocado.

"A lot of people are talking about last-mile logistics and a very important part of the Ocado proposition is actually delivering groceries to the door.

"When it comes to moving people, they will be happy to come out of their front door and get into a vehicle.

"But when it comes to groceries – and the average grocery basket has 50-plus items, chilled, ambient and frozen – we have to maintain the quality of the goods all the way to the customers' doorstep.

"My totemic example is a frail old granny at the top of a block of flats. It's unacceptable to ask her to walk down and up several flights of stairs enough times to pick up 10 bags.

"We need to be able to develop robotic systems that, ultimately, can deal with the unstructured

environment of actually getting out of the vehicle and being able to go to someone's doorstep, whether it be navigating drives, parked cars, pets, children, toys, or whatever else it is."

However, Jim Hutchinson, CEO of Fusion Processing, which is the lead in the upcoming Project CAVForth autonomous bus trial, feels a hybrid model between fully-autonomous and human control may be best suited to last-mile deliveries.

"You might have a remote drive centre where you have a group of drivers monitoring a number of self-driving vehicles," he says.

"If those vehicles get themselves to within a couple of miles of where they need to go, and there are particular complexities, such as being in the middle of a city, the situation may need a bit of human judgement in there. That's where the drivers then pick up the controls remotely."

AUTONOMOUS BUS TRIAL

From spring, Project CAVForth will operate along a 14-mile route across the Forth Road Bridge between Fife and Edinburgh, travelling mostly on motorways.

The single-deck buses will be required to safely interact with other traffic, negotiating junctions and bus stops while carrying fare-paying passengers at speeds up to 50mph.

These will operate in a set area, which makes fully-autonomous driving in these situations much more achievable than in some other use cases.

"If you're talking about a personal car where you've got lots of different users and they're all looking to do all sorts of different things, they won't necessarily stick to roads," says Hutchinson.

"People may drive to a festival and when they get there a farmer may have put up a handwritten sign directing them to parking.

STUCK IN A BOG

"So that vehicle has got to know that it can park in that field and then navigate around it without getting stuck in the boggy bit.

"That's just one particular instance and there's all sorts of different challenges like that.

"Yes, they're all solvable, but you've got a much bigger problem space than say 'right, these buses have to work in London, or they have to work in Edinburgh.

"They haven't got to park in a muddy field. They've got a particular area and we can make sure we look at that area and say 'yes, everything that they will be asked to do in that area, they can do'.

"That's a very containable problem and, as engineers, that's what you look for.

"You could really tightly constrain the operation of an autonomous vehicle to one route, but you don't really want to do that because at some point it will have to take a diversion and it will have to cope with roadworks and all those sorts of things.

"But constraining it to an area or a set of routes is operationally doable."



THREE INNOVATIONS THAT COULD HELP YOU ELECTRIFY YOUR FLEET

The industry is awash with companies touting products and services to help organisations adopt or operate electric vehicles. Here, [Andrew Ryan](#) looks at three new solutions that could ease or accelerate the transition, as well as increase efficiencies and reduce costs

1 ZIPCHARGE GO

One of the major obstacles facing fleet decision-makers seeking to electrify their fleets is the question of employees who do not have ready access to home charging.

Where an organisation doesn't operate a back-to-base model in which vehicles are charged at a depot, this means a driver is reliant on off-street, destination or rapid charging, all of which are potentially less convenient and/or more expensive than charging at home.

This is an issue ZipCharge aims to tackle with its Go unit.

Founded by Richie Sibal and Jonathan Carrier, the London-based company has developed a portable

charger. It is the size of a small suitcase, weighs from 25kg and contains lithium-ion batteries with capacities of either 4kWh or 8kWh.

This can be charged at a domestic three-pin socket before being transported – it is wheeled and has a retractable handle, again, similar to a suitcase – to the vehicle where it will take either 30 or 60 minutes to transfer its charge to the BEV, dependent on the version of Go being used.

This is, says Carrier, enough charge to power a BEV for up to 20 miles (4kWh version) or 40 miles (8kWh), which means it can be used in place of a home charger or in a number of other situations to help a fleet increase efficiency and reduce charging costs.

"ZipCharge Go was entirely conceived with the fleet market in mind," says Carrier.

"We've done a significant amount of work over the

past year-and-a-half speaking to a range of different prospective customers.

"We've been fortunate that we've had the privilege of speaking to car rental fleets, to car-sharing, to return-to-base operations through to logistics providers.

"We've had the opportunity to learn from them – not to pitch our solution, but to gain an understanding of what their needs are."

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Both Carrier and Sibal are steeped in automotive industry experience.

Sibal has spent more than 20 years in electronics, software and systems engineering and leadership at manufacturers including McLaren Automotive, London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC)/London

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ZipCharge Go may look like a suitcase on wheels, but it packs a charging punch



SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Nicola Austin, fleet consultant at Zenith



Every fleet is unique and so is every business, which is why everyone's transition roadmap is different and moving at its own pace.

We know when the Government's deadlines are, but between now and the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles in 2030, and 2040, when all new heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) sold in the UK must be zero emission, each fleet's journey will have its own milestones. It's all about a bespoke and organic transition.

When considering your company's roadmap, two key questions are:

1. How fast do you need to act with your current fleet cycles?

Thinking about the speed of transition, there are many factors to consider. Fleet has a considerable impact on your company's ESG agenda, which means you may have wider decarbonisation targets and deadlines to meet. There's also a significant opportunity to improve your company's overall sustainability by moving to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Almost all car fleets now have a policy in place to allow for electric cars on fleet and are reaping the rewards now from drivers who can easily make the switch. With ever-increasing models with new technology and improved electric ranges, there is a real opportunity to offer more cars that meet the needs of your drivers, while going at the pace that suits your organisation and the profile of your fleet.

2. How will you address your challenges going forward?

Facing your future challenges head-on by offering flexibility and choice is important so next steps need to consider further challenges to deliver ZEVs for other assets types. Dependent on your fleet's requirements, the transition may be more complex for some of your driver segments. For this population, you may need to review your operating model as there are often opportunities to change journeys or restructure your fleet to support the transition and your sustainability targets.

When it comes to net zero, there isn't a standard roadmap for every fleet. That's why it's more important than ever to work with a strategic partner that can advise on a complete solution.

For the latest electric insights visit zenith.co.uk/insights, call 0344 848 9311 or email oneteam@zenith.co.uk

Taxi, Lotus Sportscars and Gordon Murray Automotive.

Carrier has worked for a similar time in product planning, commercial and strategy at OEMs and start-ups including McLaren Automotive, JLR, Mazda and Fiat. The pair worked together at McLaren.

"My career has been in product planning and product strategy, which means I've been involved in conceptualising a product from the ground up, working with the designers and engineers to say who is the market? What's the car for? How will they use it? How do you deliver it?," says Carrier.

"In the car industry we're absolutely focused on total cost of ownership (TCO) and, particularly, fleet users.

"I've done it with cars like the Jaguar XE, for example, and we've applied exactly the same philosophy in the conceptualisation of a car as we have to this charger and, therefore, incorporating the needs of the fleet market."

Sibal began developing the product in March last year, with Carrier joining in October.

"Many fleets will typically operate on a daily mileage of somewhere between 20 and 50 miles, and our 8kWh can deliver up to 40 miles, so it's well suited to the daily operational needs those fleets have.

"However, we recognise that not all fleets are homogenous in terms of their driving distances and profiles, so we don't see the Go as a solution for every fleet in every circumstance."

He says that as well as a replacement for a home charger, the Go can be used in a variety of ways to help fleets optimise their operations.

DESTINATION CHARGING

Carrier says this includes using the Go for destination charging to fit the process into a vehicle's daily operation.

"If you take fleets that have a 30-minute to one-hour dwell time where an engineer may, for example, be mending a boiler or servicing a photocopier, they can use that time to charge their vehicle using Go no matter where they are parked," he says.

"Allowing a fleet to charge during its normal operations increases the range of a vehicle, not only by the mileage from a Go unit, but by the distance the vehicle would have to drive to a charge point.

"It also increases the efficiency of the asset because it charges while the employee is doing their job, so it reduces downtime as well.

"This is a far more efficient way of deploying charging. It fits around how a fleet would otherwise operate the vehicle and increases the efficiency of the asset which, ultimately, improves the customer service of their end operation."

The Go also has a three-pin plug socket which means it can be used to power tools and equipment which would otherwise be powered by electricity generated by diesel.

"It can reduce CO₂ emissions that way as well," says Sibal. "4kWh is quite a lot: a domestic home uses about 4.4kWh a day if it doesn't have electric heating."

Carrier says the Go can also be used to complement depot-based chargers which may reduce any need for a costly upgrade to a depot's grid connection or reduce the number of chargers which may be needed.

The unit will also be able to integrate with 

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↳ a fleet's own operations, allowing for greater transparency and efficiency.

Sibal adds: "We're designing the back office from scratch, which allows us to develop a rich API (application programming interface) that will allow our cloud network to interact with any fleet network in accordance with their requirements.

"Just like fleet managers have fleet management software, if they take a large number of the units, we will provide them with charger management software.

"That will allow them to learn and optimise the deployment of the chargers to where they can be most effective for their fleets.

"Therefore, the API interfaces with their fleet management software, not only for utilisation and TCO tracking but, critically, as and when they deploy their vehicles, how and when the ZipCharge Go should be deployed and to which vehicles to maximise its utilisation and therefore the efficiency gain a fleet can realise."

FIRST UNITS DUE Q4 2022

ZipCharge will begin trials with select partners from next spring with a delivery of the first units to customers expected in quarter four.

"We are looking for fleet partners who would be willing to work with us so we can get some real-world learning and feedback," says Carrier.

"We want some tangible data that we can share publicly that says 'this is the real impact and benefit' and then, hopefully, that becomes a trigger for other fleets to go 'that's worth looking at'."

Go will be available to buy either outright (price has yet to be announced) or leased through a subscription from £49 a month.

Further product development is due to follow.

"We have a roadmap over the next six-to-eight years, where we have forecast and planned in improvements in battery chemistry and energy density," says Carrier.

"This means we can either make that 4kWh unit lighter with the same energy, or keep the weight the same and increase the energy density.

"We have plans for a range of different products as well as how those are deployed, but we are not talking about those at the moment. They are all a part of delivering our vision and that vision is to democratise EV charging so we can allow anybody to charge no matter where they park."



Mike Strahlman says JustPark's goal is to provide a charger within a five-minute walk for fleet drivers

2 FLEETCHARGE

Parking platform JustPark is aiming to help fleets tackle the problems caused by a lack of off-street home charging through its new FleetCharge solution.

JustPark promises to provide fleet drivers with a dedicated off-street charger within five minutes' walk of their home, allowing them to charge overnight.

"The idea of FleetCharge is that we're unlocking the power of community charging by using our 'superpower' of finding and sourcing spaces to knock down the barriers to EV adoption," says Mike Strahlman, director of EV at JustPark.

"As well as peer-to-peer locations, we have partnerships with thousands of B2B sites across the country that have multiple spaces which are under-utilised.

"We can electrify those spaces and

guarantee fleets access to their dedicated chargers when they want them, effectively creating private chargers and a private network for each fleet operating customer."

Strahlman says chargers will be located either at one of JustPark's existing 50,000 parking locations or at a new site.

Chargers will be located at a mix of domestic, business and parking facilities, and always available for the designated user.

Octopus Energy Services will install and manage the charging units, and will allow fleet customers to access their company's entire private charging network through the JustPark app.

Drivers will also have access to Octopus Energy's Electric Juice network of public charge points.

FleetCharge consolidates the total cost of charging, parking and hardware into a single price per driver.

WE HAVE A ROADMAP OVER THE NEXT SIX-TO-EIGHT YEARS, WHERE WE HAVE FORECAST AND PLANNED IN IMPROVEMENTS IN BATTERY CHEMISTRY AND ENERGY DENSITY

JONATHAN CARRIER, ZIPCHARGE

3 SILVER POWER SYSTEMS

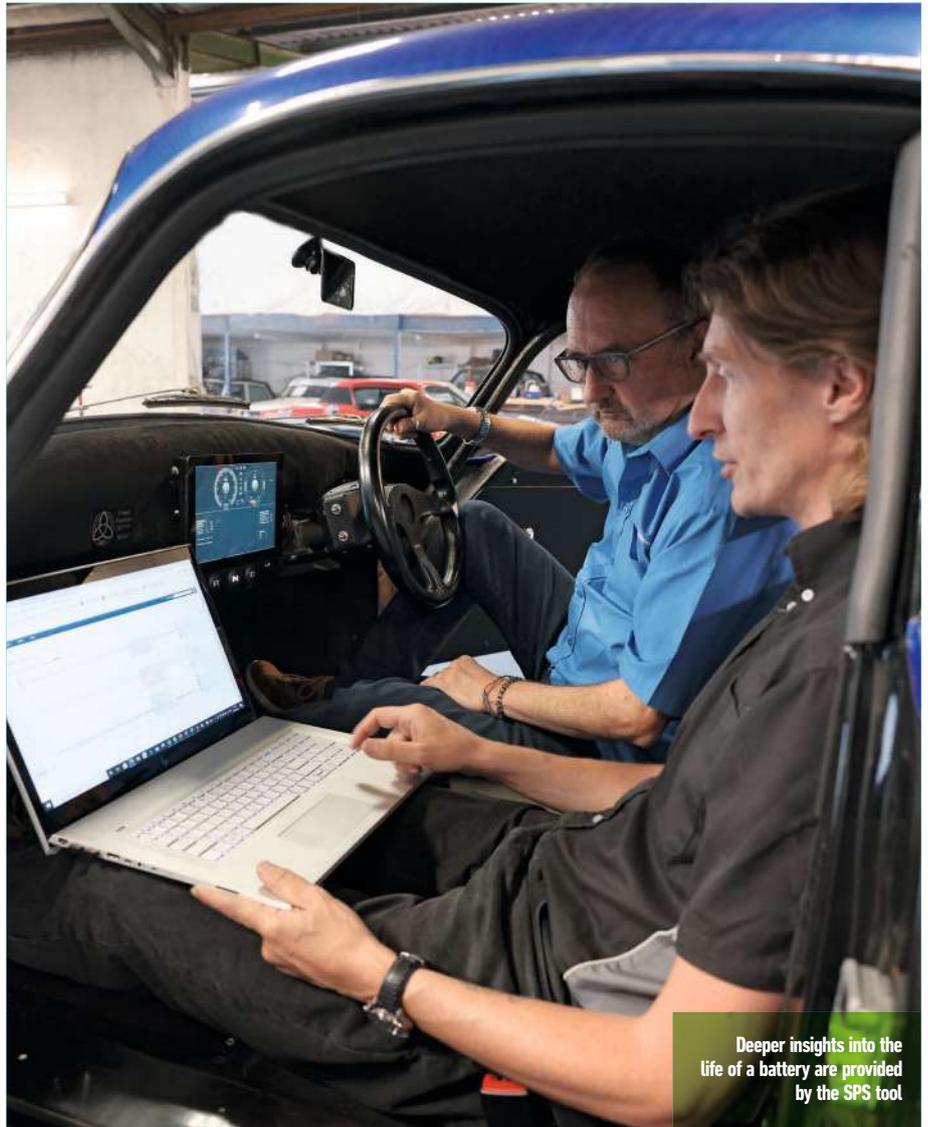
Battery analytics specialist Silver Power Systems (SPS) has created a tool which can predict EV battery health and lifetime, potentially helping fleets to run their vehicles more efficiently and predict future residual values.

The UK-based company has led the Redtop (real-time electrical digital twin-operating platform) research programme this year, which has seen Imperial College, London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC) and JSCA – the research and development division of the Watt Electric Vehicle Company – carry out a real-world trial.

Since January, around 50 LEVC TX electric taxis have travelled more than 300,000 miles under the programme, which is part-funded by the Advanced Propulsion Centre UK.

Each vehicle has been fitted with a data-collecting IoT (Internet of things) device which constantly communicates with SPS's cloud-based software.

This has led to the creation of digital twins of actual EV batteries, giving a real-time view of battery performance and state-of-health, as well as the potential to enable these models to predict battery lifespan.



Deeper insights into the life of a battery are provided by the SPS tool

THE ULTIMATE AIM IS TO MAKE THE BATTERY LAST LONGER AND THE VEHICLE LAST LONGER

PETE BISHOP, SPS



From left, SPS chief technology officer Pete Bishop, programme manager Liam Mifsud and director Parminder Singh

“We have a small IoT device that sits in the vehicle and that connects to the battery CAN bus, so we get very deep insights into how the vehicle is being operated,” says Pete Bishop, chief technology officer at SPS.

“Within the battery in a vehicle there is a battery management system. But, typically, it doesn't actually manage the performance, it's more of a safety management system.

“We are running in the cloud far more sophisticated algorithms about how the battery is working so we get much deeper insights into the factors that are degrading it, the performance it is giving, the impact of range, the calculated state of health much more accurately than the vehicle does.

“We are then able to highlight driver behaviour, charging behaviour and things that are impacting it, and recommend ways of optimising the use of the EV as well as optimise the recharge process at depots.

“The ultimate aim is to make the battery last longer, make the vehicle last longer and maximise its residual value. We are looking at a number of problem areas that have come in with electrification that will be starting to impact fleets as they make that transition.”

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Volvo Fleet and Business

Fuel consumption and emissions for the MY22 Volvo XC40 Recharge: WLTP electric energy consumption 2.5 – 2.6 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 256.0 – 259.1 miles. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare equivalent electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. The Volvo XC40 Recharge requires mains electricity for charging. These figures may not reflect real-life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

INTELLIGENT CHARGING IS THE KEY TO ELECTRIFYING FLEETS

AI-driven technology can secure lowest-cost charging and highest-impact carbon savings, says *Ben Fletcher*

Transport is the largest emitting sector of greenhouse gases (GHGs), producing 27% of the UK's total 2019 emissions.

Recently, the UN Emissions Gap Report gravely stated that the pledge to cut carbon emissions will fail to keep the global temperature at less than 1.5C this century unless further – and more significant – action is taken.

The electrification of fleets is vital in the challenge to decarbonise transport in the UK and meet the UK's 2050 net-zero goals.

Fleet electrification can help lead the electric charge across the wider transport network, but also comes with benefits for fleet operators.

A viable, realistic way to efficiently charge a fleet of electric vehicles (EVs), which also reduces workload for the fleet manager, is essential to achieving 100% fleet electrification. This is where intelligent charging comes into its own.

WHAT IS INTELLIGENT CHARGING?

Intelligent charging has the ability to manage charging based on customer and environmental inputs through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) or other software means.

This can learn the usage patterns of vehicles on the fleet and ensure they are charged accordingly while also taking into account power availability to the site and on the local grid.

From 2010 to 2020, the number of ultra-low emissions vehicles on the road increased by 4,799%, and the EV revolution will see that accelerate over the next decade.

By using AI-driven charging technology, we can intelligently manage these fleets of batteries, securing lowest-cost charging and highest-impact carbon savings.

This will ensure the transition to net-zero emission for fleets is as fast and efficient as possible while also enabling greater access to greener energy.

BENEFITS OF INTELLIGENT CHARGING FOR FLEET MANAGEMENT

As it stands, large fleets cannot charge hundreds of electric vans at the same time without it impacting the grid.

Smart charging for EVs optimises charging to happen when energy is cleanest and cheapest, with machine learning able to modify charging patterns based on factors such as vehicle usage, cost of energy and weather forecasts, ensuring fleets have minimal downtime and minimal running costs.

By shifting energy demand to less constrained times, intelligent charging can alleviate pressure on local networks while still ensuring that vehicles are ready for use on time. This can reduce the cost



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ben Fletcher has been working for Moixa for about 18 months, successfully leading a team to help customers with EVs get the most out of their vehicles through Moixa's technology. He has solid experience in the automotive industry, having worked at

Renault for nearly 20 years, latterly as head of EV in the UK.

of infrastructure, as well as running costs of the fleet itself.

Fleet electrification poses challenges for fleet and facilities managers, such as increased consumption of energy, limitations on local grid connections and costly reinforcements to ensure the power network can support the increase in EVs on the grid.

The use of innovative algorithms, that predict load and determine the best charging plan to maximise savings within grid constraints, will optimise cost savings for fleets.

BY MAKING CHARGING SMARTER THROUGH AI AND MACHINE LEARNING, EVs CAN OPTIMISE POWER RENEWABLE SOURCES

By making EV charging smarter through AI and machine learning, electric vehicles can optimise power renewable sources, while maximising the value of energy.

This smart ecosystem will be vital to ensuring that EVs bring immediate environmental benefits, while also supporting balancing the increase in demand of energy from the grid by enabling vehicle telemetry, tariffs and charging points to interact with each other more closely.

UNLOCKING FLEXIBILITY REVENUE STREAMS

Innovative software that connects energy storage devices to the grid will allow powerful EV batteries to function as energy storage points while optimising power distribution throughout the fleet.

Vehicles can be charged when there is excess solar or wind while giving power back to the grid when it's not needed.

This opens up further revenue streams as fleets can sell energy back to the grid via flexibility programmes. Unlocking flexibility means fleets can participate in local and national flexibility programmes that help reduce the costs of renewable energy.

The future of fleets is electric, but intelligent charging is crucial to take full advantage of the benefits offered by EVs.

Fleet managers need to make efforts now to greatly accelerate this electrification and decarbonise transport, while also taking steps to protect the grid from the pressures of the rising demand from charging stations.

The race to battle the effects of the climate crisis – as well as to maximise the competitive advantage of their fleet – demands it of them.

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FLEET OUTLOOK 2022



Fleet decision-makers set to face many challenges and opportunities over the coming 12 months, reports *Mike Roberts*

INSIDE



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Fleet electrification, vehicle supply difficulties due a shortage of semi-conductors and having to adapt to new ways of working because of the coronavirus pandemic will continue to dominate fleet agendas throughout 2022.

In this special section, we look at how HMRC might address the huge tax and national insurance revenue shortfall it's facing from the growing number of company car drivers switching to electric vehicles (EVs), how the worldwide shortage of semiconductors is likely to impact fleets next year and what effect the introduction of clean air zones (CAZs) is having on fleets.

These challenges add to the fleet decision-maker's already demanding jobs to manage areas such as safety, driver management, procurement and cost control, among others.

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) and the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) also share their outlook on what the fleet industry faces in 2022.

In the AFP's opinion piece, see page 33, chair Paul Hollick says the growing momentum of employees wanting an electric company car will continue throughout next year.

"Low taxes on EVs are powering a very high level of interest in company cars, including from people who have previously taken cash options, as well creating momentum behind EV-based salary sacrifice schemes, which meet the needs of many employees," he says.

And Gerry Kearney of the BVRLA is confident the fleet industry will overcome any new issues that may arise in 2022.

In his column, on page 32, he says: "The fleet sector has always been adaptable, resilient and innovative – traits that have become even more

SAVE THE DATES:

Fleet News Awards:

**Grosvenor House Hotel, London
Wednesday, March 16.**
awards.fleetnews.co.uk

Company Car in Action:

**Millbrook Proving Ground,
Bedfordshire, June 15 and 16.**
companycarinaction.co.uk

Fleet & Mobility Live:

**NEC Birmingham, October 11 and
12.**
fleetandmobilitylive.com

FN50 Dinner:

**Park Plaza Westminster Bridge,
London, November 1.**
fn50-event.fleetnews.co.uk

prominent through 2021. I have every confidence that those positives stand the sector in excellent stead going into next year, meaning we'll be able to tackle any challenges that may arise."

Asked about the biggest opportunity facing fleets, Drive Consulting's fleet risk director, Alison Moriarty, says: "I think fleet managers are going to become much more visible in organisations because the push to decarbonise is going to be high on most company agendas. In fleet, we already know how important running a safe, clean and efficient fleet is, but it can sometimes be overlooked.

"This is our time to shine."

SAFETY REMAINS A PRIORITY

Chris Connors, Countryside Properties head of facilities, says safety will continue to be a priority for fleet decision-makers in 2022: "The opportunity remains for fleet managers to work with their drivers to positively influence driver behaviour and reduce road risk.

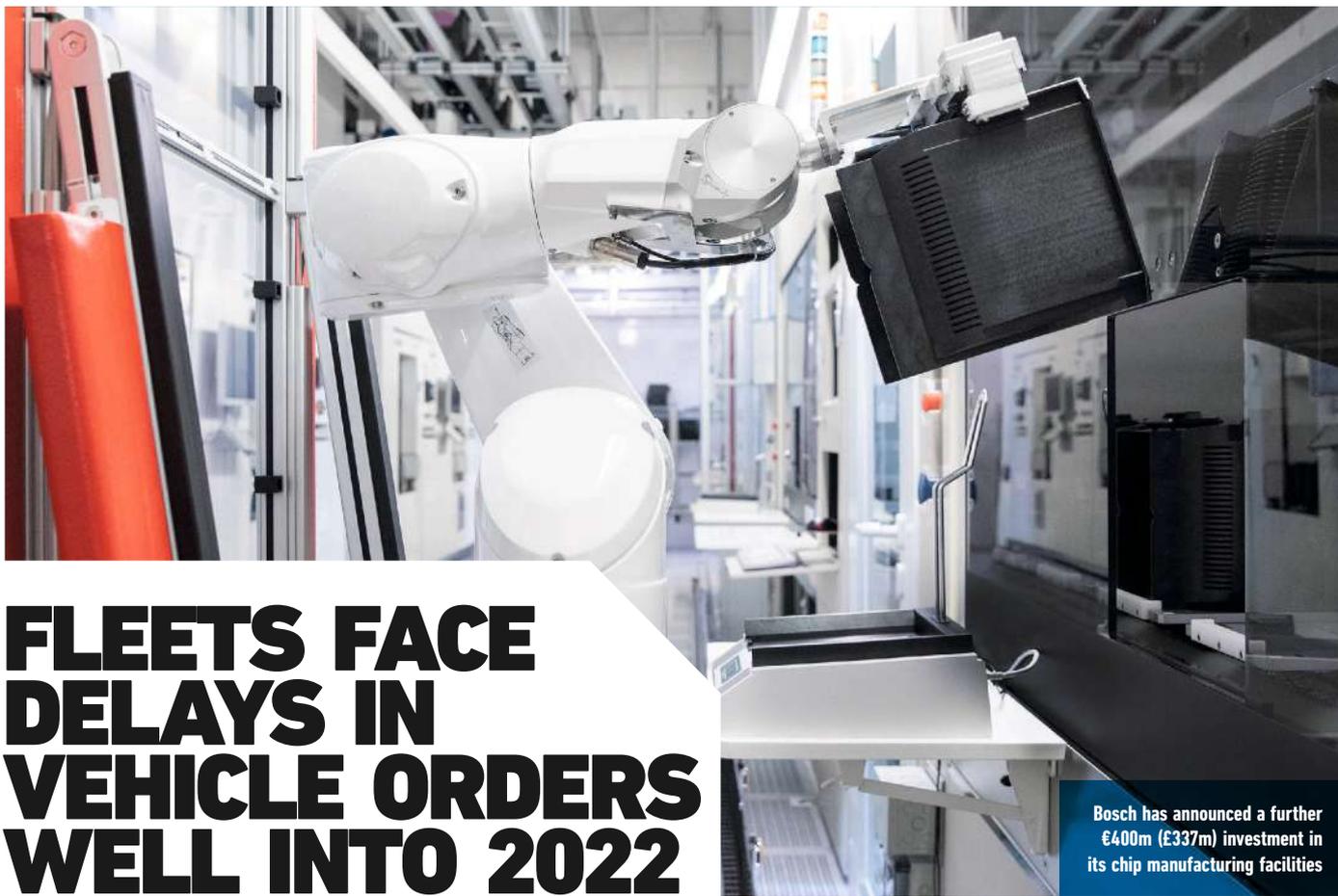
"Every accident that is avoided is an opportunity for a fleet manager to keep people safe. Then there is the opportunity to embrace the change to electric and support the environmental improvements this brings."

And Amanda Bullough, EMEA benefits lead at Siemens, says now is the perfect time to accelerate "sustainability focused change".

She adds: "One of the biggest opportunities I see is evolving traditional roles to include a variety of working styles, be that virtual or in-person, as well as developing business operations that take advantage of flexible working and technology. Through exploiting the positives of the pandemic, we can integrate more sustainable approaches, including electric vehicles and mobility solutions."



Scan here to see which electric vehicles are coming up in 2022



FLEETS FACE DELAYS IN VEHICLE ORDERS WELL INTO 2022

Bosch has announced a further €400m (£337m) investment in its chip manufacturing facilities

PICTURE: BOSCH

There's no immediate end in sight to long lead times and scarcity of new vehicles due to the worldwide shortage of semiconductors, says *Jonathan Manning*

Vehicle shortages and long lead times show no signs of abating, with fleets facing delays well into 2022 and, potentially, the end of next year. A global shortage of semiconductors (computer chips) has forced vehicle makers to close factories temporarily, extend lead times to six-to-12 months, and even to withdraw certain models from order books.

All of the major manufacturers have been impacted, and most forecast that the restoration of supply chains will not resume until Q2 of 2022 at the earliest.

In a briefing to investors at the end of October, John Lawler, Ford's chief financial officer, said that "the constraints on the chips will remain fluid through 2022, and they could extend into 2023, but we do expect the severity to reduce".

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), says there's no sign of an early end to the crisis, with some manufacturers "now quoting the end of 2022 for delivery on mainstream models".

Compounding the problem is the fact that the backlog of orders is constantly growing as fleets and private buyers look to continue replacing vehicles on scheduled cycles.

Nick Hardy, sales and marketing director of Ogilvie Fleet, says: "I don't think the situation will ease up until the latter half of next year, and it will probably be the fourth quarter before we get back to any normality."

This outlook is leading fleets to open their ordering process as early as nine months before the end of their current contract. It is also prompting drivers to

modify their expectations to secure a new car earlier; an important consideration for employees keen to switch from a petrol or diesel car into an electric model to reap the benefit-in-kind tax savings.

Steve Cuddy, Close Brothers' head of fleet (Banking Division), said his drivers are agreeing to take stock vehicles, especially BMW iX3 SUVs, rather than wait for delivery of an individually-specified model.

They are also accepting that certain features, which in normal circumstances would be included as original equipment, may be missing due to the shortage of semiconductors.

"Mercedes-Benz is sending a letter to drivers explaining that features such as wireless phone charging, augmented sat-nav and automatic boot opening may be missing. Not one person has cancelled an order because of this," says Cuddy.

In a constant battle to resolve the situation and keep his drivers mobile, Cuddy says the frequency of his

calls with dealers and manufacturers has increased from quarterly to weekly. The strength of these relationships has paid off – some of his new EVs were originally destined to be demonstrators.

And, if there's a silver lining to the chip shortage, it's the fact that vehicle manufacturers are prioritising their electric vehicle (EV) ranges (which require a lot more electronics) ahead of their internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles when allocating chips.

In the face of the semiconductor shortage, at the end of October, Bosch announced a €400 million (£337m) investment in its chip manufacturing facilities in Germany and Malaysia just a few weeks after opening a new semiconductor plant in Dresden.

The European Union would like to see greater self-sufficiency in chip production among its member states, with Taiwan and South Korea dominating the semiconductor market.

Meanwhile, manufacturers are suggesting the supply shortage will act as a 're-set' for the sector, enabling them to right-size production to meet demand and reducing the need to force registrations with short-term activity.

They have already reduced discounts on many models, according to fleets while, in a double whammy, P11D prices are rising. However, the impact has been offset by strong residual values which, for now, are keeping leasing rates at a consistent level.

Residuals are forecasted to stay strong well into 2022, with only a gradual softening into the second quarter of the year.

IT WILL PROBABLY BE Q4 2022 BEFORE WE GET BACK TO ANY NORMALITY

NICK HARDY, OGILVIE FLEET

OXFORD LEADING THE WAY WITH ZERO-EMISSION ZONE

More cities set to launch their own clean air zone schemes in 2022, says *Mike Roberts*

Oxford is set to become the first UK city to introduce a zero-emission zone (ZEZ), with a pilot scheme going live in February next year.

It will allow the city and county council to gain experience and information before launching a larger scheme covering most of the city centre at a later stage.

This month, the scheme's back-office system has gone live to give local businesses the opportunity to register vehicles and apply for a discount.

Councillor Tom Hayes, deputy leader and cabinet member for green transport and Zero Carbon Oxford at Oxford City Council, told *Fleet News*: "By introducing Britain's first ZEZ in February we hope to clean up our air, reduce toxic air pollution levels and create a more attractive civic space."

Cllr Hayes said measures had been put in place to help businesses prepare in the lead up to the zone becoming live.

"Over the past few years, we have worked closely with businesses and have been keeping them up to date on the plans for the introduction of the scheme.

"Registration for the pilot opened in December, to give businesses at least six weeks to register their vehicles for discounts.

"Once the scheme is live, businesses in the ZEZ will be eligible for a discount which will mean that vehicles registered will be eligible for a 90% discount for a maximum of 10 vehicles until 2025.

"We have also been providing businesses

THE A-TO-D OF THE FOUR TYPES OF CLEAN AIR ZONE

Class	Vehicle type
A	Buses, coaches, taxis and private hire vehicles
B	Buses, coaches, taxis, private hire vehicles and heavy goods vehicles
C	Buses, coaches, taxis, private hire vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, vans and minibuses
D	Buses, coaches, taxis, private hire vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, vans, minibuses, cars plus the local authority has the option to include motorcycles

with advice and support on how to transition to electric, ahead of the zone's implementation."

The discount for businesses is only available for a vehicle used for business-related purposes, not for commuting to and from a place of work.

The ZEZ pilot would introduce daily charges, dependent on the vehicle's emissions:

- Zero-emission vehicles (0g/km CO₂): £0.
- Ultra-low emission vehicles (less than 75g/km CO₂): £2 per day from August 2021, rising to £4 per day from August 2025.
- Clean air zone (CAZ)-compliant vehicles: £4 per day from August 2021, rising to £8 per day from August 2025.
- Vehicles not meeting the above standards: £10 per day from August 2021, rising to £20 from August 2025.

CAZ-compliant vehicles include Euro 4 petrol and Euro 6 diesel four-wheel vehicles, and vehicles with fewer than four wheels that emit 75g/km CO₂ or more.

The charges would be applied between 7am and 7pm, seven days a week, all year round.

The Government's ambition to achieve net-zero by 2050 will see an increasing number of cities launching CAZs in the coming years.

Next year, Bradford, Bristol, Greater Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield will join Bath, Birmingham and Portsmouth who already charge vehicles to drive into areas of the city.

London operates an ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) which originally occupied the same area as the Congestion Charge Zone but was expanded in October to cover an area up to, but not including, the North Circular Road (A406) and South Circular Road (A205).

A document designed to help fleet managers handle the demands of Clean Air Zones is available from the AFP (Association of Fleet Professionals).

'Clean Air Zones and Your Fleet' goes a step further than just explaining what CAZs are and how they work by explaining to fleets whose vehicles already enter a zone how they can manage everything from drivers to paying charges.



Scan to find out the CAZ plans for the UK's major towns and cities

Oxford will break new ground by introducing a zero emission zone

THE LULL BEFORE THE TAX STORM?

As company car drivers switch to electric vehicles in increasing numbers, HMRC will lose tax and national insurance revenue. So, will it change benefit-in-kind from April 2025 to plug the gap?

Jonathan Manning reports

Uncertainty surrounding long-term benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates is causing consternation within the fleet industry.

Rates currently run until April 2025, meaning that drivers placing an order today for a new company car don't know how much BIK they will be paying after that date.

Adding to this sense of unease is the current three-year hiatus during which company car tax bands have been frozen. It seems unlikely that a revenue-hungry Government will maintain the current tax bands and watch the better part of £2.5 billion in company car tax and national insurance contributions (NICs) slip through its fingers as drivers switch to low-tax zero-emission vehicles.

Historically, the Treasury has rarely announced tax rates four years in advance, but this changed in March 2020, when the Chancellor not only outlined the tax rates up to the 2022-23 financial year, but also confirmed that the rates would be frozen at these levels for a further two years, until April 2025.

"It gave us five years of certainty," says Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP). "HMRC said they would continue (this approach), but as the past 18 months have gone by we have not had any news on what will happen in 2025-26."

He is concerned the uncertainty will stall the fleet industry's impressive momentum towards electric vehicles (EVs), with hundreds of thousands of drivers still unsure about committing to battery power, due to range and charging anxieties in addition to general misunderstandings.

"For us, the bigger issue is – why won't the Government tell us," says Hollick.

"We continue to lobby. We were expecting an announcement in this Budget and we were shocked and saddened that we did not see it.

"A drop-dead date has to be the spring Budget next year, because, otherwise, it will generate too high a level of uncertainty in the market. For EV adoption we need absolute certainty; we will get drivers not taking an EV because they don't know what will happen in the final year of their lease, which would be a real shame."

NO ACTION IN BUDGET

Fleet suppliers were equally dismayed at the failure of Chancellor Rishi Sunak to address the issue in his autumn budget.

"At a time when the uptake of EVs is ready to accelerate, the silence around areas such as BIK tax rates is deafening. This only grows fears that rates will be drastically increased down the line," said Gerry Keaney, British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association (BVRLA) chief executive.

And Spencer Halil, chief commercial officer, Alphabet (GB), adds: "With no update on future tax rates for customers, nor a clear path for how long electric vehicle incentives will remain in place, businesses are unable to plan for an electric future with any confidence."

Against the background of COP26 and the climate emergency it seems inconceivable that electric company cars will not continue to enjoy a significant tax advantage over internal combustion engine (ICE) alternatives from 2025-26.

However, the Dutch and Danish markets have shown how the rates of EV adoption can slow when governments withdraw strong financial incentives.

HMRC's own figures reveal the Government's difficult balancing act between accelerating the transition to electric vehicles to achieve its carbon targets and plugging the loss of revenue as drivers migrate to EVs.

EMISSIONS GO TUMBLING

In 2010, company cars emitted 147g/km of CO₂ on average, had a scale charge (SC) of £3,865 (its list price x SC%), and the average company car driver had a marginal tax rate of 31.9%, says Harvey Perkins, director of company car advisory consultancy HRUX. By 2020, average CO₂ emissions had tumbled by almost a quarter to 111g/km, yet the average scale charge had risen to £6,793, and the average company car driver had seen their marginal rate of tax rise to 32.2%.

"The amount of tax company car drivers paid rose by 76%, despite the related CO₂ emissions falling by 24%," says Perkins.

This soaring tax take prompted an exodus from ICE company cars, with the number of drivers declining to 800,000 from 960,000 between 2015-16 and 2019-20.

This loss of 160,000 drivers suggests that the Government may have found itself on the wrong side of the Laffer Curve, the economic theory that explores the relationship between tax rates and total revenue collected, says Perkins. Levy too high a tax on a product and people stop buying it – think employer-provided free fuel.

MORE INCOME FROM FEWER COMPANY CARS

While the Government has so far managed to maintain its total tax and NI receipts from fewer company car drivers by aggressively pushing up the scale charge, the adoption of electric cars undermines this strategy. With an SC of just 2% for zero-emission company cars, drivers are making a dramatic saving by switching to battery power – so much so that many forecasters believe employees who had previously opted out of company cars will now opt back in.

"The Government has to work out the percentage scale charge that would trigger people to opt out of EVs," says Perkins.

HRUX number-crunching (with several caveats) suggests the tipping point where an electric company car no longer makes financial sense over a personal lease is somewhere between 15-20%.

"If you were paying a scale charge of 15%, over three years you would, effectively, be paying tax on 45% of the list price of the vehicle, or 60% over four years. The depreciation on a typical company car is somewhere between 40-50%, so you would be paying tax at slightly more than the depreciation that the asset has suffered," says Perkins.

But, if the scale charge were 20%, a company car driver would be paying tax on 60% of the list price over three years or 80% over four years, despite depreciation remaining the same.

"Our logic is that at a scale charge of 10% of list price it still makes sense to take an EV as a company car, but somewhere between 15 and 20% that flips," says Perkins.

This is an issue facing not just the company car driver community, but the wider workforce, too, as salary sacrifice car schemes gain traction. HR and compensation specialist Gallagher is witnessing higher interest than ever in salary sacrifice car schemes, with employers intent on offering the benefit to their staff, despite the lack of clarity over future BIK rates, says Emma El-Hadidi, director of Gallagher's Organisational Wellbeing Consulting Practice.

She says that in recent years when the Government has increased the tax on certain (non-car) benefits, employers have not stepped in to bridge the financial shortfall suffered by their workers.

"But, because a salary sacrifice car is such a large financial commitment for most people, the angle we would take is around communication and education of employees," says El-Hadidi.

"It's really surprising the number of organisations we speak to whose people do not have any idea what a P11D is, what benefit-in-kind is, how salary sacrifice works, and what their tax code means.

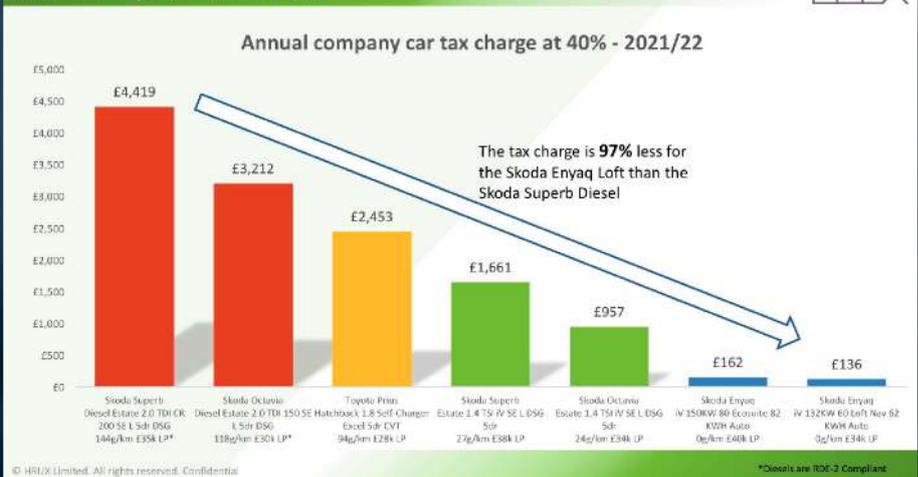
"Organisations should roll out financial literacy programmes so their people really understand such terms and phrases."



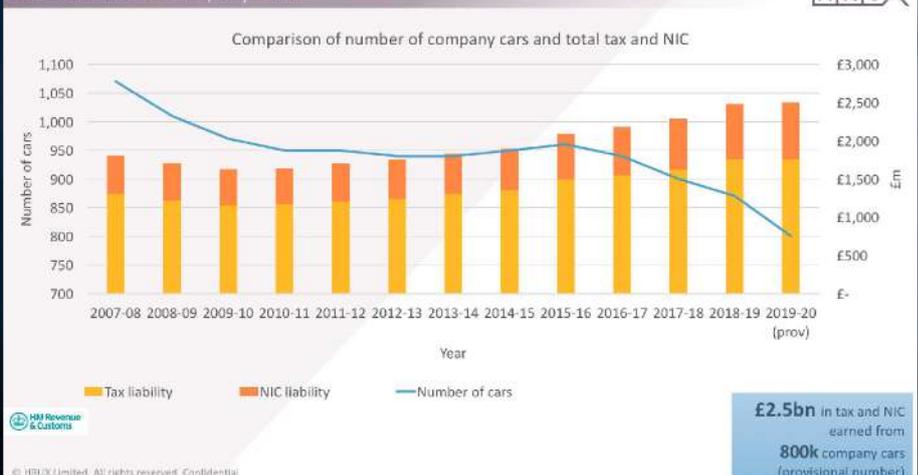
IT'S REALLY SURPRISING THE NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS WE SPEAK TO WHOSE PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT A P11D IS

EMMA EL-HADIDI, ORGANISATIONAL WELLBEING CONSULTING, GALLAGHER

CO2 Basis – Hybrids From 2021/22



Recent trends in Company Cars



Resilience shown by fleets in 2021 will continue well into next year

By Gerry Keaney, British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association chief executive



In looking back over the past year, our industry can be immensely proud of the progress it has made. 2021 was always set to be a turbulent year as the UK economy and global supply chains came to terms with the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns and the ensuing recovery.

The only thing we have been able to predict with any certainty has been change.

Change often presents opportunities and, as usual, the leasing sector has seized these and bounced back. This is particularly true in the legislative and regulatory arena, where we have seen monumental uplift in consultations and policy engagement over the past 12 months, on issues ranging from decarbonisation and air quality to motor finance and future mobility.

This has presented us with an avalanche of opportunities to engage with decision-makers and, in doing so, help shape the business and transport landscape of tomorrow.

With the constant support of our members, we have had a very successful year in generating tangible benefits for the sector, based on having a solid foundation of priorities and strong relationships to develop our influence.

This was evidenced, in part, by the physical return of the BVRLA Parliamentary Reception in September. There, we launched our updated Road to Zero report card that outlined the work that still needs to be done to support road transport decarbonisation.

Looking ahead to 2022, we expect a small number of topics to dominate as the impact of the pandemic continues to diminish.

The overriding short-term challenge is that of vehicle shortages. The global lack of semiconductors has restricted the number of new vehicles available, with predictions from experts suggesting

**THE OVERRIDING
SHORT-TERM
CHALLENGE IS THAT OF
VEHICLE SHORTAGES**

GERRY KEANEY, BVRLA

the supply will not level out for anywhere from six months to two years.

This means current vehicles will remain on fleet for longer, potentially impacting user experience and maintenance schedules, requiring lease companies to adapt and seek innovative solutions.

Beyond this, and on the back of the UK hosting the COP26 summit, the Government's activity around road transport decarbonisation and encouraging businesses to make 'greener' decisions is expected to gather momentum.

This will immediately be evidenced by more clean air zones (CAZs) being rolled out at key urban hubs nationwide, alongside current zones introducing tighter restrictions. Many operators are already in

a strong position to suit these regulations, as it is the fleet sector that is driving the move towards zero-emission vehicles.

This year has seen an unprecedented amount of policy activity and the leasing sector needs to stay alert and engaged.

Today's consultations and calls for evidence create tomorrow's legislation and operating environments. Staying ahead of this regulatory curve can give a business a competitive advantage and falling behind it can result in high financial penalties. There is a responsibility on the Government to give clear direction on such changes, which the BVRLA will continue to push for at every opportunity.

Taxation is one area where we are urgently seeking more clarity, particularly on future benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates and any road pricing strategy. Both are important tools in accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles.

For BIK rates, transparency is essential in allowing operators to plan their fleets effectively and allows accurate financial planning. Elsewhere, action is required to establish a new road pricing system to help the Government plug the £34 billion gap that will be left as the current emissions-based approach becomes obsolete. We recently engaged with the Transport Select Committee on this, urging immediate action to enable a smooth transition.

The fleet sector has always been adaptable, resilient and innovative – traits that have become even more prominent through 2021. I have every confidence that those positives stand the sector in excellent stead going into next year, meaning we'll be able to tackle any challenges that may arise.

Alongside this, the BVRLA's unwavering commitment to supporting members remains, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with members to drive positive growth in 2022 and beyond.

Five areas of risk, opportunity and challenges facing fleet decision-makers over coming year

By Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP)



1. THE NEW NORMAL BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

Finally, after what seems like an age, fleet managers and their drivers are returning to something resembling normality in the final quarter of 2021.

However, getting back behind the wheel is not necessarily a simple matter. At the AFP, we're seeing two areas of potential risk emerging. One is drivers who have worked in frontline services and industries such as parcel delivery who have been placed under huge pressure during the pandemic. The other is people who have been placed on furlough or have been home-working and covered many fewer miles in the past year than previously.

Both of these groups represent risks and these employees may need proactive management to keep them and other road users safe.

Emerging areas of concern for fleet managers include mental health issues and drug-driving.

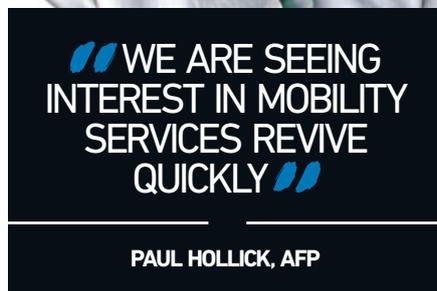
2. CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE BECOMES CRITICAL

Company car electrification now has massive momentum and electric vehicles (EVs) are arriving on fleets in considerable and rapidly growing numbers. This means we are seeing more emphasis on issues arising from their day-to-day operation – and by far the biggest of these is charging.

Two issues need resolving. The first is providing infrastructure for those who live in an apartment or terraced house and require access to overnight, on-street charging. At present, this is almost non-existent and massive investment is needed as well as meaningful strategies at both local and national levels.

The second is to upgrade the public charging infrastructure. It is coming under considerable pressure because of the growth in EV company cars and again, the only answer is for large sums of money to be made available.

Fleets are also developing methods of equitably reimbursing employees who are charging their vehicles at home, something made easier with the introduction of specific advisory fuel rate (AER) amendments, for which the AFP lobbied.



3. ELCVs START TO APPEAR IN NUMBERS

If 2021 has been the year when the electric company car has really taken off, 2022 could prove to be the equivalent for the electric van.

While there are still holes in the market such as the absence of a commercial 4x4, eLCVs are finally becoming available in both a much wider range of designs and payloads with relatively good supply also promised.

We are seeing operators starting to get to grips with the ways in which these vehicles can be used, given the new strategies that may be required to take account of range and payload.

One area of interest to watch is the degree to which fleets will look to hydrogen as an alternative.

The first production panel van becomes available in 2023 and there is considerable interest around its introduction – although factors such as the almost complete absence of a fuelling infrastructure, the cost of producing hydrogen, and the need to do so cleanly, all remain major barriers.

4. MOBILITY REGAINS MOMENTUM

Before the pandemic, mobility was rapidly gaining pace. Last year, Covid created an unavoidable pause in this process because many mobility services are based on the shared use of assets.

However, as some kind of normality returns, we are seeing interest in the subject revive quickly. Many fleet managers expect that their professional futures lie in evolving into a mobility equivalent and we are seeing strong demand across the AFP for training and guidance in this area.

In 2022, we expect this trend to gather pace, and for more and more organisations to adopt some form of formal mobility strategy.

As a result, we expect a mobility allowance to gradually become the favoured choice for those who might otherwise be considering a cash option, initially focused on those that do not wish to have a permanent car on their driveway.

5. COMPANY CAR NUMBERS BEGIN TO GROW

At the AFP, we have been predicting for a little while that car fleet numbers will soon start to grow after successive falls in recent years. This may have been temporarily postponed by the pandemic, but we believe that the tide is very much in the process of turning.

Low taxes on EVs are powering a very high level of interest in company cars, including from people who have previously taken cash options, as well creating momentum behind EV-based salary sacrifice schemes, which meet the needs of many employees.

All of this should help to power an electrified renaissance for fleets at a time when the retail sector is still lagging behind.

The quality of the EV6 means it is unlikely to require substantial financial support to achieve good sales



Riders on the storm

The combination of the pandemic and microchip shortages is a big hurdle to overcome, but Kia UK's fleet sales are allowing it to flourish. *Andrew Ryan* reports



If the saying 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going' rings true, then Kia UK is made of very stern stuff indeed.

During the financial crisis of 2009, it was one of the main manufacturer beneficiaries of the Government's scrappage scheme as it capitalised on the car-buying incentive to supercharge its registrations and establish itself as a mainstream brand.

And now, in the toughest market conditions since – the result of the Covid-19 pandemic and vehicle supply shortages – it has been one of the few manufacturers in the UK to grow its market share, with this success driven by the fleet sector.

Kia UK is on track to achieve its 2021 sales target of 90,000 cars despite the country going back into lockdown at the start of the year and a disappointing Q1 which saw it 7,000 registrations behind its curve.

"If anything has helped us achieve our plans this year, it's been the fleet market which was the fastest sector to recover back in April," says Steve Hicks, sales director at Kia UK.

"As a manufacturer, if you don't achieve what you want in Q1 it's almost impossible to catch that volume back, demand just goes.

"But we managed to sell through that as best we could and, right now, we still have cars and are delivering cars to all of our customers in all sales channels.

"I'm not saying we have huge supply, but deliveries have been about 8,000 to 9,000 a month, which is above the (annual) 90,000 sales plan.

"So many other brands don't have cars and some don't even have estimated lead times, while we're roughly on a three-month timescale.

"We're selling a lot for March right now. We're going into next year with a huge order bank, but that will slow down as other manufacturers' supply chains ramp up again."

Latest Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders sales figures show Kia registered 81,532 cars in the UK this year up to the end of October, an increase of 29% on the same period in 2020 in an overall market which had grown 2.8%.

This sales performance has given Kia a market share of 5.8%. It's also has a 6.6% market share in fleet. "That's a long way from the 2.6% we had in 2010," says John Hargreaves, general manager for fleet and remarketing at Kia UK. "We've sold nearly 50,000 cars into fleet already this year."

SUPPLY HAS BEEN KEY

Hicks says there is no doubt the fact Kia had a consistent supply of vehicles throughout the year has been a major factor in its sales success.

"You would never normally see a market share jump from where we were to where we are right now, and that can only be down to other brands not having supply," he adds.

"But that's great news for us, it's like making conquest sales. Many of our new customers have had no experience of Kia product before.

"The scrappage scheme was great for us many years ago as more customers got into our cars.

"I see the same right now. We are winning some orders that probably will go back to their other manufacturers when they have supply again, but



Steve Hicks says fleet has played a major role in Kia being on track to hit its sales target

those customers are getting their first experience of Kia and I hope that's a good one."

This year's sales trends have also seen the manufacturer's retail: fleet split shift substantially.

Usually it mirrors the market, which is currently 48:52 in favour of fleet, but Kia is now at 40:60.

"That's a real difference for us because, as a brand, Kia has traditionally been more retail than fleet," adds Hargreaves.

In time, he expects this to return to reflecting the overall market split, with the manufacturer looking to grow by 5,000 registrations a year for the next five years.

"The way we try to work is there is an aspirational number, but it's never to achieve it at all costs," says Hargreaves.

"In fleet, you don't want to be too successful in certain channels and what I'm particularly proud of this year is that we've grown across the board.

"Our corporate share is 6.7%, so it's very similar to our overall fleet share.

"We're doing some rental, but less than 2% of the volume we do is rental that doesn't come back to us, so that gives us good control over the residual values (RVs).

"We're not intending to start pulling out of some channels as some manufacturers have done, but we will scale back short-cycle business, although we will certainly be maintaining a presence in it."

UPLIFT IN RESIDUAL VALUES

Like all manufacturers, Kia is currently seeing a significant uplift in RVs as soaring demand for used cars has sent values increasing by around 25%.

The pricing guides are forecasting residuals will remain strong for the first half of next year, but Hargreaves is more bullish, predicting robust values for the whole of 2022.

"Short-cycle business is a lot of what drives used car values and my discussions with rental companies are very much along the lines that they're struggling to get manufacturers to supply them with cars," he says.

"I think there will be a lack of short-cycle cars for most of next year, and that will keep RVs high." ☺

COMPANY: Kia UK
HEAD OF SALES: Steve Hicks
GENERAL MANAGER FOR FLEET AND REMARKETING: John Hargreaves
REGISTRATIONS (YTD): 81,532
FLEET MARKET SHARE: 5.8%
KEY MODELS: Sportage, Ceed, e-Niro, EV6

Kia is 'very hopeful' for the sales prospects of the incoming Sportage



He adds: "I think most manufacturers are using this as a little bit of an opportunity to reset discount levels, and I suspect we will all try to maintain lower levels of discount so that will help keep RVs stronger as well."

Getting the purchase price right at the front end is also key to controlling RVs, adds Hicks.

"You could argue that cars such as Sorento and EV6 could be priced higher, but then you are just welcoming incentives and discounting, and that hurts the residuals," he says.

"We are trying to do everything we can to make sure we have strong RVs because it makes the whole cost of ownership better for fleets.

"We know there will be a correction at some point but we don't know when, so it's important we make sure we maximise our residuals, so, whenever the market drops, we won't drop by as much."

Hargreaves says one Kia model which will have "limited or no financial support" is its new fully-electric EV6.

He describes it as a "really exciting car" for Kia and believes the quality of the product and its RV strength will mean Kia will not need to support it substantially financially.

Fleet customers are expected to account for slightly more than half of EV6 registrations because of the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax advantages zero emission cars currently have.

FLEET APPETITE FOR EVs

This is reflected by fleets already showing a greater appetite than retail customers for EVs: 36% of Kia's fleet registrations this year have been either hybrid,



John Hargreaves says fleet electric volume is roughly the same as diesel

plug-in hybrid or battery electric vehicles. For overall sales, this figure is 30%.

"We are now at the stage in fleet where our electric volume is roughly the same as our diesel volume," adds Hargreaves.

"But we haven't been pushing (EV) sales, we've been responding to demand.

"We've had quite a lot of traditional end-user customers who have always had petrol or diesels saying they're changing to electric, but our fleet success really has been driven by the fact we have

all the powertrains. We can go to a fleet and be seen as an impartial advisor reacting to their needs."

The majority (64%) of registrations to fleets have remained ICE vehicles, and Hargreaves says this is partly down to there being a threshold with high-mileage fleets where the convenience of having a diesel or petrol is greater than operating an EV.

"There is a BIK advantage (on EVs) for the driver, but the company doesn't get that and I don't think we've yet got to a situation where companies are asking drivers to share that BIK benefit with them.

"That means the financial equation is still in favour of ICE cars. I think if you started to get to a position where company car policies were almost somehow getting the driver to share some of the tax advantages with the employer, you would see a more rapid charge towards electrified cars."

Kia's approach to offering customers a comprehensive powertrain offering is epitomised with its new Sportage.

The current SUV has been the brand's best-selling model range in the fleet sector with around 16,000 registrations so far this year – almost one-third of Kia's entire fleet registrations.

The new model, which goes on sale this month with first customer deliveries early next year, will be available with petrol, diesel, mild hybrid, hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrains.

"It will really open up new opportunities," says Hargreaves. "We've had a very good early response from the pricing guides and are expecting strong residuals. We're very hopeful with new Sportage, especially as it's building on an outgoing model that is still really strong both as a new and used car."

DEALERSHIPS MOTIVATED TO 'DO FLEET PROPERLY'

Kia's franchised dealer network has an important role to play in the manufacturer's fleet strategy.

"We've got dealers that, if you go back 10 years, were very much retail focused: now they are all fleet focused," says John Hargreaves.

"Out of our approximately 190 dealers, we've got 30 who are business specialists. They are in areas where they can realistically do local business sales and we give them a support package to help them do that.

"But we also have some level of expertise within all dealers now. It's almost like a dealer standard that they have a fleet-literate person within the dealership.

"The units they sell to businesses also count towards their targets: it's not the same with all manufacturers, so we have a dealer body that is motivated to do fleet properly."

Kia is also using its dealer network to expand its mobility offering. Around eight years ago, it started to offer daily rental through 10 sites

and this has since expanded to 20.

"We're looking to expand our dealer rental service into allowing people to have a car on an hourly, rather than on a daily, rental basis," says Hargreaves.

"We will look at that market space as a potential for expansion, possibly with the rental companies who already offer car-sharing.

"We're not going to saturate that market, but just test it at the moment and we'll start through our own dealer rental programme."



WINNER: JOHNSONS FLEET SERVICES

Johnsons Fleet Services national leasing manager Terry Ward (centre) with major account handlers Richard Storey (left) and Steve Reynard

Johnsons shows confidence in the future with launch of fleet support centre to bring teams together. *Jeremy Bennett reports*

The evolution of Johnsons Fleet Services continued during the Covid-19 pandemic with the achievement of a major milestone which underlined its ability to continuously adapt and grow to record-breaking levels, even in extreme circumstances.

In July, the Tamworth-based dealer group's fleet team moved into its dedicated, 10-acre facility, accommodating a growth in staff numbers year-on-year of around 50% and a record number of fleet sales at more than 14,000 units. It is home to fleet admin and sales, vehicle prep, multi-fuelling capacity, smart repair, corporate customer hosting facilities and vehicle demonstration areas and can accommodate more than 15,000 vehicles per year.

Fleet News spoke to Johnsons head of fleet operations Louise Baker.

Fleet News: What does the new centre mean for the business?

Louise Baker: A collection of important factors, but primarily bringing teams together – sales, admin and aftersales – in the same facility makes a massive difference in terms of our efficiency. It has also allowed us to meet the growing demands for electric vehicles (EVs) among our customer base with the access to more than 40 EV charging units. It also gives us the capacity to process a number

of vehicles beyond the record numbers we have achieved in the past year.

FN: Have you been affected by the lack of vehicle supply caused by the global semiconductor shortage?

LB: To a degree. The supply of vehicles hasn't negatively impacted orders. But supply in this quarter has significantly reduced, meaning our order bank is much higher than it would normally be. We now talk to customers a lot earlier than we would normally about their vehicle change. But this issue hit in July/August and now it's a recognised issue in the public and in fleet, customers acknowledge they will have to wait longer when they put in their order. It just means the excitement of a new car lasts longer!

SPONSORS' COMMENTS

Johnsons offers a fleet service akin to a retail buyer in terms of customer care and aftersales support. It remained open during all three lockdowns to support its customers and is continuing to improve its services by investing in a new fleet support centre. Judges also praised its offer of free electric charging for NHS workers during Covid.

FN: Has EV growth in popularity been tangible?

LB: It's growing quite significantly as the proportion of EVs in the market increases. Our provision of charge points is an acknowledgement of this. Johnsons has also completed an acquisition of a Midlands' group, Autosales, which will add Suzuki to our franchise mix and its electric product should suit the public sector.

FN: Have you seen an increase in salary sacrifice customers, as the low CO₂ levels of EVs make them more attractive to drivers by limiting BIK?

LB: Not at this stage. The constant uncertainty around the possible changes to tax legislation means people remain reluctant to move out of a company car, which is a fully managed product, with the convenience that entails.

Baker preferred not to talk about latest developments in the business (saving these for her 2022 Fleet News Awards entry), but, when asked if the business had been transformed by the past two years' upheaval, she said no, adding: "It's evolved and yet evolution is constant in the business in an industry that has to. From one year to the next our business is never the same."

Market forces and new laws are constant factors in this, but Johnsons remains recognisable to the people that work there, the company ethos and the determination to maintain a business that "can afford to support really high levels of customer service", Baker said.



AA working hard to shake off its 'breakdown-only' image

Providing EV support and using connected vehicles to prevent breakdowns are two key areas the AA intends to focus on in 2022. *Jess Maguire* reports

The AA aims to provide more than breakdown cover for its fleet customers and is investing heavily in Prestige – its service, maintenance, and repair (SMR) offering.

Gavin Franks, director of business services at the AA, says he sees an “exciting opportunity” to join up the roadside and SMR elements of the organisation’s services.

“The exciting thing we are trying to do is provide that end-to-end solution support for fleets, looking at how we manage an incident from start-to-finish, rather than just being the breakdown provider,” Franks says.

“So, if anything goes wrong, whether it’s planned or unplanned maintenance or an accident, we can quickly get the vehicle through whatever repair network it needs or fixed at the side of the road if it’s just roadside, then back into the fleet as quickly as possible.

“We’re also growing our accident management business – our existing accident management

business has been subscale, but we’ve invested in a new platform.”

SUPPORTING EV BREAKDOWNS

Two key areas the AA continues to invest in are electric vehicles (EVs) and connected vehicles.

“We believe we are at a point where we have the best trained workforce out there – so we’ve trained all our patrols to a Level 2 capability in terms of EV,” says Franks.

“We have some Level 3 trained patrols, but all our patrols are officially trained to Level 2. We are considering additional Level 3 training over the coming 12 months, now we have completed our Level 2 courses.

“We are also looking at the tool sets we need to provide our patrols with, because, although there’s a big (negative) perception around EV range, the actual volume of breakdowns that are range-related is very low – it’s about 4%, which is on a par with what we see with running out of fuel, which is about 1-2%.

“As technology evolves, we’re starting to look at how we start to test it, as there will come a time where on-board EV chargers are fit for purpose. We do see a role for them, so we’re starting to look at some of those trials.”

The AA has a concept van equipped with an onboard charger, that doesn’t require an engine or generator running to charge an EV. The van is also capable of hydrogen refuelling.

“We’re starting to look at this concept of how we specialise around EV breakdowns, rather than universally training everybody given the volumes of breakdowns on EVs are going to stay relatively small over the near future given the (low) percentage of the car parc,” says Franks.

“It’s about how do we try to have a focus team that can deal with an EV breakdown in any of its forms – whether it’s out of charge, a material issue, a user issue – having the expertise within that team who can deal with that. I think next year is probably going to be the year where we start to look at a more focused EV support team.”

Winners' Enclosure



AA director of fleet and accident management services Stuart Thomas (centre) with members of his award-winning team

CONNECTED VEHICLES

Diagnosing breakdowns before they occur with connected vehicles is also an area the AA aims to focus on.

"Through connected vehicles, we'll be able to fix more remotely and prevent a breakdown happening in the first place," Frank says.

"We can spot the degradation in advance through connected data that will allow us to contact the customer and give them the best options to suit their needs.

"Fleet is one of the areas where we see an early opportunity as we can get permission *en masse* and really start to drive it as many fleets already have telematics devices fitted within their vehicles to help manage driver behaviour."

FREEWHEELING HUB

Last January, the AA launched its Freewheeling Hub, an addition to its Multi-Fit Wheel Kit, with the technology rolled out to all patrols at the end of March 2021. The hub is being used up to 20 times per day with more than 2,000 deployments since July 2021.

The tool provides a way for patrols to safely tow EVs, 4x4s and SUVs, which normally cannot be 'lifted' and towed on two wheels.

As well as rescuing EVs, the Freewheeling Hub can be fixed to the rear wheels of stricken vehicles, so they can be towed, rather than having to wait for a flatbed recovery vehicle.

The technology has helped business customers reduce downtime and gives fleets confidence to invest in their EV capabilities.

"There are many aspects to transitioning a fleet from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to EVs," Franks said.

"The benefit of our Freewheeling Hub is that is deployed to all of our patrols, so our ability to support fleets means we're getting that consistent experience, as the way we recover vehicles will be consistently applied with a single process.

"Our patrols are very good at creating solutions to individual problems they come across, but I think over time that will evolve and develop, and we'll have different things that will add into that solution set that will give us more flexibility as vehicles change and evolve," Franks says.

The AAs EV support service also includes providing customers with charge point support from a dedicated call centre.

Franks says: "We have this capability that we've set up with charge point providers that can support people at charge points.

"We can talk customers through what they need to do if the charge point isn't working and if it's fundamentally broken, we can arrange for repair and we're extending the capability so we can go out and check on them as well.

"It's given us a lot of insight in terms of EV behaviours, both on the challenges and usability issues and insight into certain vehicles, for example, which ones will have a recurring problem.

"For us it's about providing the best support, but it's also about collecting the insights so we can share back and improve charge point usability."



FLEET CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIP PLUS INNOVATION IN MOBILITY TECHNOLOGY

Winners: The AA

JUDGES'S COMMENT: FLEET CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIP AWARD

By influencing parts suppliers to meet the needs of the London Ambulance Service and providing its own team members to deliver mechanical work and breakdown support to keep ambulances on the road during the national lockdown, the AA went above and beyond in its partnership approach. Judges also praised its offer of free breakdown for all NHS staff and said the company delivered an outstanding service which made a real difference.

JUDGES'S COMMENT: INNOVATION IN MOBILITY TECHNOLOGY

The AA's Freewheeling Hub is a game-changer which transforms the breakdown service for vehicles that previously couldn't be recovered, such as electric vehicles and 4x4s, ensuring they are quickly moved from the risk area to a position of safety. It speeds up recoveries and reduces downtime by removing the need for a flatbed truck and can also be evolved to accommodate other problematic vehicle types. An innovative new piece of kit.



**SAFETY
FIRST**

AS GOVERNMENT PLANS NEW COLLISION INVESTIGATION BODY

A dedicated Road Collision Investigation Branch would look into what causes incidents and how they can be prevented in the future.
Andrew Ryan reports

Many fleets have experience of how a culture of no-blame collision investigation can have a beneficial impact on future incident rates.

The ability to use the information on where, when, how and why an incident occurred can identify trends and the necessary action that will help avoid them recurring, whether it is targeted training, a change in vehicle spec or something else altogether.

The approach of not looking to apportion blame for any incidents can help fleets uncover a wider, more accurate picture of why a collision has occurred as drivers will not try to hide anything.

"As we've seen with Covid-19, the first thing you have to do is understand what's happening and then you can work out what treatments are available," says Saul Jeavons, director of The Transafe Network and formerly the head of investigations at the Transport Research Laboratory.

"The more resource you throw at it, the more likely you are to come up with the solution that saves lives. But actually understanding what the problem is you are trying to treat is key because, otherwise, you end up putting resource into trying to treat the wrong thing.

"Ideally, what you want is something with a no-blame culture which should be about finding out what happened, what caused it to happen and what can be done to prevent the same thing happening again."

Safety campaigners such as the charity Brake have long called for the Government to take a similar approach to road safety and their campaigning may finally be rewarded.

In October, the Government opened a consultation on proposals to establish a new Road Collision Investigation Branch (RCIB) dedicated to learning lessons from road traffic collisions, including those involving self-driving vehicles.

"It's been a long time coming," says Jeavons. "I was looking the other day at a PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport

Safety) conference paper from an event I was at in 1999 and it was looking at whether we should have a road police investigation branch and what shape should it take.”

INVESTIGATIVE BODIES

Similar bodies for air, maritime and rail travel already exist: the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) has been operating since 1915, while the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) have operated since 1989 and 2005 respectively.

All three have the legal power to investigate incidents in their sector and make recommendations about which interventions could be implemented to prevent the recurrence of those events.

These recommendations are not binding, but for the Government to consider in the context of its wider priorities.

The Department for Transport (DfT) consultation document says a Road Collision Investigation Branch would operate in a

similar way. Safety campaigners say this type of body would help end the stagnation in the reduction of road deaths which has occurred in recent years.

“Currently, information about the perceived cause of a road crash is recorded by police at the time of a collision, but only provides basic insights which simply are not adequate to properly investigate and determine the most effective countermeasures to tackle future road casualties,” says Jason Wakeford, head of campaigns at Brake.

“Brake has long advocated for an independent agency to provide the necessary evidence to learn from crashes.”

Latest DfT figures show the number of reported road deaths fell in 2020 for the first time in eight years.

The number was 1,472, a 16% fall compared with 2019’s 1,748. However, this coincided with a 21% drop in total road traffic caused largely by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government figures also show there was an estimated 23,486 killed or seriously injured casualties in 2020, a decrease of 22% on the previous year, while total casualties fell 25% to 115,333.

AUTOMATED VEHICLE SPARK

The Government says it has launched the consultation, which closes today (December 9), due to the huge developments which are taking place across the transport sector, such as the roll-out of increasingly automated and electric vehicles.

The report says automation and technological advances in areas such as digital roads and micro-mobility may mean the nature of collisions may change over time, becoming more like those in other transport sectors where the causes often relate to the interactions of human

operators with a complex control system.

“No final decision has been made on the establishment of such a body, and all evidence pertaining to its need and benefits will need to be fully considered before such a decision is made,” stresses the document.

In June 2018, the DfT and National Highways jointly funded the RAC Foundation to undertake the Road Collision Investigation Project (RCIP), which is looking at the business case for creating an RCIB.

While the final project report is expected to be published next summer, the work, to date, firmly supports establishing the investigative body.

“What has been abundantly clear to us over that time is that there’s a big, gaping RCIB-sized hole in the landscape,” says Elizabeth Box, head of research at RAC Foundation.

“There is a huge number of dedicated and passionate professionals who are doing their utmost to improve road safety in the UK.

“But without the co-ordination that an RCIB could provide, with the powers to investigate and the remit to provide evidence-based recommendations, a lot of the excellent work currently taking place will not have maximum impact.”

Roads policing is provided by 43 independent police forces in England and Wales, while Scotland and Northern Ireland both have national police services.

In accordance with guidance issued by College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice, fatal and serious road traffic collisions are currently investigated by the police.

These are primarily focused on identifying criminal culpability and, where necessary, informing the coronial process.

An RCIB would go beyond the scope of the focus of any police investigation and would look to investigate road traffic collisions (RTCs) with the remit of learning and prevention.

As well as data from police investigations, there is already substantial information available from

Government-funded initiatives such as the Road Accident In-Depth Study (RAIDS) programme, Stats19, and the Collision Reporting and Sharing System (CRASH).

These, coupled with information from Forensic Collision Investigation (FCI) reports and Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) reports, have so far informed research into the causes of collisions.

The police and other stakeholders have highlighted how this information, although rich and varied, is not adequate by itself to analyse the cause of, and determine the most effective measures to tackle, collisions.

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

"We know more can be done to further improve our understanding of collisions and which interventions are most effective in eliminating them," says Roads Minister Baroness Vere of Norbiton.

The minister adds: "A new investigation branch would provide us with vital insight as we continue to modernise our road network to ensure better, greener and safer journeys."

An RCIB would look to use data from aforementioned data sources, as well as organisations such as emergency services, insurance companies, the Motor Insurers Bureau (MIB) and vehicle manufacturers.

Its work could complement activity by police

forces, coroners, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, local road safety partnerships and highways authorities.

"Generally speaking, where adequate resources exist, what happens in the UK in terms of police investigation is still up there with the best," says Jeavons.

"But in terms of what's happening with multi-disciplinary, no-blame investigations, it does very much feel like the UK is lagging behind."

Numerous other countries already have RCIBs, and Box says those which the RCIP programme has spoken to as part of its research have reported safety improvements.

"The response on the value of independent investigation was universally presented by those we spoke to," she adds.

The Norwegian safety investigation authority, for example, said HGV collisions had fallen 60% over the past 10 years, which it attributed to be, at least in part, an outcome of recommendations which had been put in place as a result of safety learning.

"If we are going to be serious about achieving a Vision Zero, it really is vital that we seek to learn the safety lessons from incidents on the road network," says Box.

"Without a feedback loop dedicated to no-blame safety learning, we're not going to get much further in reducing KSIs (killed or seriously injured) on our roads, in my opinion.

"This becomes even more important with the changing road environment we've got in future years – and even today – with electrified mobility, micro-mobility and automated vehicles."

WHAT ACTIVITIES MIGHT AN RCIB CARRY OUT?

The Government envisages an RCIB undertaking the following general investigation-related activities:

- Evidence collection on site.
- Evidence collection off site, including evidence storage compounds, garages, company offices, test facilities and private property.
- Preservation of evidence.
- Co-ordination of investigations when working with police and other statutory bodies, on- and off-site, including the conduct of parallel investigations into both collisions which involve criminality and those that do not, and the resolution of conflicts.
- Conducting interviews of relevant people, including survivors, witnesses, family members and associates, police officers, medical staff, local and central government organisations and agencies, and company

staff (for example, manufacturers, maintainers and testers of vehicles and components).

- Involving its own experts and experts from other jurisdictions.
- Delegation of parts of an investigation to expert organisations (for example, if related to UK or foreign automated vehicle data).
- Forensic examination and testing of vehicles and infrastructure involved, including sub-components where relevant, and the ability to destructively test or alter evidence where necessary.
- Downloading of recorded, electronic and photographic and video data.
- Computer modelling/simulation.
- Statistical analysis.
- Road safety-related research and other studies (internal and commissioned).
- Receiving evidence from, and sharing learning with, other countries/bodies/experts, for safety investigation purposes.

- Writing and publishing safety investigation reports, safety bulletins/digests/advice.
- Liaison with involved families and victims.
- Liaison with coroners.

■ Consultation with individuals and organisations involved in a collision or collision themes.

General (non-investigation) activities it would perform are:

- Disseminating safety learning (conferences, webinars, publications).
- Recruitment and training of investigators.
- Development and refinement of collision investigation techniques.
- Maintaining awareness of current developments in road safety, vehicle engineering and collision investigation.
- General liaison with other bodies, domestically and overseas, to obtain and disseminate learning and information to improve road safety.

A SPECIAL REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY **FleetNews**

THE ROAD TO ELECTRIFICATION

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is ready to help customers every step of the way with the transition to electric vehicles



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Vehicle Solutions

The future is electric

A wealth of support is available to fleet decision-makers about how to start the decarbonisation journey

Fleet electrification is inevitable, whether to meet the deadline of the Government's 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, or as companies strive towards achieving their sustainability targets.

UK businesses and their company car drivers are providing the catalyst for a surge in electric vehicle (EV) registrations. But for some fleet decision-makers, driving through an e-mobility strategy can be a challenge for which they feel ill-prepared, despite recognising the huge environmental benefits it offers. Fortunately, plenty of support, information and advice is available to them.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is committed to helping businesses and fleets make the right decisions to achieve a smooth and efficient EV transition through its Total EV Fleet Transition and decarbonisation solutions.

The three times Fleet News Awards 'Leasing Company of the Year – More Than 20,000 Vehicles' winner manages the entire decarbonisation process for fleets after surveying their vehicles and charging infrastructure.

The company has developed an end-to-end total EV transition strategy for its customers to assess, design and deploy vehicles, workplace/depot charging solutions, collaborating with distribution network operators (DNOs) and solar partners.

The FN10 leasing company also offers a market-leading salary sacrifice proposition, which allows non-company car or grey fleet drivers to access afford-

able, low-emission vehicles. And for those only just considering the move to a zero-emission fleet, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions head of decarbonisation, Jonny Berry, offers some sound advice.

"Please contact me," he said. "Talk to me or anyone else who has worked in this field before. Learn from others who have done it before you. That is the best first step you can take, to begin raising awareness of the types of things they will need to undertake at the start of your journey."

Once familiarised with the process, Berry says businesses must then consider how their EV fleet will be 'refuelled'.

He said: "Initial research includes determining how much electricity you have at the depot or at work, as well as how many people can charge at home or in a neighbourhood, and how many people must rely on public charging.

"Then start talking to other companies; remember, it's all about being present, asking questions – it's the most important thing you and your co-workers can do. Most companies in the area will help you, but aim to work with those who are unbiased and agnostic."

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions has a team of EV experts who assist clients in understanding the transition and help explain real-world vehicle capabilities.

And that's just the start of the company's offering to fleets, as Berry explained. Its experts and consultants can guide businesses every step of the way, from



IN HIS OWN WORDS:

JONNY BERRY ON HIS COMMITMENT TO HELPING COMPANIES REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS...

"I've spent several years working with OEMs inside the Renault-Nissan group, advising and aiding businesses and fleets as they transition to electric vehicles, and most recently, helping to establish a charge point solutions provider from the ground up. Helping individuals lower their carbon footprint and enhance their air quality is something I'm enthusiastic about.

"I've driven more than 200,000 miles with zero tailpipe emissions, I eat locally whenever possible and restrict my meat intake, and I exclusively buy garments made of recycled materials. Where I can, I give it my all.

"However, receiving Nissan's CEO award, winning the EV GreenFleet champion last year, and being recognised in the GF 100 Most Influential list are all things I'm really pleased about. The EV Café, which I founded, is my crowning achievement."



“Life is full of challenges, including one that improves the air we breathe and helps to combat climate change. Fleets should take advantage of this opportunity to do something positive for everyone, while potentially also saving money in the longer term”

Jonny Berry, head of decarbonisation

fleet optimisation and workplace charging to EV salary sacrifice and company car schemes.

“Of course, we’ve already established a great electric vehicle selection process, with our EV-Hub and EV-Academy trained staff making it easy to for drivers to assess which electric car is right for them. We also provide complete end-to-end support for charging solutions, whether at home, at work, or at the depot,” he said. “For refuelling on the public network, we’re looking to introduce a fuel card-like experience at the beginning of 2022. So, we’re well ensconced in the future fleet environment.”

Driver anxiety over a move to EVs is inevitable. Worries such as vehicle range and charging facilities regularly feature high up in surveys of drivers’ concerns. But they can be outweighed by the significant savings made through the low benefit-in-kind tax rate introduced in 2020 for electric cars.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is well-placed to help fleets support drivers as they make the switch to electric.

Berry explained: “We provide a comprehensive driver training programme that will teach all drivers what they really need to know about overcoming anxieties and becoming ready to operate an electric vehicle.

“It describes how to charge an electric car in various locations, for example, and offers tips and information on real-world use. We also provide ongoing customer help if they have further queries.”

It’s perfectly understandable that some fleet managers are nervous about the move to EV. But Berry is quick to highlight the many positives resulting from such a move, not least helping protect the environment for future generations and improving a company’s bottom line.

“Fleets shouldn’t feel nervous about the move to electrification,” he said. “Life is full of challenges, including one that improves the air we breathe and helps to combat climate change. Fleets should take advantage of this opportunity to do something positive for everyone, while potentially also saving money in the longer term.”

Such an undertaking doesn’t have to be tackled without all-round support. For a successful transition, fleets should seek out experts for help and advice.

Berry said: “They’ll need to talk to OEMs, leasing companies, industry veterans and start-ups. Then figure out what knowledge gaps need to be filled and what charging policies need to be implemented and go to work. Their workers will value them in the future. The only thing they should be concerned about is being left behind.”

FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) news stories surrounding electric vehicles are not to be believed.

Berry’s advice to fleets is this: “Make your own decision based on the actual experts. When compared to an internal combustion engine (ICE), an EV’s complete life and refuelling capabilities are incredible. The most common misunderstanding is that it is not suitable for everyone. Yes, it is. It only hinges on how hard or easy it is to put fuelling mechanisms in place.”

We take a more detailed look at workplace charging elsewhere in this report, but it’s an opportunity that all fleets should explore.

Berry said: “There are a lot of factors to consider. It’s crucial to ensure it’s a well-designed, optimised, reliable solution with business-critical aftersales support.”

To find out more about how to transition your fleet visit: hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing/fleet-electrification

■ Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions has announced that it will rebrand under the new trading name of Novuna Vehicle Solutions, from February 14, 2022.

The company says it will continue to invest in new products and applications that make it easier for its customers to make the transition to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future with electric vehicle leasing.

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Vehicle Solutions

There's no better time to introduce workplace charging

As businesses welcome more and more staff back into the office changes to the workplace should include offering electric vehicle charging

A workplace charging infrastructure is a central part of any electric vehicle strategy and is a useful tool to help encourage EV take-up. The total EV fleet transition solutions provided by Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions doesn't just look at optimising the existing fleet of clients, it also considers the businesses's refuelling needs.

Head of decarbonisation Jonny Berry explained: "Once we have carried out an electric vehicle suitability assessment, we can start to map out where the charging is going to take place and what speeds are required.

"We can deliver an end-to-end journey while remaining agnostic to existing infrastructure as well as implementing new, ensuring we meet key principles, such as open protocols, fit-for-purpose hardware and scalable wants and needs of the client.

"Our service goes much further than depots and workplace car parks; we recognise the shift to more domestic and public use cases where the vehicle might not return to a base.

"We offer this unique service to any business looking to transition to an electric fleet, from data analysis and vehicle provision to infrastructure and energy solutions.

"We will then be able to provide a comprehensive TCO (total cost of ownership) model for today and future business operations."

Although some company vehicle drivers may not consider workplace charging as critical to their current needs, this option will be more sought after in years to

come as an increasing number take advantage of low benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates on electric vehicles.

For businesses, there is no better time to introduce at-work charging.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions uses company data to determine how such an infrastructure would work is critical.

"We collect data on routes, dwell times, vehicle type, load, use case and all these data points allow us to formulate a top-down perspective of not only that Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions has supplied the right vehicles, but that we can fuel them efficiently," he said.

"Building the case for the right EV shows us how, where and when the requirements are for fuelling at base, at home and in the public domain."

Asked how successful implementations have been, Berry replied: "We have successfully implemented many business-critical solutions into the workplace environment, coupled with market-leading ongoing support. We also ensure that the data received from the charge points is interpreted in way that ensures optimal use of the electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) and vehicles.

"This, in turn, enables us to help scale up in line with the client's requirements. All of this has resulted in operational savings for our clients, but, more importantly, a cleaner environment for all."

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions manages the network using a globally recognised platform and Berry explained how the company looks to offer advantages across other networks.

Saving costs and staying compliant

Reducing fuel bills and cutting back on administration are just two of the many benefits of a fuel management service offered to fleets by Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions can provide customers with extensive data reporting capabilities that cover mileage capture and fuel analytics.

Working with a number of fuel, travel and expense card partners, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions help fleets select the solution that best suits their objectives, including public charging for EVs. It expects to help fleets to save more than 15% on their total fuel spend.

The mileage capture and audit service reduces fuel bills by accurately recording and auditing employees' business mileage and fuel expenditure.

A mobile app can log drivers' miles while on the move, it can take a telematics feed or drivers can input business mileage via an online system.



Start your fleet electrification journey today with Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions.



He said: "We provide similar solutions to legacy systems such as fuel cards, in EVs it is referred to as 'roaming', which is the ability to use other networks seamlessly with the potential to shore up their own fuel prices in advance."

The costs to the business of workplace charging should be carefully considered dependent on operational and commercial requirements.

A back-office solution is available for companies wanting to charge their employees, for example. It enables businesses to set their kWh price and will also manage all the related invoicing and/or receipting.

Given the increased uptake of electric vehicles across company vehicle drivers, salary sacrifice and commercial fleets in response to incentives and a growing prevalence of zero emission zones, businesses should offer workplace charging wherever feasible.

The service audits every journey, ensuring compliance with a company policy.

At the end of each month, drivers submit their final odometer reading and a payroll file provided for reimbursement or private mileage deductions where fuel cards are used.

The system can also provide e-feasibility analysis, EV performance monitoring and reporting, domestic charging reimbursement, public charging payment and/or reimbursement.

A range of driver support services are offered as part of the package, including:

- Easy-to-use app to record mileage
- Quick and simple to make mileage and expense claims online or through app
- Domestic charging reimbursement
- P87 services for tax returns
- Driver helpline to support employees

Consolidating all fleet data from multiple suppliers and all parts of the business, provides a real-world insightful reporting suite, that will help companies:

- Improve cost efficiencies
- Steer their fleet strategy
- Reduce their carbon footprint
- Manage their driver performance

It will also ensure complete business mileage records are available for audit or to submit to HMRC.

"Our service goes much further than depots and workplace car parks; we recognise the shift to more domestic and public use cases where the vehicle might not return to a base"

Jonny Berry, head of decarbonisation

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Visit: hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing

EV transition is priority for roundtable participants

Mixture of electric 'old hands' and EV relative newcomers share experiences in Manchester



By Stephen Briers

The transition to an electric fleet was the main topic of conversation as a dozen fleet decision-makers gathered at Worsley Park Marriott Hotel on the outskirts of Manchester to participate in the *Fleet News* roundtable, sponsored by Chargepoint.

Businesses were at different points in their road to zero journey, with the likes of Steve Openshaw, who has been driving an electric vehicle for the past eight years, and British Gas, with its 3,000 orders for Vauxhall Vivaro-e vans and a rapidly evolving electric car fleet, sitting alongside fleets only just taking their first tentative steps.

Fleet News: Where are you on your electric journey and what are your challenges?

Gemma Whiteley: We've just deployed four electric Zoes and are at the data collection stage. Our goal is to reduce emissions, but we expect this will mean a mix of fuel types. Around 45% of our staff do not have driveways at home so we need a solution for them.

Karl Elliott: We are two years into our electric journey and have 29 full electric vehicles (EVs) and 30 hybrids (PHEVs) on our fleet of 180. We have 22 charge points with solar panels

on the roof so we can charge for free. All of our vehicle replacement will be EV where possible or hybrid if not.

Steve Openshaw: I'm eight years into driving an electric vehicle and have proven that they work. We have invested in infrastructure to upgrade our electric supply to be able to put in 40 charge points. They will be used by all staff, not just the car fleet, particularly for those who cannot charge at home.

Damian Bennett: We've had EVs for our benefits drivers for five years, but had little uptake. Now we have a new policy for job-need drivers and have negotiated discounts and we're seeing lots of demand, including cash takers opting back in – 50 just this year. Our order bank is 10% full-EV and most of the rest are PHEV. We offer staff two-, three- and four-year operating cycles and are seeing people opt for a shorter lease to test the water. We're also seeing PHEV drivers switching to full EV when they replace.

Tim Muir: We are targeting net zero by 2030. All our cars are PHEV and we are trialling electric for our vans. We are also considering hydrogen. Range isn't the issue; it's productivity and the charging infrastructure. We also have a substantial grey fleet and are looking to bring them back into the company fleet.

Maria Williams: Our biggest challenge is we operate on sites that we don't own which makes charging very difficult. But our work profile lends itself to EVs.

James Rooney: We have had EVs since 2013 and we plan to be completely electric by 2025. All our engineers take their vans home, so they either charge at home or on public chargers. However, public is a chore; we don't have range anxiety,



we have charge anxiety which is down to quantity and reliability. Our vans need charging every day, but our cars are only charged once or twice a week. Driver education is important; we have an online course with videos. The biggest thing is the fact the vehicles are automatic, but there is also the charging side; for example, if they unlock their van, the charging stops because it also unlocks the port. They have to be made aware of this; it's a big learning curve.

FN: Is there merit in considering a national fleet charging network where chargers can be shared by businesses and reserved?

Joe Gorman: It doesn't work for public charging if they don't turn up, but we do see businesses opening up their workplace to other businesses or to the public for overnight charging if they can't charge at home. We also see opportunities with parking operators, but they want to charge for parking as well as for charging and this doesn't work – it needs new business models.

KE: We will have 40 chargers at our office, and we are looking at opening them up at night so others can charge on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Tanya Sinclair: We have our own workplace chargers that are open to the public. They can pay contactless or via an app. It knows if it's an employee and they get four hours free. A visitor is on a different rate.

Steve Winter: It will be the biggest issue going forward. Around 40-50% (of people) don't have home chargers so we have to have reliable and timed charging so we can plan it into their working day. When everyone has an EV, there will be queues at the charge points – we're already seeing this, but we can't afford this to happen. We want a fleet charging network. There are a lot of businesses that have charging infrastructure which costs a lot of money that will sit empty; they could get return on investment by hiring it out to other fleets.

FN: How do you find electric range versus the official figures?

JR: We find range is seasonal. The (larger battery) Vivaro-e is 205 miles, and we can get it, but you have to drive carefully. Travelling at 45mph-plus with wind resistance is not your friend. We see a consistent 150-160 miles year-round, with winter cutting around a quarter of



ATTENDEES

1. Maria Williams, fleet and hire manager, Bilfinger UK
2. Gemma Whiteley, estates contract supplier manager, Lowri Beck Services
3. Tim Muir, national compliance manager, ECG Facilities Services
4. James Rooney, fleet engineer, Centrica
5. Joe Gorman, director – UK, Ireland and Nordics, Chargepoint
6. Stephen Jackson, head of plant and transport, O'Connor Utilities

7. Tanya Sinclair, senior director policy UK and Ireland, Chargepoint
8. John Hole, fleet manager, PHS Group
9. Damion Bennett, fleet optimization leader – Europe, Russia and CIS, GE Healthcare
10. Steve Winter, head of fleet, Centrica
11. Steve Moores, head of estates, Lowri Beck Services
12. Lee Rossall, head of procurement, BES Utilities
13. Chair: Stephen Briers, *Fleet News*
14. Steve Openshaw, group fleet manager, Eric Wright Group
15. Karl Elliott, fleet business development manager, UBT UK

the range because of the effects of cold on the lithium battery – it's not necessarily down to the heaters. Motorway speeds of 70mph can take another 20-30 miles off.

FN: EVs cause a hole in Government revenues from falling fuel duty and benefit-in-kind tax. What's the solution?

TS: The Chancellor has floated the idea of road charging, but it's a political issue. My personal view is that it will have to happen, and happen soon, but we have to ensure the driver doesn't lose out.

SW: The biggest thing with road pricing is it can't be an administrative burden or an additional tax burden. We just need a formula we under-

stand. We are leasing for four-to-six years so we need a long-sighted view – this is key. Weaning us off grants isn't an issue because the manufacturers would reduce prices – we already saw this when the grant changed (eligibility to cars less than £35,000).

FN: What workplace charging solutions are you deploying?

SO: We are planning for 10 years from now. We have ringfenced additional power for the building and the company is investing in a new substation to ensure we are future-proofed. We have looked at dwell time to establish our power needs and how much is given free to employees before we start charging.

We also monitor the charge outputs and when it drops, we can step in and tell people to move their vehicle.

JR: We do on-site storage. At our office, 7kW is generally adequate because people are there all day; we have rapid chargers, but they aren't used as much. The expensive bit is putting the wires in the ground. We find that AC chargers are fine, but lots can go wrong with DC chargers. Also, tethered are more reliable than untethered.

FN: And what are your home charging policies?

TM: We pay for the home charger for the employee, but we don't reimburse them for the energy they put in.

JR: We bundle the charge point with

the lease or they can install their own, but we certify it.

JG: In our experience, companies usually provide home chargers for the vans, but not the cars.

While the upfront costs for electric vehicles might seem high, there are a number of savings which make the total cost of ownership figures work when compared with diesel alternatives.

British Gas has seen a reduction in accidents as people drive more smoothly and safely, while regenerative braking is reducing brake and tyre wear, resulting in lower maintenance costs.

"Service times have fallen – the Vivaro-e takes around half-an-hour – so we see the face of maintenance changing to while you wait," says Winter.

Residual values (RVs) are also holding up well. The Nissan eNV200s the organisation took on a few years ago had an RV forecast of £2,500; British Gas sold them for £10,000!

"We are encouraging our funders to increase their RV forecasts; when they exceed forecast, we have a profit share," Winter says.

Fleet decision-makers yet to implement policies or procedures to tackle the problem of engine idling should make it a priority for 2022.

Engine idling releases harmful emissions into the atmosphere and addressing the problem can save on fuel costs and protect workers' health.

One fleet manager estimates his company saves around £17,000 per year since taking steps to reduce idling.

Idling Action, funded through the Mayor of London's Air Quality Fund, provides training and a free toolkit of educational resources to businesses keen to explore implementing an anti-idling policy.

Its 'Engines Off' campaign asks companies to pledge a meaningful commitment to reduce air pollution from engine idling, to use free educational resources to engage drivers/employees, to publicise their commitment and to demonstrate best practice to others

The campaign is led by Camden Council and the City of London Corporation and supported by media partner *Fleet News*. It focuses on companies whose drivers enter London for work, but the problem of idling is widespread in every town and city.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS

Health experts say idling vehicles emit pollutants including nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter which are linked to asthma, heart disease, chronic bronchitis and cancer.

In a recent *Fleet News* poll, 56% of respondents said they have some form of policy in place to discourage drivers allowing idling, but that still leaves a large number of companies who are not addressing the issue.

Idling Action project lead officer Natalie Curd says: "We urge fleets to tackle idling in 2022 as a quick win to help tackle the climate crisis and the air quality health

FLEETS URGED TO STOP IDLING

Companies asked to put anti-idling policy on the agenda for next year. *Mike Roberts* reports





crisis, while also saving fuel and protecting driver health.”

The campaign highlights the fact that polluted streets are a workplace for thousands of people. For drivers and other outdoor workers, this means exposure to harmful levels of air pollution is part of daily life.

In terms of wasted fuel, a Transport Research Laboratory study found that it can cost up to 3p for every minute spent idling. If a vehicle idled for 10 minutes per day, within six months that would equate to a cost of more than £58. It also found that idling for just 30 seconds produces twice as much pollution and wastes more fuel than switching off and restarting an engine.

Many fleets are already helping the environment and reaping the financial benefits of having robust anti-idling policies in place. Auto Windscreens is saving thousands of pounds in fuel costs every year on its fleet of more than 300 vehicles.

Head of fleet and facilities Shaun Atton says the company uses an integrated telematics solution which combines 4G cameras and telematics, adding: “Idling is one of the key measures we use to coach and reward our drivers. The key to receiving positive outcomes from this type of implementation is to educate drivers about why we are targeting a reduction in idling time.

“Reducing our environmental impact is a priority for our business and is a key objective for staff, so our drivers are engaged with, and supportive of, our policy. We started to monitor our idling in 2019, comparing fuel waste from idling in Q1 2019 and Q3 2019. We saw an annual saving of £17,213 in fuel costs and a CO₂ reduction of 44,831kg.”

Lee Jackson, head of fleet and transport at transport and enforcement company Marston Holdings, also uses telematics to monitor driving behaviour, including idling. It was one of the first to sign up to Idling Action’s Engines Off pledge.

Jackson says: “We’re committed to developing solutions that reduce our impact on the environment. We have developed a fleet efficiency dashboard in partnership with our telematics provider that delivers metrics such as mpg, idling, harsh events and utilisation.

“This has proved very successful and, over the past six months, we have increased our mpg by 12.1% with a number of key initiatives to tackle harsh events and engine idling alongside improving the awareness of our employees of their driving behaviour.

“The company has also reviewed its fleet renewal programme and created a selection matrix that now only includes either ULEVs or EVs, contributing to an 11.1% reduction in our CO₂.”

Training to improve any highlighted issues is then offered to drivers on a case-by-case basis.

SIGNING THE PLEDGE

One of the latest companies to sign Idling Action’s pledge is testing, inspection and certification company Socotec, whose fleet manager Alison Devine read about the campaign in a previous *Fleet News* article.

Devine says: “By pledging to cut dangerous vehicle emissions, Socotec is helping to reduce

localised air pollution and the harmful effects that this has on the respiratory health of our employees, clients and the wider public.”

She said she hoped to reduce the company’s fuel bill by around 5% if each vehicle reduced idling by around five minutes a day.

SOCOTEC INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

■ Installation of telematics – the Trakm8 system monitors driving style and behaviour, measuring factors such as idling, harsh braking, harsh acceleration and speeding. This allows Socotec to focus on rewarding positive behaviour and coaching to improve driving performance.

■ Increased focus and training – employees are required to complete online courses through Socotec’s internal training platform. Some sites have completed FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) Bronze and Silver, with drivers having also completed their online training.

■ Anti-idling campaign – Socotec’s key focus is to reduce climate change and improve public health. By encouraging employees to switch off their engines while stationary, the organisation says it can achieve this on a local level and as part of the national campaign.

■ Driver behaviour focus – driving is one of the most dangerous work-related activities, and the company says that improved driver behaviour focus ensures that Socotec drivers will be safer on the road, as well as reducing the risk of an accident.

■ Employee Commuting Survey – it has launched an annual Employee Commuting Survey, which is intended to capture the miles commuted by each employee and the mode(s) of transportation taken on a daily basis for a typical working week. The results of the survey will enable the company to determine carbon emissions, as well as develop its carbon management plan.

It’s inevitable that some fleets run vehicles that have to idle, for example to enable on-board equipment to function properly because it provides a safer environment for the driver.

Where there is no excuse, London Borough of Hackney corporate fleet manager Norman Harding has introduced measures to tackle idling in his company vehicles, which include refuse collection trucks or vans used by skilled tradespeople.

“We have auto-shut off on our trucks so if a vehicle idles for more than five minutes it automatically shuts down,” Harding says.

As reported in October’s *Fleet News*, Idling Action hosted a webinar earlier this year which included speakers from British Safety Council, Mace Group and Marston Holdings, all keen supporters of the Engines Off pledge.

As well as businesses highlighting the fuel savings and environmental benefits associated with anti-idling policies, they also stated how companies taking action are shown in a good light to potential new customers and it can help with staff recruitment.

■ **To access free resources for businesses and to join the organisations responding to the call to action for cleaner air visit: www.idlingaction.london; or email info@idlingaction.london; or head to Twitter: [@idlingaction](https://twitter.com/idlingaction)**



Watch Idling Action's webinar highlighting the many benefits of an anti-idling policy

CAR PARK REVOLUTION

Whatever stage an organisation is at on its journey to fleet electrification, sooner or later it will need to consider allowing drivers to charge at the workplace. *Mike Roberts reports*

As an increasing number of drivers opt for plug-in hybrid or fully electric cars due to the favourable tax rates, companies will need to consider offering workplace charging points.

There are some initial steps fleets should take to work out the scale of charging infrastructure they may need in the long-term.

First, as part of a site survey, they should consider the number of EVs operated now and in the future, the number of available parking bays and the available budget for the installation.

They should also consider what speed of chargers they'll require. If a vehicle can be charged overnight then a slow speed charger, costing less money, could suffice. But, if a quick turnaround is needed, then a rapid charger may be the better option.

The cost of buying and installing different chargers varies hugely.

Dundee City Council fleet manager Fraser Crichton puts the cost of a 50kW rapid charger at around £22,000; a 150kW unit could be three times as much.

But a 7kW charger comes in at less than £1,000 and a 22kW unit is less than £2,000 (not including Government grants).

The intended site charging capacity and any potential local grid constraints should also be

considered. It could be that a substation would need to be installed at significant cost.

Financial help for charger points is at hand: the Government's Workplace Charging Scheme offers grants of up to £350 per socket up to a maximum of 40 sockets per company.

It's estimated that since the scheme was launched in 2016, more than 13,000 workplace charging points have been installed.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), which offers a series of guides to help fleets on their electric vehicle (EV) journey, has noticed its members are more likely to install charge points at sites they own rather than lease.

RANGE CONCERNS

But, allowing drivers to charge at work helps promote EVs to company drivers, alleviating any range concerns they may have, says AFP chair Paul Hollick, adding: "What a fleet manager doesn't want to happen is a driver wanting to hand their keys back after having an EV because they say it doesn't work for them.

"There is a level of diligence with each driver to make sure they fully understand how the vehicles work, how they're going to charge them and how they're going to make sure that they operate

for the trips they are planning to make."

Hollick says drivers of companies that offer some sort of workplace charging capability shouldn't depend on it as their main charging source.

He adds: "Some companies cannot allow for all their employees to use workplace charge points as a primary charging location, because it is just not sustainable. So, the office needs to be for topping up, rather than the primary location for charging. That's certainly the case for cars anyway."

Fleets may consider asking staff to pay for charging their vehicles at work and many suppliers offer services that enable this – from setting a kWh price to managing all the invoicing.

One concept being considered is the possibility of fleet operators creating a national EV charging network by allowing other businesses access to their workplace chargers.

It's an idea fully supported by *Fleet News* and the AFP and was discussed at a recent *Fleet News at 10* webinar, drawing interest from all operators looking for a reliable network and chargers they can pre-book.

National Grid fleet manager Lorna McAtear says: "As fleets, you look to minimise your costs. So, if you find a way to share your costs by, for example, opening up your charge points at the weekend for



There are many factors to take into account when considering installing chargers in the workplace

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Jonny Berry, head of decarbonisation, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions



As decarbonisation strategies are drafted to reduce carbon footprint across UK businesses, there is a great emphasis on the transition of fleet vehicles and introduction of enablement schemes such as salary sacrifice. But what does workplace charging look like and how far should you go?

As businesses are, hopefully, able to welcome more and more staff back into the office in the year to come, changes to the workplace should include offering electric vehicle (EV) charging to not only cater for the increasing number of people taking advantage of low benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates on EVs, but for the future employee base.

Currently, around 40% of UK households have no access to off-street parking to install a charger. So, while we need to see a far greater increase in public charging provision, there is great value to both employer and employee in building a comprehensive workplace charging infrastructure, as this moves from an attractive benefit tool to an essential requirement in years to come.

At Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions we assess each customer's EV suitability using company data and then map-out and deliver end-to-end journeys, remaining agnostic to existing infrastructure as well as implementing new to ensuring we meet key future principles, such as open protocols, fit-for-purpose hardware and scalable wants and needs of the client.

As I explain in the *Fleet News* special report this month (see page 43), workplace charging infrastructure is a central part of any electric vehicle strategy and is a vital tool to help encourage EV take-up.

Our service goes much further than depots and workplace car parks; we recognise the shift to more domestic and public use cases where the vehicle might not return to a base. We offer this unique service to any business looking to transition to an electric fleet, from data analysis and vehicle provision to infrastructure and energy solutions.

Start your total fleet transition with Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions today:
www.hitachicapitalvehiclesolutions.co.uk/electric-vehicle-leasing

 Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC
Vehicle Solutions

the public or sharing with other businesses, it makes sense. All solutions are viable, but it's the details now, making sure the service provision is there so all operators can share when needed."

In the not-too-distant future, vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technology could become commonplace and is certainly something larger fleets might investigate. Special chargers allow electricity to flow from a charge point to an EV and vice versa, meaning fleets could sell leftover electricity in their vehicles at the end of a day back to the grid – ideally at a higher price than they paid for it.

CHARGE UP WHEN CHEAPER

For example, if a van arrives back at a depot with 20 miles' worth of charge left in its battery, then it could sell that electricity back to a power company or use it to power a home or an office. The driver could then fully charge the van up in the early hours when electricity is cheaper.

Experts suggest it could become widespread by 2023 and Imperial College has calculated a fleet of 1,000 EVs could earn around £130 each weekday (*Fleet News*, May 2021)

Dependent on the nature of their business, not all commercial fleets are in a position to offer a back-to-base model where vehicles are

plugged in at a depot and charged overnight.

And van drivers with no access to a home charging unit or if driveway space is already taken up by personal cars will have to rely on the public on-street network or residential hubs.

To address this, AFP has launched a kerbside charging group to solve what it describes as the "last stumbling block" to EV adoption.

Members include representatives from Capita, Virgin Media, SSE, ISS, Defra, Kier, OpenReach, Clarion Response, Centrica, Marston Holdings, Murphy Plant, Speedy Services and Mitie.

It is collating data from members to map where kerbside charge points are needed, with results due in the new year.

Hollick says: "It's not an exaggeration to say members are muddling through with a mixture of depot-based charging and use of high-speed public facilities. However, both of these bring sizeable operational compromises, either needing vehicles to return to base or taking time out of the working day for charging.

"We're getting all their data together about where they need charge points and then heat mapping it nationally. We can then use that data to speak to local and national government about where charge points are needed."

Switching to an EV fleet? Time to consult the experts

SG Fleet is positioning itself as the leasing company of choice for electrification, supported by an exceptional team, including a number of former fleet managers that have already made the switch and are ready to help guide customers on their own journey.

The latest FN50 data also highlights that, among all leasing companies in the UK, the business has one of the largest numbers of electric vans on order and the highest percentage of 'live' electric vehicles (EVs) in its fleet.

Peter Davenport, SG Fleet UK managing director, says the business launched its eStart solution as far back as 2015, so there is already years of experience to draw on when helping fleets to add more EVs.

eStart is SG Fleet's award-winning end-to-end planning solution that helps businesses plan and manage their budgets and vehicle requirements.

The company is already working with a number of fleets in its core market segment of between 100 and 500 vehicles in the social housing and parcel delivery sectors. Fleets in these segments have already been transitioning to electric in a big way.

SG Fleet has a lot of experience with

mission-critical and corporate fleets, but also offers direct-to-consumer products such as Novalease salary sacrifice. When included as part of a broader fleet offering, this product ensures that all employees that need to drive for business can source their requirements from one source.

Davenport says: "The decision you make on switching to EVs has to be based on accurate data. Fleets need to know how their operations will be impacted by making the switch. You can really start to see the benefits when you look at the total cost of ownership."

SG Fleet has its own Motrak telematics solution, so it is able to fit plug-and-play boxes to a fleet and embark on a three- to six-month data collection and feasibility study before any vehicles are ordered. This solution is available to new prospects as well as existing fleet customers.

Chris Salmon, SG Fleet UK commercial director, says the telematics form part of a total review that looks at the current fleet of vehicles, site inspections, vehicle routing, infrastructure requirements and more.

Salmon says: "We'll track what the vehicles are doing, but we'll also look carefully at the strategic goals for each organisation when it comes to EVs.

"This could be reducing CO₂ emissions, reducing fuel and maintenance costs, reputational or green credentials, or simply to prepare for a low-emission future.

"We'll take on the majority of the work and crunch the numbers so we can present solutions and run tenders for fleets on areas like charging and electricity providers."

Once a selection is made, SG Fleet's team members work on implementing and delivering the eStart plan. This includes helping with driver education "to win hearts and minds" with EVs.

Salmon says some drivers, particularly those with vans, might really like their current experience with diesel products and be more wary of the change.

He says: "We'll guide our customers through that process with webinars, or road shows in normal times.

"We'll also run driver education sessions for EVs to try to help make the switch to the new technology as easy as we can."

Poachers turned gamekeepers

One of SG Fleet's key areas of differentiation behind the award-winning eStart solution is the people behind the offering.

Paul Dawson heads up the sales side of the eStart offering and has 11 years of experience in both the fleet industry but also as a facilities energy manager, with a key focus on reducing energy spend.

This positions Dawson well to help fleets when looking at their total sustainability goals as a business as part of their electrification journey.

Dave McDonna heads up new business sales and has been working in the fleet industry for 17 years in various roles for Enterprise, Lex Autolease, BT Fleet, Leasedrive and Zenith.

After working for many of the 'larger' leasing and fleet management companies, he had seen the limitations that their structure and ownership can create and came to SG Fleet with the brief to help create a product set and culture to approach fleet management in the most honest and effective way possible.

Wayne Millward and Anthony Marcou are both on the team as strategic client relationship managers.

Both have backgrounds as former fleet managers responsible for hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of vehicles at companies like British Gas, the





**Peter Davenport, SG Fleet UK
managing director (left) with
Chris Salmon, SG Fleet UK
commercial director**

AA, Selecta, Connect Group and Npower. Salmon says: "Some of our team have been on the other side of the fence and ran some of the largest fleets in the UK.

"When we introduce them to customers, they are getting access to fleet managers who have managed thousands of vehicles and can benefit from their experience with moving from internal combustion engine (ICE) to electric and hybrid.

"We're very much in it together with customers that are switching to EVs and many of our team have already done it so they have a lot of experience to share.

"The consultative process includes conversations on various levels, from operational to strategic."

Every SG Fleet customer has access and can speak directly to the main board. This is a key element of the customer service offering and Davenport reiterated that open and honest communication has been important, particularly during the challenges of the pandemic.

Access to the latest electric vehicles

SG Fleet has a strong order bank of electric vehicles, with a particularly strong stock of electric vans ready to come through to customers in Q1.

“ THE DECISION YOU MAKE ON SWITCHING TO EVs HAS TO BE BASED ON ACCURATE DATA

PETER DAVENPORT

There is availability across the board, with all the latest EV products.

However, this doesn't mean the business has been totally insulated from semiconductor shortages that have impacted new car vehicle production for many manufacturers this year.

Davenport says: "We have a good stock position so those fleets that have ordered will get vehicles through in Q1.

"We are managing the stock issues appropriately, but it's also important not to over-promise. That's where really open communication with customers is vital.

"We are writing more contract extensions, which means that switching to EVs might be delayed slightly for some. We're

advising fleets to get their orders in as early as they can.

"The supply situation will return to normality next year, but it's a market challenge the whole industry is having to deal with right now."

Future mobility provider

In addition to SG Fleet's expertise with EVs, the company is looking to introduce new mobility solutions to the UK market over the next two years.

Davenport says: "We're constantly developing products and solutions that help create a fully electric fleet.

"We're very conscious of the changes in mobility and the way people move around for business and leisure. You'll see certain developments over the next two years that will underpin our future as a mobility provider, not just for vehicles on lease."

This means creating a total mobility package including charging and last-mile solutions so fleet customers can come to SG Fleet for all their mobility needs.

Salmon adds: "We'd like to get to a place in the next two years where our customers come to us and we can solve all their mobility needs. There's a lot more to come from us down the line."

**For more information please call: 0344 85 45 100
or email: uk.enquiries@sgfleet.com**





TESLA MODEL Y

You can even play video games using the steering wheel and pedals (when stationary, of course)

By Matt de Prez

Love it or hate it, Tesla is making bold moves in the fleet space. It may have a non-conventional approach to most things it does, but there's no ignoring the recent popularity of the Model 3 among company car drivers.

With the new Model Y, Tesla enters the family SUV space to take on models such as the Audi Q4 e-tron and Kia EV6. It's based, largely, on the Model 3 – sharing a platform, powertrain and design language.

It features a practical hatchback, rather than the Model 3's saloon boot, and a raised seating position for those on board.

Two versions will be available in the UK, both using a dual-motor setup for all-wheel drive. The £54,990 Long Range can cover up to 315 miles on a single charge, while the £64,990 Performance manages 298.

We tested the Long Range variant, which should satisfy most drivers with 384PS and a 0-60mph time of 4.8 seconds. It straddles the premium electric SUV segment, offering similar range and performance credentials to models including the BMW iX3 and Mercedes-Benz EQC.

Based on our initial drive, we're confident the car can achieve 300 miles between charges. It also has 250kW rapid charging capability, meaning a 10-80%



All the controls are found on the dominant touchscreen

top up takes less than 40 minutes hooked up to a compatible charger.

The large central touchscreen houses all the car's controls, from sat-nav and climate to headlights and wipers. It even doubles up as the instrument cluster.

It's here that Tesla's technology focus is apparent. The system is slick, with immediate response, excellent graphics and an intuitive layout. The 15-inch screen dominates the interior and provides access to features that other carmakers do not offer, like a bioweapon defence filtration system for the air con, video games that utilise the car's steering wheel and pedals (when parked) and a special mode if you want to take the car camping.

As impressive as the digital experience is, it can also be frustrating.

Simple functions like adjusting the door mirrors or turning on one of the heated seats requires a delve into the system. We'd also prefer a speedometer that appears in the driver's line of sight, either as a head-up display or separate screen.

With little else to take up space in the cabin, there's plenty of room for passengers and the boot is massive – providing up to 857 litres of luggage

space. More storage space can be found in the front, under the bonnet.

The minimalist design may not be to all tastes, but we were pleased to notice an uplift in material and build quality compared with previous Tesla Models we've experienced.

The only niggle was a rattle coming from a panel in the rear.

Drivability is another impressive attribute. The Model Y is agile, with sharp steering and responsive brakes. There's not much body roll, despite the raised ride height, although the firmer suspension, combined with 20-inch alloys, made the ride on our test car unsettled. We'd be cautious of specifying these over the standard-fit 19-inch wheels.

We don't doubt that eligible drivers will rush to place their orders for the Model Y. It's desirable, capable and practical. The first batch is due to arrive in Q1 of 2022, with the Performance version following in the summer.

Alongside the Model Y's introduction, Tesla's corporate sales team is working a new system to streamline the way it interacts with the sector, in the hope that it can eliminate some of the pain points previously experienced.

FLEET PICK MODEL Y LONG RANGE

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£54,935
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£9
Class 1A NIC	£76
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£22,865/42%
Fuel cost (ppm)	5
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	40
CO ₂ (g/km)	0
Mpg	315



Coupé styling means headroom for those seated in the rear is a tad tight

BMW 4 SERIES GRAN COUPÉ

It only has ICE powertrains available, but this latest edition to the 4 Series is more fun and cheaper to run than closest rival

By Matt de Prez

Following the launch of the controversially-styled 4 Series Coupé last year, BMW has expanded the line-up with a five-door Grand Coupé version.

Filling the gap between a 3 Series saloon and estate, the 4 Series Gran Coupé offers a degree of versatility for those that want something a bit more stylish and engaging to drive.

As with the 4 Series Coupé, there's no plug-in hybrid version available, so fleet customers will have to make do with a choice of petrol and diesel engines. It might seem a bit behind the times, but the coupé has still managed to attract fleet buyers; accounting for around a third of sales this past year.

While we'd love to see BMW's excellent plug-in hybrid engine from the 330e offered in the 4 Series, it's unlikely to happen as the fully electric i4 is just around the corner.

The 4 Series, then, remains a choice for those that either really want to drive an internal combustion engine (ICE) car or need the flexibility of one.

For a company car driver, the £43,000 420d makes the most sense out of the range. It emits 130g/km of CO₂, placing it in the 30% benefit-in-



kind tax bracket with monthly bills of around £220 for a 20% taxpayer. It should be good for 55mpg and delivers a decent glug of power with 190PS and 400Nm on tap. A mild-hybrid system helps to keep the emissions in check and provides a small power boost when required.

There's also a 420i petrol, which is a tad thirstier – expect around 40mpg tops – but costs roughly the same as the diesel over a four-year cycle thanks to its list price being almost £3,000 cheaper.

We preferred the diesel model as it feels more effortless to drive and is going to be cheaper to fuel in real-world driving.

Under the skin, the 4 Series Gran Coupé is longer and wider than a 3 Series. It feels more nimble than its counterpart, with quick responsive steering, and it gives a greater sense of attachment to the road.

The ride is firm, but not harsh. Overall, it's a relaxing and comfortable place to sit. The driving position is low-slung and sporty, but not to the extent that it feels overbearing.

There's more legroom in the rear than a 3 Series offers, but headroom is a little tight due to the sloping roof line. The hatchback provides 470 litres of boot space, which is more than you'll find in the average family crossover.

While the look of the 4 Series caused controversy when first revealed, the Grand Coupé seems to have matured. It looks less ungainly – perhaps we're just used to it now or perhaps BMW was on to something all along. There will still be some drivers who are put off, but they can always choose a 3 Series instead.

Compared with its closest rival, the Audi A5 Sportback, the 4 Series Gran Coupé is more fun to drive and cheaper to run. For those that are tempted but can't countenance the tax bills, the electric i4 might be worth waiting for.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



One of the big topics of conversation in the motor industry during 2021 has been the global lack of semiconductors, which has particularly

hit the production of new cars. During the height of the pandemic car factories closed and, basically, cancelled their orders for the microchips.

At the same time, people were working from home and the demand for computers and home entertainment grew. The chip makers simply switched from one customer, the motor industry, to others.

When the lights at the car factories were slowly turned back on, the factories found themselves in many cases at the back of the queue for supply. I doubt they saw that one coming.

Chips are such a crucial component in most strategic technologies, from computers, defence, cyber security and renewable energy, everyone needs them.

Fleet companies have many cars that need to be changed, the poor fleet manager is either trying to get extensions on current vehicles, or source new ones which may not be what the driver wants. This, of course, means getting another MOT, service, tyres etc. The owners of the vehicles, the leasing companies, want to swap the cars, and some are reluctant to let the contract run on indefinitely.

Manufacturers are getting hold of whatever they can, even getting cars that are not completely finished, or lacking some standard spec, and trying, wherever possible, to complete the car at the import centre, by sourcing some components, locally, but even this is proving difficult.

Many cars are now being delivered with just one key. So, goodness knows what happens if the driver loses it.

The private owner where the car is on a PCP contract, is in the same dilemma. They really want or need a new car, but lack of availability means keeping it much longer than intended, and the future value of their car is uncertain. It may be worth a fortune, as they are now, or prices may slip, that is an unknown.

I really feel for the people at the sharp end at leasing companies who are having to negotiate with their customers on extensions, contract prices and letting drivers down with non-supply. That can't be easy.

It seems there is no magic wand that can be waved to kick-start the supply of chips to the motor industry and it will be late 2022 before any sort of normality is resumed.

So, for the foreseeable future, it looks like used cars will be occupying spaces in showrooms where new cars should be.



LEXUS NX450H+

First plug-in hybrid from Lexus has operating system technology that matches the best in class

By Andrew Ryan

For many years, Lexus – together with parent company Toyota – was ahead of its rivals when it came to electrification, with hybrid technology largely fitted across its range.

However, when it comes to plug-in electric vehicle technology, it has been losing ground. This is changing. It launched its first fully-electric car, the UX300e, earlier this year and is now producing its first plug-in hybrid (PHEV), the NX450h+.

This will have plenty of appeal for company car drivers even when looking at it on paper: it has an official electric-only driving range of 43-47 miles and CO₂ emissions of 20-26g/km, putting it in the 7% benefit-in-kind tax band.

Unlike some rival PHEVs, the NX450h+ also has a 'self-charging' hybrid system, so when the charge in the PHEV battery is depleted, it reverts to hybrid power.

This means it offers a real-world fuel economy of around 55mpg in those circumstances, far more than if it was operating on petrol power alone.



Another figure which will be of interest to the driver is the combined 309PS.

Acceleration is brisk when needed – the 0-62mph time of 6.3 seconds makes it one of the fastest crossovers of its kind – and the CVT gearbox helps deliver the power smoothly.

It's no hard-riding sportscar though. On our test, the NX450h+ coped brilliantly with the bumps and lumps of broken road surfaces to provide a cossetting and refined ride, making it relaxing to drive.

It also offers the practicality you would expect from an SUV of this size: there's masses of room for all occupants, while the boot has 545-litre capacity and a completely flat load area for ease of use.

The interior features the premium materials and level of build quality Lexus customers have become accustomed to, but it also includes a significant upgrade: a new multimedia platform.

Lexus has always lagged behind its premium rivals when it comes to infotainment, but the new Lexus Link system changes this.

It features either a 9.8-inch or 14-inch touchscreen dependent on trim level, while the touchpad used on

previous models, which had its critics for being too fiddly to operate, has also been replaced with one that relies on touch or voice commands.

The result is a system that is easy to use, with menus that make sense to navigate, and a super-crisp display.

Its operating system is also faster than its predecessor – Lexus says it is 3.6 times as quick – comfortably putting the technology in line with class best.

In another first for Lexus, the NX has an e-latch electronic door release system which replaces the familiar internal door handle with a push button in the door panel. External access is via a small button on the inside of a fixed handle on the outside of the door.

It incorporates Safe Exit Assist which uses the car's blind spot monitor to prevent doors being opened into the path of vehicles and bicycles approaching from the rear.

NX 450h+ is available in five equipment grades – Premium Pack, Premium Plus Pack, F Sport, F Sport Takumi Pack and Takumi – with P11D prices starting at £48,745.

FLEET PICK
LEXUS 450H+ F SPORT

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£54,745
Monthly BIK (40%)	£128
Class 1A NIC	£529
Annual VED	£0 then £480
RV (4yr/80k)	£17,107/31%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.77
AFR (ppm)	22
Running cost (4yr/80k)	63.15ppm
CO ₂ (g/km)	25



MERCEDES-BENZ EQA

It's not the biggest or best, but the EQA offers excellent refinement and good equipment levels

By Matt de Prez

There will soon be an electric Mercedes-Benz model in all the core segments, as the roll-out of the brand's EQ range gains further traction.

The EQA is the smallest model to date, occupying the all-important compact SUV space, but also filling in for the lack of a fully-electric A-Class hatchback.

It's based on the GLA, rather than a bespoke platform, and the two cars share a body and interior. The only notable visual differences are found at the front and rear, where the EQA gets some tweaks to bring it in line with the rest of the EQ range.

A gloss black panel replaces the conventional radiator grille at the front, complete with a full-width LED light bar. There's a similar treatment at the rear, with a single tail light that stretches across the boot.

The EQA is certainly an under-the-radar electric vehicle (EV). It doesn't shout about its zero-emission capability, which may appeal to some, but, overall, it's a little on the bland side for a premium-badge car.

Things get a lot better when you step inside. The dashboard oozes class, with a mixture of gloss black



EQA's dashboard oozes class and feels more upmarket than rivals

and matte silver trim pieces. It feels markedly more upmarket than rival models, if a little cramped.

Herein lies the issue. By converting a car designed for an internal combustion engine (ICE) to electric, Mercedes is unable to provide the same level of interior space as cars like the VW ID4, which have long wheelbases and flat floors.

The EQA's boot is tiny in comparison, providing just 340 litres of space against the ID4's 543 litres. When you factor in pricing, the EQA sits among much larger models like the Audi Q4 e-tron, but struggles to provide the practicality of a much cheaper car like the VW ID3.

Prices start at £45,590 and three powertrain options are offered, all utilising the same 66.5kWh battery. The entry-level EQA 250 uses a single motor that drives the front wheels. It serves up 190PS.

The EQA 300 can be had for a shade less than £50,000. It uses two motors, boosting power to 228PS and provides all-wheel drive, while range-topping EQA 350 models (from £51,090) have 292PS.

All variants promise around 263 miles (WLTP) of driving range and can charge from 10%-80%, using

a 100kW rapid charger, in as little as 30 minutes. In the real-world, our experience suggest that 200-225 miles is more realistic.

It may not appear to be a class leader for its range, cost or performance, but the EQA does have some very positive attributes. For example, it's remarkably quiet on the move. There's very little wind or road noise, which makes for a relaxing drive.

Performance is good, too. Even the base 250 model feels lively, although it sometimes struggles to put its power down from rest. Grip improves on the move, thanks to the weight of the battery. There's not a great deal of body roll, but the EQA isn't especially dynamic. There's no shortage of electric options in the EQA's segment. Drivers seeking practicality can choose from a growing number of electric VW Group models, while premium offerings include Tesla's Model 3 and the Polestar 2 at a similar price.

Mercedes might not have a stand-out product with the EQA, but it's not one to be overlooked. It's not the biggest or best to drive, but offers excellent refinement, good levels of equipment and will suit those wanting conventional styling.

FLEET PICK
MERCEDES EQA 250 SPORT

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£45,590
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£8
Class 1A NIC	£63
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£15,628 (34%)
Fuel cost (ppm)	5
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	46.5
CO ₂ (g/km)	0
Range	263



▶ MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

By Jeremy Bennett

Mazda plans for total sales volumes of 2,106 units in a full year, and for 57% of those to go into fleet channels. So, who are the 1,219 drivers being targeted by Mazda and what is the competition it is fighting off to win this modest number?

A Mazda spokesman believes the MX-30 is an "ideal commuter car", perfect for those company car drivers who are either 100% office-based "or a hybrid of home and office working".

Now, if your work/life balance is disciplined enough to be able to manage with the car's stated range of 105 miles, with no shocks and surprises in your

working week, or you have a planned charging regime, this might be enough to be comfortable with.

Factor in cold weather and I've seen the fully charged battery range at 97 miles. A eight mile difference isn't much, but the psychological impact of less than 100 miles was enough to have me asking my partner if I could borrow her diesel car to take a 94-mile journey from home into Norfolk.

I just didn't want to risk it on a trip that was very much outside of my typical weekly commuting/charging pattern. And it's these 'unknowns' that put the MX-30 into the niche appeal category, befitting its low sales volume.



▶ HYUNDAI TUCSON

PHEV ULTIMATE

By Stephen Briers

The Tucson is proving to be a comfortable companion for all types of driving.

Despite its size, it laps up the urban life, never feeling onerous even in the tightest of spaces. Given the opportunity to stretch out on the motorway the Hyundai is in its element, offering smooth and stress-free cruising, cushioning occupants in multi-movement seats with a choice of heated or cooling fans.

Get to the twisty bits and the car is assured rather than sporty, clinging on with a little body wallow, which is more pronounced on the Ultimate's 19-inch

alloys. Push hard and you can turn into bends a little too aggressively, creating over-steer, but this is easily adjusted as you get used to the car's personality.

The four-wheel drive Tucson is capable when the terrain gets rough, equipped with downhill brake control, all-wheel lock drive for greater traction and hill-start assist control.

It's not go-anywhere Land Rover performance – more soft-roader than off-roader – but we have no need to regularly plough muddy fields. Nevertheless, it's reassuring to know that, in rain, snow and ice or on gravelly surfaces, the Tucson has the kit to cope.

▶ AUDI Q4 E-TRON

40 SPORT



By Andrew Ryan

One of the most striking things about the Audi Q4 e-tron has been how straightforward and convenient running a battery electric vehicle with an official range of 316 miles has been.

Granted, I do have a Pod Point charger at home and I have moved into it from a Mazda MX-30 (see left) which offered less than half that range (around 130 miles).

In my time with the Q4 e-tron, I've already made a number of journeys without needing to stop to charge compared with having to stop twice when in the MX-30.

One saw me do a 264-mile round-trip with 13 miles range left when I arrived home, while another was around 230 miles with about 35 miles left, meaning that, in the right conditions, I have a real-world range of around 270 miles.

Speed is certainly an enemy of range and driving at 70mph for extended periods has a noticeably detrimental effect.

The recent cold snap has had a similar effect. Usually, my 40-mile commute to the office sees me comfortably achieve an efficiency of 3.6 miles/kWh. However, when the temperature has been 2°C or lower, the same route has seen this fall to 2.5 miles/kWh – a 30% drop.

This hasn't been an issue for me largely because of the size of the Q4 e-tron's battery and the journeys I have made when it's been cold, but there could be times when those circumstances coincide and that would mean a stop to charge is required which would be unnecessary in warmer temperatures.

With the Q4 e-tron, that should not prove too big an inconvenience, dependent on the location and availability of rapid charge points on the public network.

Our model, which has the larger 77kWh battery (Q4 e-tron is also available with a 52kWh battery), is able to charge at up to 125kW which, theoretically, can take on 80 miles of range in approximately 10 minutes.



Scan here to read extended test drives and previous reports



spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert (I've found it to be very handy when reversing out of a parking space), reclining rear seats and a nine-inch infotainment system. And the heated steering wheel and front and rear heated seats are most welcome on chilly days.

It is missing a satellite navigation system, so, like I was, you may be a little surprised to see a 'map' button on the display unit. It's not completely useless, however, as it'll display your mobile phone's map if connected via Apple CarPlay or Android Auto.

Overall first impressions of the car are positive. It's very comfortable with generous space both front and rear and it seems very practical, though I've yet to load up the boot with anything more than a couple of bags of shopping.

I've also only done relatively short journeys in the Across, but I've got a few work trips coming up this month so I'm looking forward to getting some more miles under the tyres and seeing how it performs on the motorway.



▶ SUZUKI ACROSS FIRST TEST

2.5 PHEV E-FOUR E-CVT

By Mike Roberts

The Across plug-in hybrid SUV is the result of a collaborative agreement between Suzuki and Toyota and is based on the Rav4.

It's powered by a 2.5-litre petrol engine and two electric motors, and provides all-wheel drive, even in fully-electric mode. Maximum power is rated at 306PS, giving the car a 0-60mph acceleration time of just six seconds – this SUV is quick off the mark.

You might think a £46,000 price tag is expensive for a Suzuki, and you'd be right. But, not only is this car packed with equipment, its CO₂ emissions of

22g/km put it into the 7% tax bracket, meaning a monthly cost of £53 for a 20% taxpayer and £106 for a 40% taxpayer.

Its 18.1kWh battery pack gives 46 miles of emissions-free driving – that's a lot of local journeys without using a drop of fuel.

There's only the one model available, so what you see is what you get (apart from the colour, of which there are six to choose from). Having no options to consider shouldn't mean you're left wanting. Its extensive spec list includes adaptive cruise control, LED headlights, lane-assist, electric tailgate, blind



Inside, the seven-inch Easy Link infotainment system features navigation, digital radio and Bluetooth phone connectivity, as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

In terms of safety and driver assistance technology, the Captur Iconic comes with lane departure warning with lane-keep assist, plus traffic sign recognition.

The Captur S Edition builds on this with 18-inch alloys, two-tone exterior paint with contrasting black roof, roof bars and added chrome exterior trim detail.

Front and rear parking sensors are standard, complemented by a reversing camera, while the electronic handbrake also features an auto-hold function. S Edition models also feature a seven-inch driver information display.

At the top of the line-up, the Captur RS Line features aluminium sills and pedals, while the Easy Link infotainment system is upgraded to a 9.3-inch portrait-oriented touchscreen with connected services including Google search and live traffic and weather updates.



▶ RENAULT CAPTUR FIRST TEST

S-EDITION E-TECH HYBRID 145 AUTO

By Gareth Roberts

Renault says the all-new Captur E-Tech Hybrid uses the same technology that debuted on the Clio E-Tech Hybrid, which was engineered with input from the Alpine Formula One team.

It combines a 1.6-litre petrol engine with a 1.2kWh lithium-ion battery and two electric motors, together with the automatic, multi-mode 'dog' gearbox that features in all Renault E-Tech models.

The hybrid powertrain offers three levels of energy regeneration and regenerative braking: battery regeneration during deceleration;

brake mode; and regenerative braking.

It generates 145PS delivering a 0-to-62mph time of 10.6 seconds and a maximum speed of 106mph, while emissions start from 113g/km CO₂, delivering fuel economy of up to 56.5mpg.

There are three trim levels: Iconic, S Edition and RS Line. The Captur Iconic builds on the kit specification of SE Limited models and features 17-inch alloys and LED lighting.

Automatic lights and wipers are also standard, as are rear parking sensors, automatic folding exterior mirrors and keyless entry and ignition.

▶ VAUXHALL MOKKA

SRI NAV PREMIUM AUTO



By Luke Neal

A journey to Fleet and Mobility Live at the NEC in October gave me the opportunity to test the Mokka-e's real world range. At 69 miles from the Fleet News office, it's the longest distance it has been driven so far.

Drivers can choose between three driving modes, Normal, Eco and Sport, to suit their requirements and energy consumption. Each mode not only alters the throttle and steering response, but also adjusts the power and torque available:

- Eco: Power and torque limited to 60kW and 180Nm – maximises vehicle range.
- Normal: Power and torque limited to 80kW and 220Nm – ideal for daily driving.
- Sport: Full power and torque (100kW and 260Nm) – maximises performance.

As I left the office car park, I switched the driving mode from normal (it always resets to this after being switched off) to eco, for maximum efficiency, which showed 208 miles of available range with my battery at 100% capacity. Plenty for a return trip.

With lights, climate control, heated seats, sat-nav, radio and wipers on, plus phone charging and speeds of mainly 70mph with light traffic and little braking required, I used 126 miles of range to complete the 69 miles. Luckily there was an available, free-to-use charge point at the hotel.

My return journey was a little further, 80 miles back to my house so, again, I opted for eco mode which offered ample power for the journey, but this time, I set the adaptive cruise control and lane-positioning assistant which are both standard features on our SRi Nav Premium trim level and sat behind lorries at 56mph for the majority of the journey.

I also turned off the air conditioning (I'm not sure if this really makes any difference or not) and arrived home using a more respectable 98 miles of range.



▶ VOLVO XC40

T4 R DESIGN

By Matt de Prez

There's been little to dislike about the Volvo XC40 since it joined the test fleet back in May. But no car is perfect and, with more than 6,000 miles covered, we're pretty clued up on the car's foibles.

The biggest frustration comes from its plug-in hybrid powertrain. Unlike other Volvo plug-in hybrids, which use a four-cylinder petrol engine to power the front wheels and an electric motor to power the rears, the XC40 integrates its motor into a seven-speed dual clutch gearbox – making it front-wheel drive.

While the self-shifter does a decent enough job of providing a smooth drive, our XC40 sometimes

delivers a delayed gearshift when accelerating. It usually manifests itself at around 65mph, when you're about to join a busy motorway. We've checked with other drivers and they've reported the same.

The car also lacks the punchy acceleration we'd expect from its 211PS power output. It's not a particularly slow car, reaching 60mph from rest in around 8.5 seconds, it just doesn't pick up as quickly as we'd expect for an electrified powertrain.

Fuel economy, when the battery is discharged, has been fairly poor, at around 30mpg. With regular charging over the past few weeks I've managed to nudge the average up to a more respectable 47.



▶ CITROËN BERLINGO

FIRST TEST

CREWVAN ENTERPRISE BLUE HDI 100

By Trevor Gehlcken

An enormous amount of thought has gone into what the average van driver needs from the Berlingo and, so far, I have not found a single item missing. I mean, how many vans have a large heavy duty fold-up plastic carrying bag under each seat? None that I've ever come across before.

In the cab, we get two coffee cup holders (important for coffeholics like me), along with air-conditioning, electric windows and rear parking sensors. On the dash is a large screen that does an extraordinary number of things. I particularly like the way it

automatically links up with my iPhone when I plug it in. I yell: "Hey Siri, play Radio Caroline!" (yes it is still going) and seconds later my favourite station is blasting through the van's superb speaker system.

The driver's seat is a dream for old fogeys like me, with loads of lumbar support and adjustment every which way.

I can't mention all the goodies on offer here, but I will say I was expecting to find many of them on the added options list at additional price. In fact, it's all standard apart from the metallic paint job which weighs in at £350. Top marks there, Citroën.



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www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data

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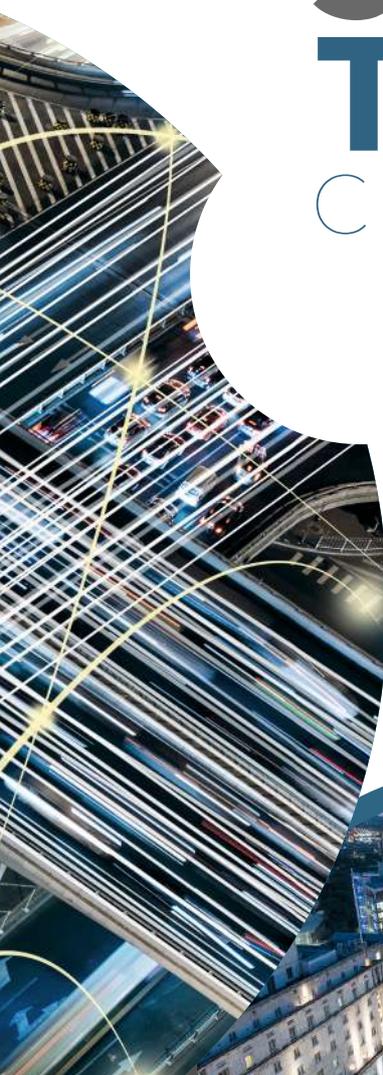


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TOP TIPS FROM BUSINESSES IN THE KNOW

For any fleet manager charged with the task of implementing a new product or service, the number of suppliers jostling for their attention can be quite overwhelming.

Clear and concise advice at their fingertips is what they need most when trying to plough their way through the wealth of information available.

Companies that offer such advice stand out from the crowd and cement their place as key industry voices – it's these businesses that quickly gain a

reputation for being leading experts in their field.

How fleets want to receive such advice also differs; some fleet managers prefer it in print, others online or from an email newsletter, or via social media. *Fleet News* uses all of these mediums and more to convey information to those who need it most.

Sharing your expertise can really make a difference to fleet policy implementation and puts your business front and centre in the minds of decision-makers and influencers.

DRIVER TRAINING • VEHICLE RENTAL • SOFTWARE
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Plan ahead to access the right vehicles for the job in 2022

For all businesses that rely on vehicles for the transportation of people and goods, now is the time to start planning for 2022 as the vehicle and parts supply issues of 2021 continue.

Long delays for new vehicles will remain. The availability of replacement cars and vans when existing fleet is off the road – for servicing, maintenance and

repair – will also continue to be a challenge. And that means businesses need to work more closely than ever with suppliers to ensure they can access the mobility solutions they need.

At Europcar Mobility Group UK our focus is on understanding the future needs of customers and working with manufacturers to ensure we can meet those needs.

What are your fleet plans for 2022?



Planning ahead – what do you need?

- Think about the volume of vehicles and any seasonal shifts when your business is likely to need more or fewer vehicles.
- Would a combination of rental and corporate car sharing with an on-demand fleet help

manage travellers' needs?

- Length of rental is also critical – balancing hourly and daily rental with longer term requirements.
- What modifications and adaptations will be needed to make vehicles fit for purpose?
- How important are low and zero emissions for your travellers and your business?

Talk to the Europcar Mobility Group UK team so we can help with your vehicle planning.

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For more information, contact us –

- www.europcar.co.uk/business
- 0371 384 0140

Fleet health checks – keep your show on the road

A thorough and regular fleet health check is a bit like a check-up at the doctors. It makes sure everything is in working order, offers practical and actionable advice, and delivers real peace of mind

The importance of regular fleet health checks can't be overstated. Not only do you need to ensure legal compliance and that your

fleet meets up-to-date health and safety legislation, but you also have a duty of care to your drivers to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to keep them safe on the roads.

There's also a strong educational aspect to a fleet health check, highlighting good practice and areas for improvement – in particular where there are indications that you are not conforming to



legal requirements. It also kick-starts a new focus on driver risk management in your business or re-starts an existing programme that might need checking and re-calibrating to improve momentum and drive better fleet performance.

PULSE, from DriveTech is a comprehensive and actionable fleet risk health check for business covering policies, drivers, vehicles and journeys

– helping you to appreciate where your operation is currently, and what actions business leaders might need to prioritise.

It's an ideal way to kick-start a full appraisal of the organisation's approach to driver risk, or a means of re-calibrating an existing driver risk programme that has not been reviewed for a significant period.

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For more information, contact us –

- tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk
- www.drivetech.co.uk ● 01256 610907

Big Data helps fleets transition to EVs



By Martin Evans, managing director, Jaama

2030 is just over eight years away and many companies have already started to transition their car fleets to electric vehicles (EVs). For most fleets, eight years involves up to three replacement cycles.

There are many decisions that need to be made from a vehicle choice, operation and

infrastructure perspective to manage the transition successfully. The growing car choice list and infrastructure changes over the coming years will constantly evolve which means fleets need to keep up-to-date with what is available.

Fleets will need Big Data and insight information, including wholelife costs to support choosing the most appropriate vehicles to ensure the transition is both timely and smooth.

Understanding mileage trends for each driver along with forthcoming charging infrastructure plans against real-world vehicle ranges and wholelife costs of new EVs will be a good place to start.

Jaama's Key2 system has the ability to hold data from many different sources. Required data

can then be served-up in an easy-to-understand format to ensure fleets are making well-informed strategic decisions. Key2 'is more advanced than its competitors when dealing with EVs', according to Octopus Electric Vehicles which will help with any transition.

Ensuring a fleet management system stores comprehensive driver and vehicle data in real-time, which is easily accessible, will help make companies make the right decisions.

And, while 2030 still feels a long way away, Big Data will help companies shape plans of their fleet now to make that transition to zero emissions a much more enjoyable experience.



For more information, contact us:

- enquiries@jaama.co.uk ● www.jaama.co.uk
- 0844 8484 333

Don't choose a supplier, choose a partner



By Ben Creswick, managing director of JCT600 VLS.

We have never lived in a more VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) world. With this in mind, it's essential to look for a partner who cannot only demonstrate historic best practice, but also has a dynamic level of innovative thinking.

This may be perceived through technological platforms, which are scalable and can be simply adapted to future changes, the value-added support offered to drivers, or it could be through the dynamic and passionate nature of a business's culture.

Most partners can provide similar products, but the real differentiator when identifying a new partner is its people.

Choose a partner that empowers its people to have freedom and creativity. Do they have a sense of speed and flexibility? Can they adapt to changes in policy and provide ongoing consultancy, so you know you always have the best solution that is right for your business?

Is there a clear culture that

connects its people with their business? In the VUCA world, if your dealings with a potential partner's people clearly demonstrates that they have meaning and focus, a real sense of 'team', then they will be the ones that you can be confident in to adapt to change and won't let you down.

A good supplier delivers the policy; an exceptional partner goes above and beyond to become an extension of your team. They care about your business and fleet objectives, and want to make a difference.

Ultimately, look for a partner that is just that – a partner.



For more information, contact us:

- contactvls@jct600.co.uk ● www.jct600vls.co.uk
- 0113 250 0060

How connected technologies can support drivers under pressure

Fleets across the UK have faced numerous challenges in recent months, with driver shortages exacerbated by both Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. In the run-up to the festive season, commercial drivers are under increasing pressure to transport goods to their destination on time.

It's more important than ever that fleet managers have the right tools to offer drivers the support they need to keep them safe on the road and reduce risky driving behaviours.

What drivers need is technology that will make their lives easier and empower them to make good decisions while out on the road.

Machine vision and artificial intelligence (MV+AI) can be hugely beneficial.

Using these two powerful technologies simultaneously as part of a video telematics solution, drivers are empowered, and fleet managers can gain visibility over risky driving behaviours.

This includes being able to identify whether drivers may be texting or smoking, and to know if they are using their mobile phones, or following another vehicle too closely – all behaviours that have strong correlations with collisions.

MV scans inside the cab, as well as the road in front of the vehicle, to identify such behaviours. AI then determines the level of risk and alerts the driver if necessary. The driver will receive an in-the-moment alert which allows them



to self-correct and prevent an incident.

Driver empowerment and road safety must be placed at the heart of any fleet management programme – and offering this extra level of support becomes even more vital during high-pressure periods, such as the lead up to the festive season.



For more information, contact us ● +44 (0) 1908 880733
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Sourcing operational parity when transitioning to EVs

Wherever you are on your journey to net zero, transitioning to electric vans is a unique challenge. Identifying the right electric vehicles (EVs) that will meet your fleet's operational requirements is key.

Your considerations should

be much wider than just range and where the vehicles will be expected to go on a day-to-day basis.

There are all kinds of other factors that you'll need to think about. This is when an experienced fleet partner can be a huge benefit for your business.

Think about the weight of the loads that the vehicles will be carrying and how many stops they will be making, its dwell time when it's not being used and where it will be kept while it's not out on the road.

Modelling the charging mix across home, hub and public network along with operating location are critical elements of evaluating cost.

Collating and analysing data related to vehicle utilisation used to be costly and time-consuming, but utilising specific telemetry analytics or even free apps can support you with data collection.

When transitioning vans, it's crucial to look at the size and specification of the vehicles as well as the typical loads they will carry, including ancillary



By Alan Bastey, customer relationship director, Zenith

equipment and other goods.

The van's overnight storage location is important, as are cost impacts including its downtime and clean air zone and ultra-low emission zone charges.

For more EV insights and advice, contact our EV experts.



Connect with our experts ● 0344 848 9311
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Commercial Fleet



Why road to net zero 'could stall' for trucks

HGV framework and incentives needed from Government

PLUS: NEW MOBILE PHONE LEGISLATION – LOGISTICS UK ADVICE • RENAULT TRUCKS 'C' RANGE



ROAD TO NET ZERO 'COULD STALL' WITHOUT FRAMEWORK AND INCENTIVES

Government urged to give greater clarity after diesel phase-out is confirmed from 2035

By Gareth Roberts

The commercial fleet industry is warning that the route to net zero could stall without the policies and incentives to promote alternatives to diesel heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

It comes after the Government confirmed that new, non-zero emission HGVs weighing 26 tonnes and less will be phased out by 2035, with all new HGVs sold in the UK to be zero emission by 2040 (commercialfleet.org, November 10).

It had already announced it would end the sale of petrol and diesel vans from 2030, and hybrids from 2035 (fleetnews.co.uk, November 18, 2020).

However, ministers are being warned that, if the decarbonisation of the heavy truck sector is to be achieved, operators will require more than just targets.

David Wells, chief executive of Logistics UK, said: "Businesses need more detail on the technologies that will replace diesel vehicles.

"We need long-term certainty on the policy, regulatory and taxation framework that will sit alongside phase out dates, allowing us to make solid business and investment decisions. We don't expect the Government to provide all of the answers or all of the money, but what we are concerned about is the route to net zero could stall if we don't have the right policy framework or incentives to help the sector."

Speaking at the launch of The Route to Net Zero: A Manifesto for Logistics during a virtual event to coincide with Transport Day at COP26, Wells stressed "urgent action" was needed, highlighting the uncertainty around future powertrains for HGVs.

He explained: "Battery electric might be the right solution for the last mile where the vehicles return to the depot, but there are still real concerns of the mileage range and how payloads may be compromised."

For long-haul HGVs, he says the future powertrain direction still remains "unknown".

"We must start planning now for the infrastructure that will support the vehicles of the future," he said.

The Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trials (LEFT) report, published last year, suggested a range of solutions for the heavy sector, which it categorised as 'Revolution', 'Transition' and 'Evolution' technologies dependent on the potential contribution to the net zero agenda.

Revolution technologies included battery electric vehicles (BEVs); transition technologies included range-extended electric vehicles and dedicated gas vehicles and hydrogen/gas dual fuel vehicles; while evolution technologies included lightweight and aerodynamic trailers and trailer kinetic energy recovery systems (KERS).

Andy Eastlake, CEO of the environmental consultancy Zemo Partnership, says there are three likely alternative technologies: hydrogen fuel-cell powertrains, 'electric road systems' that deliver the electricity

to the vehicle as you drive and BEVs.

However, where battery electric trucks were concerned, he admitted: "There are challenges in terms of the scale of the batteries and impact on the operation."

Scottish Water, which operates 1,200 commercial vehicles ranging from vans to 44-tonne HGVs, wants to be operating a zero-emission fleet by 2030.

Fleet manager Elaine Pringle said a Cenex review had identified suitable electric vans to replace its light commercial vehicles, but alternatives for heavier vehicles were a problem.

She explained: "For our large vans and HGVs, there is no credible option right now due to the purchase price, the lack of UK vehicle availability and the lack of refuelling infrastructure, particularly in Scotland."

In the summer, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced funding of £20 million to deliver a series of projects to help support the uptake of zero emission trucks (commercial-fleet.org, July 27).



FOR OUR LARGE VANS AND HGVs, THERE IS NO CREDIBLE OPTION RIGHT NOW

ELAINE PRINGLE, SCOTTISH WATER

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's



Used LCV market overview

Average auction prices fell by more than 1.2% in October, driven by a shortage of later year used stock. A combination of increased demand for Euro 6 stock driven by the impact of new clear air zones (CAZs), London's widened ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) and the impact of fleet sustainability commitments, has seen demand for Euro 5 vehicles reduce.

With an increase in older Euro 5 vehicles now being de-fleeted and average age and mileage profiles now at their highest for some time, average selling prices have dropped slightly. Demand for Euro 6 stock, though, continues to rise unabated, with used prices set to increase through the remainder of the year and into 2022.

October in detail

Glass's auction data shows that the overall number of vehicles sold in October fell by 25.5% versus September and was 24.2% lower than the same point 12 months ago.

Average sales prices paid decreased by 1.2% compared with September, but remain 17.6% higher than October 2020. The average age of vehicles sold has increased from 73.8 months to 76.1 in October, while the average mileage increased slightly from 79,171 to 79,477 over the same period. The latest average mileage for October is 6,039 miles (+7.6%), higher than a year ago. First time conversion rates increased from 80.9% to 81.5% in October.

Medium-sized vans were again the most popular at auction accounting for 41.4% of all sales in October, while the highest proportion of all LCVs sold – 43.1%, up from 32.0% in September – were in the six years old-plus age bracket.

In nearly 36,000 used vehicles observed for sale in the wholesale market, 50.6% were priced in excess of £20,000, 32.4% were on sale for between £20,000 and £10,000, 11.9% were on sale between £10,000 and £5,000 and 5.4% for £5,000 or less.

Glass's continues to monitor the LCV market closely and has an open dialogue with auction houses, manufacturers, leasing and rental companies, independent traders and dealers as well as the main industry bodies. This information, combined with the wealth of knowledge in our CV team ensures Glass's valuations remain relevant in the marketplace.

Glass's

Part of Autovista Group

Projects receiving a share of the funding included an electric road system feasibility study involving a consortium led by Costain, which includes Scania and Siemens Mobility.

It is considering a 20-kilometre (12.5-mile) stretch of road near Scunthorpe for a possible trial of electric road systems, which involve battery-electric trucks being supplied with electricity from overhead catenaries via a pantograph enabling them to charge dynamically.

The trucks come equipped with a battery that charges while they are in motion so they can detach to both overtake vehicles and reach their final destination with zero emissions from start to finish.

Meanwhile, a hydrogen fuel cell feasibility study, led by Arcola Energy, is looking at a possible future trial of hydrogen fuel cell trucks and new refuelling infrastructure in Scotland.

Truck maker Daf is also deploying 20 battery-electric HGVs for use by public sector organisations to enable testing in a real-world, real-time logistics environment.

The DfT says these projects will support the roll-out of zero emission technologies to decarbonise heavy transport vehicles from 2035.

Eastlake welcomed the Government target dates for zero-emission trucks, but said: "Getting there will require a lot of detailed thinking."

The Logistics UK net zero manifesto suggests a roadmap for Government and policymakers to help commercial fleets decarbonise their operations.

It includes a call for large-scale technology trials that result in clarity and certainty for HGV operators on which zero tailpipe emission technologies will be commercially viable, enabling long-term business planning.

It also wants Government infrastructure plans to recognise the needs of commercial vehicles, support for operators installing charge points at depots and the use of appropriate low carbon fuels to be incentivised through the tax system to help operators lower emissions immediately.

Wells said he was "disappointed" that low carbon-fuelled vehicles will not be available for sale after 2040. "These fuels can act as effective, interim solutions while the technology for zero tailpipe emission HGVs matures."

He added: "Dates will only be attainable if the Government provides the right support."

"Our members need to see a nationwide network of recharging and refuelling infrastructure put in place, effective and affordable vehicles made readily available for all, and fairer charging arrangements for the necessary power upgrades to commercial premises."

Five Ts to electric transition

Fleet managers must concentrate on the five Ts as they prepare for the switch to electric vehicles over the next decade

The five Ts refer to Technology, Total cost of ownership, Training, Timing and Transition.

The focus comes as companies prepare to shift to zero-emission vehicles by 2030, ahead of a proposed ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans (including hybrids by 2035).

Follow our guide to the five Ts as part of your fleet management electrification strategy:

Technology

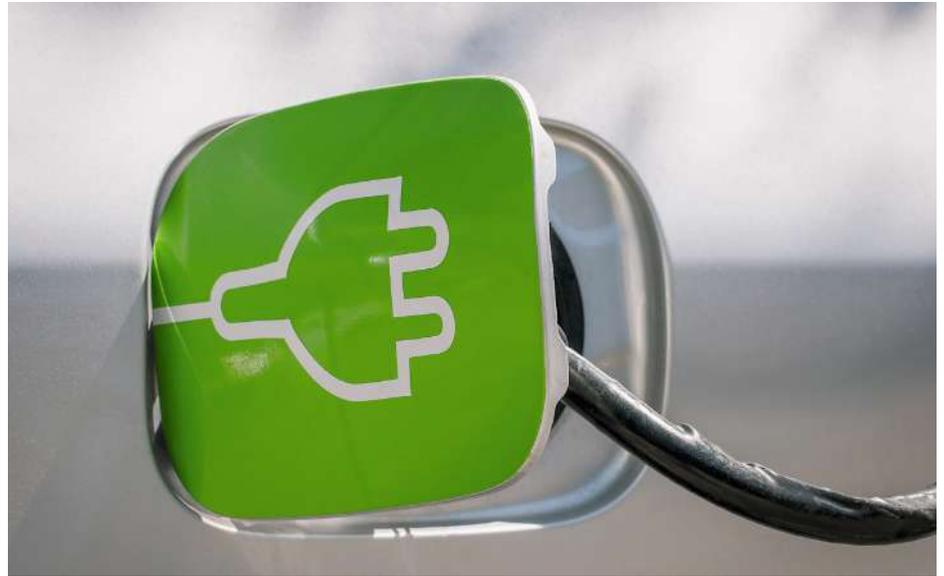
Technology will play a critical role as fleets prepare for change. A key starting point is data, which is an essential aspect of adapting policy. Fleets can use tracking technology to monitor how vehicles are used to identify travel patterns that are most suited to early electrification. This could be city-based vehicles or those that typically cover local journeys, with occasional longer trips. Fleet managers will also need to assess the infrastructure needed for home, workplace and public charging.

Total cost of ownership

Total cost of ownership (TCO), or wholelife costs, will be a vital tool during the switch to zero-emission vehicles. It enables businesses to understand how vehicles compare. Data includes purchase, lease or rental costs, and predicted spending on repair, maintenance, fuel, or electricity. It also incorporates depreciation, residual values, and taxes for both driver and company. While electric vehicles (EVs) tend to have higher list prices, they are cheaper to operate and tax, often leaving them with a TCO advantage compared with petrol and diesel.

Training

Fleets will need to focus on three broad areas when it comes to training. First, board members need to be briefed on the fleet transition strategy and the Government's Road to Zero plans,



“While EVs tend to have higher list prices, they are cheaper to operate and tax, often leaving them with a TCO advantage”

to understand the importance of embracing change. Fleet managers will also need to invest in their own training and education, to ensure they are a source of expertise within their businesses to deliver the strategy. Finally, drivers will need to be trained to efficiently operate EVs, including guidance on charging and support with adapting their driving style to maximise range.

Timing

The countdown has started towards the end of the fossil fuel era on the UK's roads, so fleet managers need to start preparing. They need a timetable for change to share within the business to identify any potential barriers and develop solutions. The Government's

2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans is nearing, and manufacturers will be switching production to focus on EVs in the coming years, meaning some vehicles on current choice lists may become harder to source.

Transition

Fleet managers can start the switch today by trialling the latest electrified vehicles. Our Reflex Renewable Drive Programme puts fleet managers behind the wheel of zero-emission vehicles. To ensure a smooth transition to electric, fleet managers will rely on their suppliers to provide accurate information and guidance to assist them in their electric strategy. Reflex has the tools and the resources to support customers in making the switch. Our award-winning Drive with Reflex modular risk management service also provides essential insights and data that will drive future changes.

To discuss how Reflex Vehicle Hire can support your fleet on the Road to Zero, including vehicle tests as part of the Reflex Renewable Drive Programme, contact a member of our expert team.

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q Some of our drivers are reluctant to take their holiday saying they do not have to if they don't want to. Is it a legal requirement for drivers to take their 20 days' statutory holiday in a 12-month period?



ISTOCK/SHANSHE

A It is a legal requirement for a driver to take 20 statutory days off in a 12-month period, but whether this is a calendar year, or a holiday year is up to you.

However, due to Covid-19, the Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 amends the Working Time Regulations 1998 to create a further exemption relating specifically to the pandemic.

It states that: "Where it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to take some, or all, of the holiday to which they are entitled due to the coronavirus, they have a right to carry the four weeks under regulation 13 into the next two leave years."



ISTOCK/MACHINEHEADZ

Q We have received a complaint from a member of the public saying snow was coming off the rear of one of our vehicles, making for poor visibility to the extent that they planned to notify the police. Can we be prosecuted for this?

A The simple answer is yes, you could be. The law is clear in that anything carried on a vehicle should not cause a nuisance or danger. Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986,100 (s2) states: "The load carried by a motor vehicle or trailer shall at all times be so secured, if

necessary, by physical restraint other than its own weight, and be in such a position that neither danger nor nuisance is likely to be caused to any person or property by reason of the load or any part thereof falling or being blown from the vehicle or by reason of any other movement of the load or any part thereof in relation to the vehicle." This would also apply to snow being blown from the vehicle.

In addition, the Highway Code rule 229 states that all snow must be removed from the vehicle before starting off.

Any use of hand-held mobile phone while driving to become illegal

Police will soon be able to prosecute drivers using a mobile phone while at the wheel more easily, after the Government strengthens existing laws to further improve road safety. It is already illegal to text or make

a phone call (other than in an emergency) using a hand-held device while driving. Next year, laws will go further to ban drivers from using their phones to take photos or videos, scroll through playlists or

play games. This will mean anyone caught using their hand-held device while driving will face a £200 fixed penalty notice plus six points on their licence.

Drivers will still be able to continue

using a device 'hands-free' while driving, such as a sat-nav, if it is secured in a cradle.

They must, however, always take responsibility for their driving and can be charged with an offence if the police find them not to be in proper control of the vehicle.

Following the public consultation, the Government will revise the Highway Code to explain the new measures. It will also be more precise about the fact that being stationary in traffic also counts as driving, making it clear that hand-held mobile phone use at traffic lights or in motorway jams is illegal except in limited circumstances.

However, there will be an exemption to the new law for drivers making a contactless payment using their mobile phone while stationary to ensure the law keeps pace with technology.

This exemption will cover, for example, places like a drive-through restaurant or a road toll, and will only apply when payment is being made with a card reader. It will not allow motorists to make general online payments while driving.



ISTOCK/ANNASTILLS

RENAULT TRUCKS C RANGE

C Range is a great option if you often find yourself in tight corners



By Tim Campbell

Renault Trucks has, in theory, two offerings when looking at the needs of the construction sector.

The 'K' model is a more European style product and caters for what would be traditionally called the 'muckaway' sector.

Of course, the needs of UK operators have always been focused around maximising the payload potential which results in a low chassis weight requirement. After looking at the specification of the 'heavier' K range, Renault Trucks decided a lighter weight product was necessary, hence the 'C' Range.

One of the most popular models is the four-axle C460.32 8x4 tridem which starts life as a conventional 6x4 chassis before it undergoes a converter transformation when a fourth rear steer axle is added, tridem style.

MODEL TESTED

SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	C460.32 8x4 Rear Steer Tridem
Cab	Night & Day
Engine	Renault Trucks DTi11 10.8 litre
Power	453PS (338kW) @1700-1900rpm
Torque	2,200Nm @ 1,000-1,400rpm
Gearbox	Optidriver 12-sp Automated
Front axle	9,000kgs
GVW	32,000kgs
GCW	35,500kgs
Chassis weight	10,249kgs
Wheelbase	3,900mm
Brakes	Discs all round
Tank	315 litres

DRIVELINE

The '460' part of the Renault Trucks nomenclature denotes the nominal engine horse power rating and, in the case of this eight wheeler, it's powered by the DTi 11-litre Euro VI diesel engine rated at 453PS (338kW) developed between 1,700 and 1,900rpm. The torque hits a high of 2,200Nm between 1,000 to 1,400rpm helping to provide a good driving style.

The 10.8-litre six cylinder commonrail engine uses various after-treatment systems involving a catalytic converter, diesel particulate filter and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) together with a partial gas recycling.

Behind the engine sits a 430mm single plate clutch matched to Renault's well known and respected automated gearbox, the Optidriver. In this case, it's the ATO 2612 version resulting in a 0.79 overdrive gear at the top end.

Naturally, a multi-wheeler requires a power take off to power various types of ancillaries and the 'C' comes standard with the S81 model with a maximum torque rating of 1,000Nm.

DIMENSIONS

The good news turning circle-wise is the wheelbase remains the same as the 6x4 at 3,900mm measured from the centreline of the front axle to the centreline of the second axle. This results in a maximum overall chassis length of 9,610mm.

Measured kerb to kerb, it takes 7.78m to complete the sweep while it requires 10.3m for the traditional 8x4 chassis, which is a 32% difference, although the C460 weighs around 200kg more than a conventional 8x4.

WEIGHTS

The tridem has a gross vehicle weight of 32,000kgs and, matched to Renault Trucks' Day and Night cab,

has a kerb weight of 10,249kgs, which includes a full 48 litre tank of AdBlue and 315 litre fuel tank filled to 90%. All this means there's a potential body and payload allowance of 21,751kgs.

SUSPENSION/BRAKES

The front suspension consists of a two leaf springs and an anti-roll bar, with the rear bogie using air suspension and an anti-roll bar and rear shock absorbers. Of course, steel rear suspension is also available along with a two-channel remote control for the rear suspension. Braking on the 'C' range start at the engine, with Renault Trucks Optibrake 'retarder' fitted as standard. It uses a combination of a conventional exhaust brake and valve compression braking coupled to the service brake and rated at 300kW(403PS) at 2,300rpm.

CAB

The all-steel large night and day cab features heated and electronically-controlled rear view mirrors, as well as door hatches on either side. The interior is 2,260mm wide and single bunk is 2,010mm long and 670mm wide, and the mattress is 170mm thick, with twice as many springs as the previous model. The instrument panel features a seven-inch HD colour information display and the steering wheel has a handy removable writing board complete with a set of controls for the media system.

SUMMARY

The C460 is an excellent blend of a strong chassis that's optimised to the needs of the UK lightweight multi-wheeler operator. The large cab provides an impressive work environment for the driver. Converting a base 6x4 to a tridem configuration offers the best of both worlds, especially if you're in a tight corner.

THE LAST WORD

ANDY PAGE

HEAD OF SALES AND MARKETING, SOFICO UK

Like his grandad and his dad, Page is a motorbike nut. He travels around Europe on one and would 'electrify my dream collection of motorbikes' so they could never be banned from the roads

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is – first, don't panic, it's going to be great! And probably more importantly, don't be afraid to take risks and follow what you enjoy in life.

The first memory associated with a car – probably my beloved grandad's three-wheeler Robin Reliant. My grandad (and my dad) were bikers first and foremost, and he refused to buy a car and took my brother and I as babies around in his sidecar – until he was forced by my gran to buy the three-wheeler.

If money was no object – I'd electrify my dream collection of motorbikes so the Government could never ban them!

My pet hate is procrastination! I have a saying – don't talk about it, just do it.

A book that I would recommend is *The Dalai Lama – The Art of Happiness*. It is such a refresher for mental health – his philosophy and strategies for dealing with stress and negativity in life is something I believe should be taught in schools. The art of remaining positive takes practice and has helped me countless times in life and my career.

The song I would have on my driving playlist – *Blockbuster* by the mighty Sweet. When I negotiated the purchase of the school record player for our sixth form commonroom, this was the only record it came with.

My favourite movie quote is "Hang on a minute, lads – I've got a great idea" (from *The Italian Job*), the words to strike fear into my friends and family. I am very outdoorsy and creative, so I regularly come up with crazy ideas to drag my family into.

My hobbies and interests – as you may have guessed, motorbikes. I've toured most of Europe and have a long list of places yet to go. I'm also a rugby nut having played a bit and love nothing better than watching my son run out at my home club.

If I was transport minister for a day, I would make multi-modal transport mandatory. Having access to different modes of transport (including affordable public transport) would not only help the environment, but also have a hugely positive impact on people's health.

Why fleet? My grandfather and father both worked in transport, so it was always there around me – I formed a 30-plus year career in automotive and asset financing, but have always had a 'tech' interest and how that could improve the working processes and, importantly, the customer experience. My move to Sofico this year has really ticked that last box for me and it's great to be working in an environment where you feel you have real input.

How I got here: I started in a Sainsbury's management training programme but then moved into a privately-owned car financier. There followed 12 years of working for two mainstream bank-backed asset finance companies (Roy Scot Trust and Lloyds Bowmaker), before joining Volvo Financial Services for 20 years looking after bus and coach and then truck financing.

Latest products, developments and achievements: Sofico's system, Miles, is undergoing some really exciting developments. Miles is probably the only proven true hybrid, both fleet and retail, finance platform there is that is completely configurable. Its ability to manage the simplest to the most complex contracts effortlessly across border and from single asset to multi-mobility is impressive.

My company in three words: Experience, innovation, people

Greatest career influence? He'll blush, but my last boss at Volvo, Steve Williams. Not only did he teach me everything I needed to know about trucks and complex lease services, but he constantly reminded me that it isn't what we do in work that is important, it is the customer experience of what we do that is.

Advice to fleet newcomers: Do as much reading and networking as you can – we are in a fast-moving and evolving industry and it's hard but important to keep pace.

If I wasn't in fleet? I'd love to be a professional motorcycle tour vlogger, seeing the world from two wheels while making money.



Next issue: Spencer Halil, chief commercial officer at Alphabet GB

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