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Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO_2 emissions: 0 g/km. Electric energy consumption (combined): 20 to 21 kWh/100Km / 2.9 – 3 miles/kWh. The iX xDrive40 electric range: 246-257 miles. The iX xDrive50 electric range: 366-380 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The iX is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

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ELECTRIC FLEET

Six fleets – from delivery to construction, private to public sector – tell all about their road to zero journey and what they've learned so far

Prepare for road pricing
Momentum is building as select committee inquiry takes evidence

Fleet News Awards 2022
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Steve Winter, British Gas
How award-winner handles "unprecedented levels of complexity and change"

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THE BIG PICTURE

We're looking into speculation that one of the UK's major electric vehicle charge point operators is suffering software issues, including failure to couple up, errors on location and payment malfunctions. You'll be first to know if the story stands up!

Rapid expansion of EV public charging infrastructure is raising investment concerns with some legacy networks – albeit their legacy is only a few years old – and risks undermining customer confidence.

But, while public charging is important for confidence, many commentators believe home, work and destination charging are the critical elements to get right – that's where most charging will take place.

A growing number of fleet operators, including the likes of British Gas and DPD, are calling for businesses to unite and share their workplace charging networks. In return for a fee (helping to speed up return on costly infrastructure investment), they would be able to pre-book workplace charging across the country.

We think it's a great idea and plan to work with the Association of Fleet Professionals to facilitate such a network, based on pre-booking and paying for usage. Watch this space for more news.

I had a recent experience during Fleet & Mobility Live which underlines how hotels have yet to grasp the concept of destination charging.

The Genting Hotel on the NEC complex has one – count 'em – charger, a 7kW Pod Point. I arrived Monday evening ahead of F&ML at 8.30pm to find the charger was occupied by a plug-in hybrid BMW X3. No matter, I was staying for a couple of days and would surely secure a slot.

I left for the show (review on page 58) at 8am the next morning and, no surprise, the X3 was still there, plugged in. It was when I returned to the hotel at 4.30pm to find the same car monopolising the charging bay that I started to get a little irked.

The receptionist was powerless to help. The Genting does not ask for registration plate details, so had no idea which guest owned the car. It was still gathering cobwebs at 8am Wednesday morning – almost 36 hours later.

Astonishing. The chance to gain data was going begging but, worse, it left other guests unable to charge their cars.

Hotels need to start implementing a booking system to monitor usage and prevent charger hogs. The same principle would underpin a national business charging network, giving fleets access to chargers across the country and enabling them to improve routing, scheduling and operational efficiencies.

Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief, *Fleet News*

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Burning question:
Is there a food you were obliged to eat when young, but avoid now? Or one you never ate, but do now?

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief
Stephen Briers 01733 468024
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Not obliged, but I used to enjoy celery until a whisky-induced episode as a teenager. I still drink whisky though!
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I despised tartare of Hampshire Fallow Deer with Juniper, Confit Egg Yolk & Pickled Walnut as a child. But it's a Tuesday night regular now
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I hated liver and onions and still do
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I didn't use to eat onions – my dad would have to pick them out of meals like Shepherd's Pie for me or I wouldn't eat it. I like them now, but still won't eat raw tomatoes
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Liver (and its 'rubber bands'). Couldn't stand it then, avoid it now
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Out of office
Photos **istock, Chris Lowndes**

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I never ate broccoli, but love it now
Production editor
David Buckley
Still hate sprouts. Now love olives. First olive I ever ate was part of an in-flight meal. I thought it was a funny tasting grape. Sheltered youth!
Senior designer
Chris Stringer
I always used to be a hater of Marmite. Now, though, with age and time, I am a lover of it
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COMMERCIAL FLEET

NEW ROAD PRICING AHEAD?

New report shows fiscal impact of electrification

By Gareth Roberts

The future of motoring taxation remains unclear, but the need for change is mounting as increasing electric vehicle (EV) registrations continue to drive down tax revenues for the Government.

The latest registration figures show that about 15% of new cars sold were pure electric in September, up from 11% in August.

Plug-in hybrid cars also increased their share to 6.4%, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), meaning more than one-in-five new cars sold in September was capable of zero-emission driving.

The RAC estimates that there are more than 330,000 zero-emission battery electric vehicles (BEVs) on the UK's roads – with more than 125,000 registered so far in 2021 alone – along with 320,000 plug-in hybrids and 700,000-plus conventional hybrids.

With the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and vans ending from 2030 and hybrids from 2035, and with the Government consulting on a ban on new diesel trucks from 2040, the number of plug-in vehicle registrations is estimated to rise rapidly to around three

million by 2025, 10 million by 2030 and 25 million by 2035.

KPMG's Mobility 2030 team expects the already-growing sale of zero-emission cars and vans to reach 98% of sales in 2031 and 27% of the parc by 2030.

DWINDLING TAX TAKE FROM EVs

It leaves the Treasury urgently needing a plan to plug a potential £40 billion shortfall from road taxes, including fuel duty.

At £28.4bn in 2019-2020 (excluding VAT), tax revenues from fuel duty account for a significant 2% of GDP (gross domestic product), while vehicle excise duty (VED) receipts were estimated to account for £6.5bn.

The impact of electrification can be seen in the comparable costs, according to new research from the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

It suggests that the cost of petrol or diesel, fuel duty and VED is about £1,100 a year for the average petrol or diesel car, while for EVs it is only £320 – a reduction of 71%.

Irrespective of the pace of EV uptake in the 2020s, if the UK is to hit the Government's EV deployment targets, the Exchequer will lose almost £260bn in revenue by 2040, the institute says.

With each £5.5bn equating to a penny on income tax, compensating for this loss would require the basic rate of income tax to rise by around 6p in the pound – or 2p by the end of the next Parliament – a 4.5 percentage point increase in VAT or huge rises in other consumer taxes.

The question is how to plug this shortfall. The institute's Avoiding Gridlock Britain report suggests taxing the charging of EVs could damage adoption rates, prove regressive and be difficult to implement.

Increasing VED for pure electric vehicles and for hybrid vehicles would also, in the short term, significantly disincentivise the transition to zero emission vehicles, it says.

The Treasury could also look to recoup lost funding through other avenues such as VAT or income tax. However, this would contradict the 'user pays principle' by re-distributing the tax for the funding of roads away from road users to the general population who may not have access to vehicles or derive additional benefit.

The report, instead, suggests that the Government could support the expansion of the current set of tolls, congestion and air quality charges and/or consider implementing a 'road pricing policy' in which users are charged according to the 'user pays principle' – for the use of the vehicle rather than its ownership (see panel).

It says this would not only provide the Government with revenues for infrastructure spending, but also address other objectives such as optimising the capacity of the finite road asset, managing congestion, or improving air quality.

The Government is taking notice. Behind the scenes, ministers are discussing road pricing options and how to introduce a policy without it being a vote loser.

The Transport Select Committee is also getting involved.

During a session at the House of Commons, British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) director of corporate affairs Toby Poston told the committee: "Any new road pricing scheme must be easy to pay and have the simply objective of providing a revenue-neutral replacement for fuel duty and VED.

"It should be based on a simple distance-driven model that considers vehicle weight, emissions and use case with discounts given to shared mobility solutions – such as car clubs, rental cars, buses and taxis – to incentive more sustainable travel choices."

Fleet decision-makers attending a recent *Fleet News* roundtable also called for a simple solution which replaced, rather than added to, existing taxation.

Steve Winter, British Gas head of fleet, said: "It can't be an administrative burden or an additional tax burden. We just need a formula we can understand and a long-sighted strategy view."

CONGESTION RISK FROM DOING NOTHING

A failure to act will dramatically increase congestion. Cheaper driving as fuel duty has remained frozen and fuel efficiency has improved is already having that effect, according to the Tony Blair Institute report.

This year's decision to retain the fuel duty freeze could result in the equivalent of another 400,000 cars on the road by the end of this Parliament, it claims.

It estimates that a 70% drop in fuel cost is expected to see a 7-14% increase in vehicle miles in the short run with the effect rising closer to 40% in the long.

Consistent with this, the Department for Transport (DfT) forecasts EVs will result in a rise in traffic of 30% and an increase in the proportion of vehicle miles driven in congested conditions up by five percentage points to 12%.

Without action, this increase in congestion could push up the costs of congestion to the UK from £59.5bn to £121.54bn by 2040 and increase the amount of time the average driver wastes in traffic by nine hours, to 32 hours a year.

The report suggests there will also be an acceleration in the current trend, driven by app-based map services, to move traffic away from main roads and onto residential

FOUR ROAD PRICING OPTIONS

1. **Flat rate per mile: road users are charged for each mile they drive.**
2. **Geographic or toll-based: costs vary dependent on geographic area or specific roads, with cost focused on areas with high congestion.**
3. **Time-based rate: road users are charged for each minute they spend driving.**
4. **Dynamic rate: an 'Uberised' model, where charges vary dynamically based on the road being used and time of travel.**

Source: Tony Blair Institute

"A FAVOURABLE TAX REGIME... WILL PLAY A VITAL PART IN ACCELERATING OUR JOURNEY ALONG THE ROAD TO ZERO"

SIMON STATON, VENSON AUTOMOTIVE SOLUTIONS

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streets not designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic.

Some form of road pricing to plug an anticipated loss in vehicle-related tax revenues is supported by more than half (53%) of motorists, recent research from Venson Automotive Solutions suggests.

In an earlier *Fleet News* poll, almost half (45%) of the respondents said they were in favour of an alternative pay-as-you-go taxation scheme based on miles driven. More than a third (36%) said they were not.

The Venson survey found that more than one-in-five respondents (22%) favoured a nationwide road pricing 'pay-as-drive' scheme, with a further 31% saying they would support a 'road miles' system, for example, where the first 4,000 miles each year were free before paying a set cost per mile driven.

More than one-third (38%) of respondents, meanwhile, preferred the introduction of a new electric vehicle (EV) tax, which could see drivers of heavier vehicles paying higher taxes.

Venson client management director Simon Staton says there is pressure on the Chancellor to outline a 10-year trajectory to establish a financially viable means to achieving zero emissions.

"Our survey findings confirm an understanding by the public that some sort of EV tax or related user charges will be necessary, which should offer Government assurances that people are mentally preparing to make the switch," he added.

"A favourable tax regime, together with a raft of new models and significant growth in the charging network, will play a vital part in accelerating our journey along the road to zero."

In evidence submitted to MPs on the Transport Committee, which is conducting an inquiry into road pricing (it has yet to publish its findings), Greener Transport Solutions says that, to coincide with the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars, Government should announce that fuel duty and VED will be scrapped from 2030 and replaced by a mandatory road user charge based on distance and time. The charge would apply to all vehicles.

The distance element would pay for road infrastructure and the time charge would cover congestion and pollution.

The not-for-profit organisation, which is dedicated to the decarbonisation of transport, proposes that, ahead of it becoming mandatory in 2030, road users would be encouraged to opt-in.

It suggests a distance charge of 2p per km for cars, and an average of 3p per km for vans and 6p per km for lorries. The charge for lorries and vans would increase in line with weight per axle and wear and tear to the road surface.

For cars a flat rate charge of 2p per km is recommended as the weight of a car is marginal to the damage inflicted on road surfaces.

MOTORING TAX SET INDEPENDENTLY

Greener Transport Solutions wants the Government to set up a commission with cross-party representation to agree a way forward. It would consider delegating authority to an independent body such as the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) in consultation with the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) to set motoring taxation. It says this would build cross party support and politically de-risk the introduction of road user charging.

Greener Transport Solutions argues that in the same way the Government asks the Bank of England to meet inflation targets it should ask the ORR/OBR to establish the right level and mix of motoring taxation to meet targets in public finances, road infrastructure spend and set targets for congestion and air quality.

It concludes: "The switch from ICEs to EVs provides a window of opportunity for an honest conversation about road taxation and to develop a politically deliverable national road pricing scheme."

Many contend that road pricing can't be put off any longer – it's time to act

ANDY EASTLAKE,
CEO, ZEMO PARTNERSHIP

Transport academics and specialists have been queueing up in recent months to publicise their conversion to the idea that some form of road pricing or travel taxation to replace our current system of fuel duty and vehicle excise is not only desirable, but inevitable.

Increasingly, as the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change has said, doing nothing is now not a viable option, economically or politically – and perhaps even socially...but the road to an acceptable new equilibrium is uncharted and full of potholes.

It's been widely observed that Government has to find a way of filling the £40bn+ gap in revenues from the current system of taxing motoring. It's clear, too, that fuel duty and road tax (VED) are blunt tools that haven't been able to deal with the real social costs of driving, from emissions to congestion.

Without other action to tackle car use, the lower cost of running EVs is likely to mean greater vehicle use with associated congestion and space occupation currently blighting many cities.

The recent Oxford CREDS report highlighted that we're not going to be able to meet net zero targets without reducing car use in addition to transforming the technology we use to power those cars. (Some policymakers are already committed to change; Scotland aims to cut national car mileage 20% by 2030 while London is targeting 80% of journeys to be non-car by 2041.)

As Zemo's lifecycle work shows, tailpipe emissions are only part of the story. The manufacture and disposal of vehicles and creating the capacity to supply energy to them all have an emissions impact. As in many areas of life, for transport, efficiency must be a main focus of any new approach.

Road pricing has a back-story, of course, and as a label carries a great deal of baggage, so we'll need to communicate much more effectively than in the past why it's needed now; how proven (GPS and associated) technology is now commonplace, and how its introduction can be fair, reduce traffic congestion and accelerate a necessary transition to the cleanest, most efficient (and, perhaps, smaller) vehicles (some of which will still be cars, of course).

Importantly, the public is much more aware that we're facing a "triple whammy" of emergencies in climate, air quality and congestion. But, because of the collective memory of the terms 'road pricing' and 'road user charging', perhaps we need a new term to describe the benefits a new approach could bring in terms of climate, air pollution and space.

More and more people are arguing that the time for road pricing has arrived. They say it has the potential to influence how, when and where we travel. It could help to promote active travel choices, speed the introduction of EVs and other zero/low emission vehicles and provide policymakers with an effective lever to manage congestion. It will have to be fair and not discriminate against those with fewer resources and limited travel choices. And it must be clearly understood if it's to be accepted and effective.

As the Institute for Global Change says, the transition from our current system of vehicle taxation is under way whether we like it or not. The transition offers us a huge opportunity to rethink our relationship with our cars and the incentives we put around their use.

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Genesis launches into the UK fleet market with a VIP service promise

Slow and steady from new premium car brand as it expands on its retail buyers-only start

The Genesis GV60 will become a key fleet model for the brand

By Matt de Prez

Genesis is set to shake up the premium car sector with a unique VIP-style service offering that will be available to fleet customers alongside a line-up of electric cars.

Having launched in the UK in the spring, the Korean brand, which is part of the Hyundai Motor Group, is now establishing its fleet sales process and promises to provide corporate customers with the same luxury service level as retail buyers.

> "THE CORPORATE MARKET IS GOING TO BE PIVOTAL, PARTICULARLY FOR THE EVs"
>
> **JONNY MILLER GENESIS**

The set-up is being implemented by ex-Volvo national leasing and residual value manager Jonny Miller, who joined the business as head of sales at the start of the year following a stint at Polestar.

Fleet sales have not been the brand's immediate priority, as its first two models to launch – the G80 saloon and GV80 SUV – were not focused in fleet-friendly segments. But, by 2025, Genesis plans to only launch fully electric cars and, in 2022, it will introduce two: an electric version of the G80 and the GV60, a mid-size crossover-style vehicle that utilises the same platform as Hyundai's Ioniq 5.

Miller told *Fleet News:* "We're doing things slow and steady to start with. We have the ability to do that, with the backing to do that, to make it make it a success. Now, I know, because of my background and where I've been and what I've done, the corporate market is going to be pivotal, particularly for the EVs.

"So, always in the back of my mind was the thought that we need to be ready for the corporate market."

In September, Genesis introduced two more cars to the UK. The G70, a BMW 3 Series-sized saloon, and the GV70, an Audi Q5-sized SUV. These are the first models that Miller believes will appeal to user-chooser fleet customers.

Prices start at £33,850 for the G70 and just shy of £40,000 for the GV70. Both are offered with a choice of petrol or diesel engines, but there are no tax-friendly hybrids. Instead, the brand has a strategy to jump straight from internal combustion engines (ICEs) to fully electric cars.

As a new-to-the-UK brand, Genesis has opted for a digital sales model and will not operate dealerships. Instead, it has launched the Genesis Personal Assistant (GPA) scheme, a personalised service that sees each customer assigned to an agent who will look after them from the first point of contact, through purchase or ordering and then for aftersales. The GPA will be on hand to answer questions, they'll deliver demonstrator vehicles for testing and they will handover the car at the point of delivery.

Miller said corporate customers can choose whether the GPA interacts with the driver directly or fleet or HR team.

All vehicle movements will be handled by a third party, which will use covered trailers to ensure cars always arrive clean and without unnecessary miles on them.

With no showrooms, aftersales will also be outsourced.

Unlike Polestar, which uses a similar sales model but makes use of the existing Volvo dealer network for service and repair, Genesis has appointed a repair agent with national coverage.

Vehicles will be collected from the customer and taken for service or repair work; the customer will never see a physical workshop.

Every Genesis car comes with a five-year care plan including home delivery, warranty, servicing, roadside assistance, a like-for-like courtesy car, sat-nav mapping and over-the-air software updates.

It's part of what Genesis calls the Genesis Difference and sets it apart from other carmakers in the premium segment.

Miller said: "There are complexities to overcome. The data providers are built for SMR and adding in all the elements of a service. We're trying to tell them to nullify that and present zero for a fixed maintenance budget. It breaks their systems. So again, we're working with the industry with our model to see how this is going to work. We want to give the customer the best experience. Our partners and supply chain are going to have to adapt their processes as well."

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LEZ impact revealed as expanded ULEZ goes live in London

New measures encourage walking, cycling and public transport use

By Gareth Roberts

The 100% discount on plug-in electric vehicles (PHEVs) entering the London congestion charge zone has been scrapped.

The PHEV exemption was withdrawn on Monday (October 25) to coincide with the launch of the capital's expanded ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ).

Speaking at a recent Cross River Partnership webinar on the ULEZ expansion, Tanya Ferguson, senior policy and programmes officer for the Greater London Authority (GLA), said: "We're ending the cleaner vehicle discount for plug-in hybrids in recognition of the point that vehicles (irrespective of emissions) contribute to congestion and we want to be encouraging a shift to walking, cycling and (the use of) public transport."

Prior to the change, only vehicles that emitted no more than 75g/km of CO_2 and had a minimum 20-mile zero emission capable range, qualified for the 100% discount.

Now, only battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are eligible for the cleaner vehicle discount, which Transport for London (TfL) says will be scrapped altogether from December 25, 2025.

From this date, all vehicle owners, unless in receipt of another discount or exemption, will need to pay to enter the congestion charge zone during charging hours.

Currently, the congestion charge, which is in addition to the ULEZ charge, operates from 7am to 10pm, seven days a week, with drivers paying £15 to enter the zone.

The fee was increased by 30%, from £11.50 a day, and the hours of operation extended by four hours a day and applied at weekends for the first time from June 2020, as a result of a funding agreement between the Government and TfL (fleetnews.co.uk, May 15, 2020).

However, TfL is running a consultation on the future operation of the congestion charge, with the main proposals including no charges in the evenings to support London's recovery, operating between 12-6pm on weekends and retaining the current charge level of £15 (fleetnews.co.uk, July 28).

The proposed new weekend charging hours are targeted at reducing congestion at the busiest times, said TfL.

"IT IS REALLY ENCOURAGING TO SEE BUSINESSES SHIFTING TO CLEANER VEHICLES"

MAYOR OF LONDON, SADIQ KHAN

ULEZ AND LEZ BENEFITS

The change to the London congestion charge comes as new research suggests that the benefits of both the capital's ULEZ and low emission zone (LEZ) have been felt across the country.

The report, from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), suggests that heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) visiting the capital, which have to comply with minimum air quality standards, frequently travel far beyond the clean air zone's (CAZ) boundary.

To examine the 'reach' of London's air quality restrictions, EDF Europe analysed data from Inrix that showed HGVs covered on average twice as much distance outside the zone than within (33km/20.5m outside compared with 14km/8.7m inside).

HGVs it found travelling to and from the zone passed through 95% of major towns and cities in England and Wales, which, together, have a combined population of around 18 million people.

NEWLY EXPANDED ULEZ NOW LIVE

EDF's findings were published ahead of the opening of the newly expanded ULEZ, which now covers an area up to, but not including, the North Circular Road (A406) and South Circular Road (A205). It is 18 times larger than the original central London ULEZ, which had occupied the same area as the congestion charge zone.

Speaking alongside Ferguson at the Cross River Partnership event, Stephen Inch, principal policy and programmes officer at the GLA, said there were no plans to expand the ULEZ further.

"We think we've got the boundary in more or less the right place for the ULEZ and we have no plans to expand it, although we will be starting to look at what happens next in terms of moving to a zero emissions transport system," he said.

London's much larger LEZ, meanwhile, includes all roads within Greater London, those at Heathrow and parts of the M1 and M4, covering 1,500km^2. The M25 is not included.

New rules for the LEZ were introduced in March for buses, coaches, lorries and vans more than 3.5 tonnes in line with the requirements in place for the ULEZ.

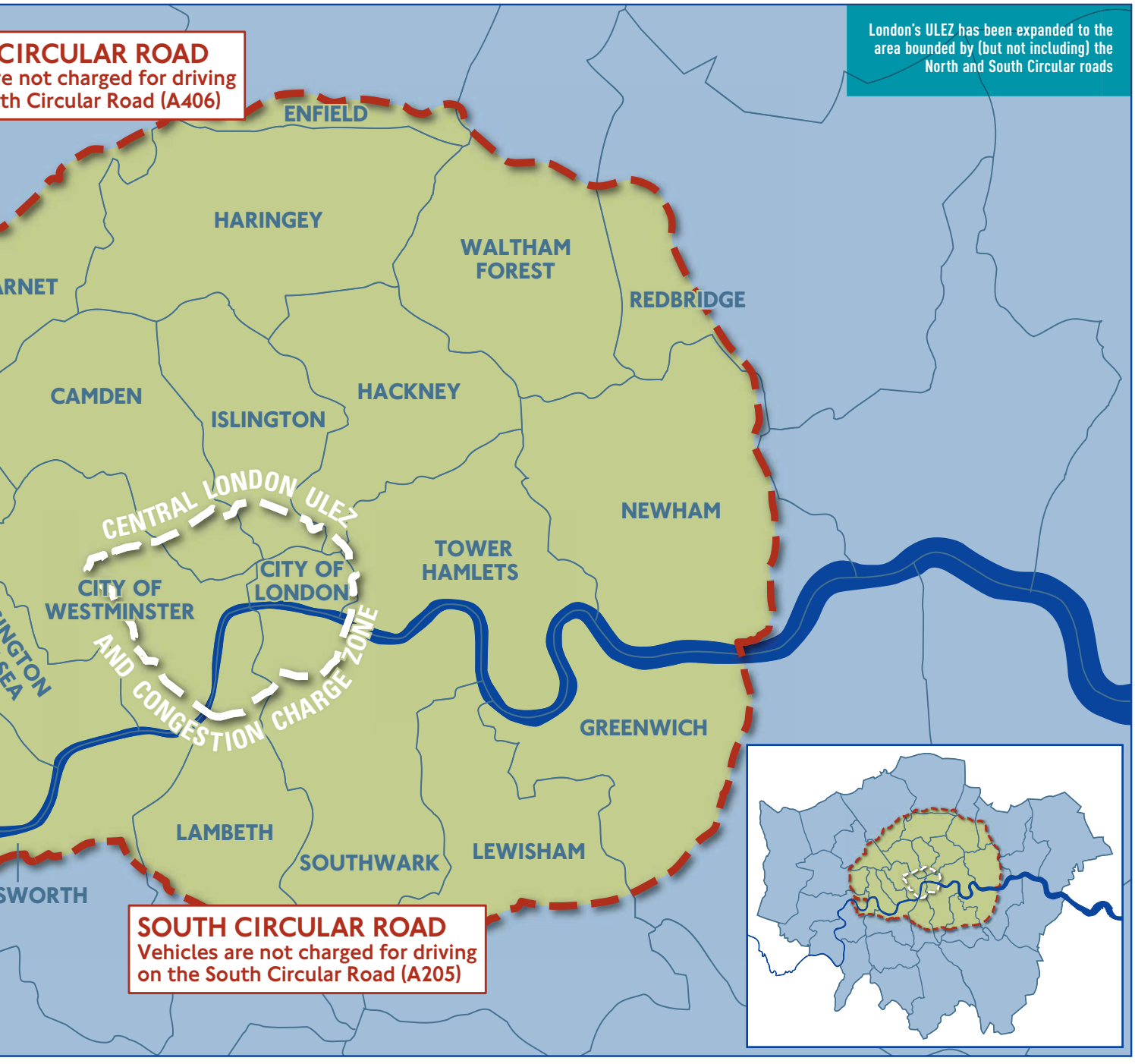
Vehicles adhering to the latest Euro VI standard pay nothing to enter the zone, while Euro V vehicles need to pay a daily charge of £100, and Euro IV vehicles and below face a daily charge of £300. It operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The EDF research suggests that 95% of HGVs, buses and coaches are meeting the LEZ standards, up from 87% in March and has almost doubled since the scheme was announced in February 2017.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "It is really encouraging to see businesses shifting to cleaner vehicles and 95% of heavy goods vehicles now meeting the low emission zone standards."

He argues that the ULEZ expansion will bring "significant" health benefits to millions of Londoners and help tackle the climate emergency.

Alex Williams, TfL director of city planning, added: "The doubling in the number of vehicles that comply with the standards now compared with when they were announced has had



a major positive impact on the air people breathe, not only around the capital but throughout the country.

"I would like to thank the operators, companies and drivers who have made the change to cleaner vehicles that meet or exceed the low emission zone standard.

"We know the pressures of the pandemic have been tough, but those making the transition are playing a key role in the green recovery."

The success of the LEZ and the expansion of the ULEZ are central to the mayor's twin goals of cleaning up London's air and achieving a net carbon zero London by 2030.

The central London ULEZ, says TfL, has been "transformational" since its introduction in April 2019, helping to reduce roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in the CAZ by almost half.

Elizabeth Fonseca, senior air quality manager for EDF, said: "Heavy goods vehicles are a significant source of health-harming air pollution in our towns and cities, particularly for those who live, work and go to school near busy roads.

"By incentivising cleaner vehicles, clean air zones like London's low emission zone are a critical tool for reducing pollution from transport and addressing health inequities."

EMISSIONS STANDARDS

ULEZ emissions standards for the newly expanded zone remain the same, with a minimum standard of: Euro 3 for motorcycles, mopeds, motorised tricycles and quadricycles; Euro 4 for petrol cars, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes); and Euro 6 for diesel cars, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes). There is a £12.50 daily charge for driving within the ULEZ for vehicles which do not meet the ULEZ emissions standards.

In London, EDF estimates that diesel vehicles (including HGVs) are responsible for 89% of total NO_2 concentrations from road transport, based on modelled data produced by Cambridge Environmental Research Consultants (CERC) for the Breathe London pilot.

Analysis of monitoring sites after the ULEZ start date and before the pandemic found a 25% drop in NO_2 levels near roads inside the zone and an average 8% drop across London.

London's CAZs are anticipated to contribute to a roughly 30% reduction in nitrogen oxide (NOx) road transport road transport emissions in Greater London.

AWARDS 2022 TIMELINE

19 NOVEMBER 2021
Entry deadline for all categories

25 JANUARY 2022
Judging day for manufacturer awards – cars and vans

26 JANUARY 2022
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27 JANUARY 2022
Judging day for manufacturer awards – trucks

2-3 FEBRUARY 2022
Fleet manager interviews/ judging takes place

Mid-FEBRUARY 2022
Shortlist revealed

16 MARCH 2022
Winners revealed at *Fleet News* Awards black-tie ceremony, Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London

FleetNews AWARDS 2022

Entries to the *Fleet News* Awards 2022 are now open for those wishing to follow in the footsteps of British Gas's Steve Winter, the 2021 fleet manager of the year, who said: "Any award is a nice recognition of the work that you, your team or your business undertake, but to get it from *Fleet News* is a clear validation and recognition from industry experts of your achievements."

Or Fraser Crichton, corporate fleet operations manager at Dundee City Council, winner of the environmental innovation award, who said: "It is wonderful to be acknowledged for our innovative EV strategy by a transport industry leader such as *Fleet News*."

Like them, you can boost your business credibility, as well as your own careers and staff motivation. All it takes is half an hour of your time!

Interested? Then enter the *Fleet News* Awards 2022 – your opportunity for recognition within the fleet sector and beyond.

Judges are looking for quality, innovation and evidence of improvements in each of the fleet, manufacturer, supplier and headline categories.

THE CATEGORIES

FLEET AWARDS

Excellence in Fleet Safety and Compliance
Environmental Fleet Trailblazer
Fleet Benefits Scheme of the Year (NEW)
Most Improved Fleet
Diversity and Inclusivity in Fleet (NEW)
Fleet of the Year – up to 250 vehicles (NEW)
Fleet of the Year – 251-1,000 vehicles
Fleet of the Year – more than 1,000 vehicles

SUPPLIER AWARDS

Leasing Company of the Year (up to 20,000 vehicles)
Leasing Company of the Year (more than 20,000 vehicles)
Rental Company of the Year
Outstanding Product of the Year
Fleet Customer Partnership of the Year
Fleet Dealer of the Year

MANUFACTURER AWARDS

Vans
Best Small Van
Best Medium Van
Best Large Van
Best All-terrain Workhorse (NEW)

Trucks
Best two-axle lightweight rigid truck up to 12 tonnes (NEW)
Best rigid truck more than 12 tonnes (NEW)
Best tractor unit (NEW)

Cars
Best Small Car
Best Lower Medium Car
Best Compact SUV
Best Mid-size SUV
Best Premium SUV
Best Compact Premium Car (NEW)
Best Premium Car

Alternative fuels
Best Zero Emission Car – up to £35,000 (NEW)
Best Zero Emission Car – more than £35,000 (NEW)
Best Zero Emission Van
Best Zero Emission Truck (NEW)

HEADLINE AWARDS

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Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Car (VOTED)
Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Van (VOTED)
Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Truck (VOTED)
Fleet Manager of the Year
Fleet News Hall of Fame

contact Sandra Evitt on 01733 468123 or sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk

The sharing society?

In the third and final part of our series focusing on the Government's transport decarbonisation plan, *Andrew Ryan* looks at the role car- and ride-sharing may play in the future

While much of the focus of the Government's transport decarbonisation plan (TDP) is on technology and place-based policies such as ultra-low emission zones, it also stresses that these are not the only way to cut CO_2.

Other areas it focuses on includes using modes of transport such as bicycles and e-scooters, as well as stressing how important car- and ride-sharing could be.

All would be wrapped around Mobility as a Service (MaaS) which integrates multiple modes of transport into one information, booking and payment platform.

"Actions taken by businesses and other organisations to make journeys more efficient, such as organising car sharing, are not the product of recent advances in technology," says the TDP.

"By better understanding people's different needs and preferences, including motivations for, and barriers to, using these technologies, we can encourage changes in behaviours and more sustainable travel to increase the pace of decarbonisation."

RIDE-SHARING

The report highlights how sharing vehicles with other people can significantly reduce carbon emissions as well as help tackle congestion.

Data from the 2019 National Travel Survey found the average occupancy rate is 1.55 across cars and vans. When looking at commuting trips, which make up 20% of car and van journeys, this figure falls to 1.14.

In England, 62% of trips are taken by lone drivers, a proportion which has been stable since 2002. The report says most commuting trips by car are taken by lone drivers.

"Increasing the occupancy rate is not straightforward, but has the potential for very significant carbon savings," says the report. "For instance, increasing car occupancy from 1.55 to 1.7 could save nearly three million tonnes of carbon a year by 2030 – roughly equivalent to that currently emitted from all buses in a year.

"An increase to 1.6 could save nearly one million tonnes a year by 2030.

"Increasing average commuting car occupancy by 10% could save as much carbon as doubling passenger rail use."

The report gives an example of how ride-sharing can cut traffic: Tesco is a member of social enterprise Liftshare, which works with more than 700 of the UK's largest employers to reduce the

number of single occupancy vehicles on the roads.

The supermarket giant provides special parking and other incentives for ride-sharers at its Welwyn Garden City headquarters in Hertfordshire, and one-third of the site's staff now share their car commute. This reduces the number of cars driving there by 700 a day.

In the report, the Government says it will work with large employers in the public and private sectors to develop a Commute Zero programme which will encourage long-term changes to employee travel habits.

"We will support the take-up of lower carbon commuting, such as public and active transport, and car-sharing initiatives, including a pilot commuter census survey and demonstrator projects," says the report.

Commute Zero will build on the current consultation regarding strengthening the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme, and proposes to develop a methodology to reduce carbon emissions from staff commuting as part of the option to add a net zero element to energy audits by all large UK businesses.

CAR-SHARING

Car-sharing includes the formal and informal sharing or access to a vehicle, such as car clubs, where electronic systems are used to provide drivers with unattended access to cars for short-term rental, often by the hour, as well as peer-to-peer sharing where individuals rent out their private cars through an app.

The Government has committed to publishing guidance for local authorities for shared car ownership and says this will enable them to share best practice and evaluate different schemes.

Many local authorities have already introduced car clubs to reduce grey fleet mileage and one of those is Highland Council in northern Scotland.

It developed a partnership in 2018 with Enterprise to provide employees with access to car club and pool car rental vehicles.

The fleet of 60 hybrid and electric vehicles is located across 21 council offices and its use has contributed to an estimated 37% cut in CO_2 emissions, equivalent to 649 tonnes, compared with employees using their own petrol- or diesel-engined cars.

Another example of shared ownership/access is the West Midlands Bus on Demand service, which began operation in April.

Forming part of the £20 million Transport for West Midlands Future Transport Zone, the bus

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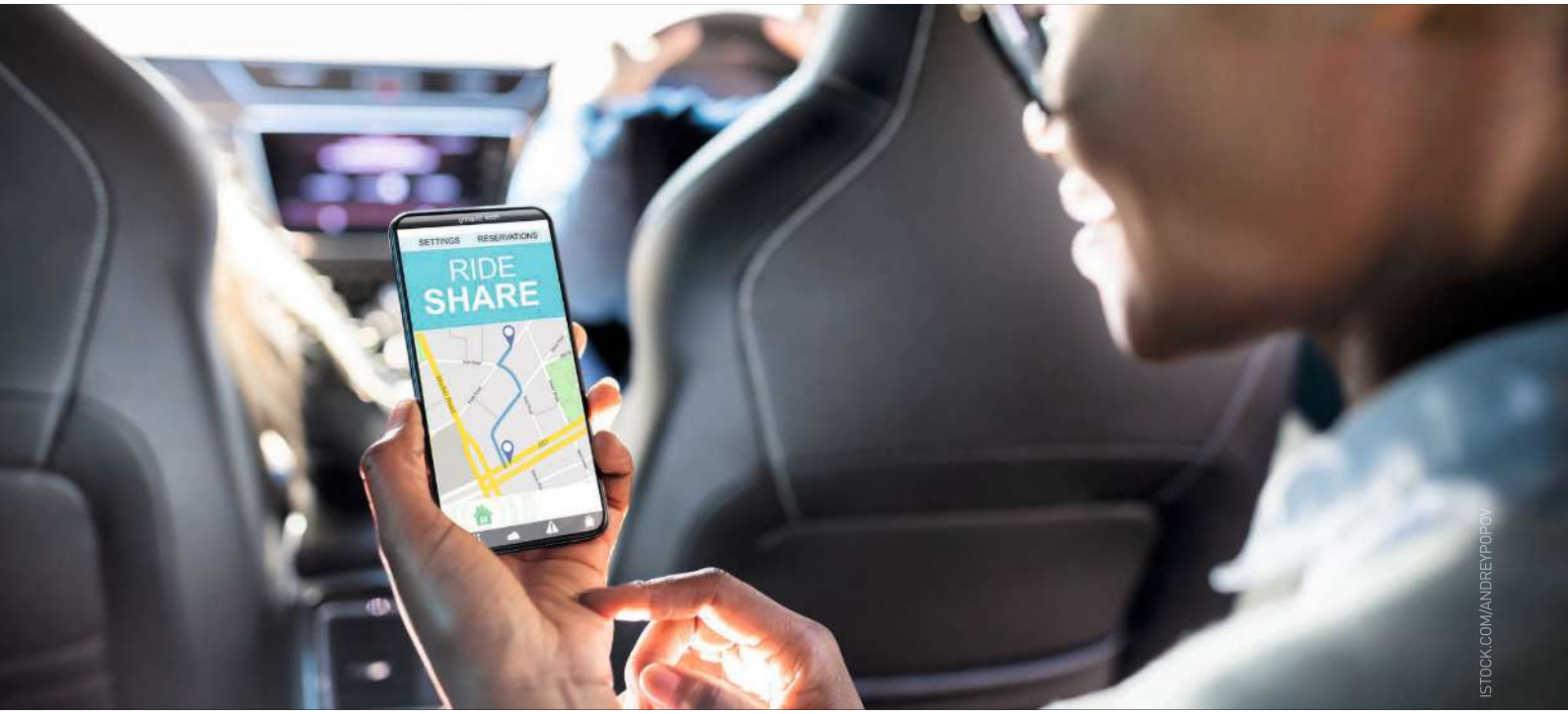

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service allows consumers to book a ride by entering pick-up and drop-off locations.

Users are then matched with other passengers heading in the same direction. It is aimed at those who commute to the University of Warwick campus but do not live close to a bus stop.

MOBILITY-AS-A-SERVICE

The much-talked about MaaS – the integration of different forms of transport with information and payment functions into a single mobility service – is still in its formative stages.

The theory behind the concept is that it can make mass transit and active journeys more convenient for people by streamlining planning and payment.

Some schemes, such as the Go-Hi app in the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland, are already in operation.

In this MaaS project, which was launched in June, the app provides instant access to information on buses, trains, taxis, car hire, car clubs, bicycle hire, air travel and ferries.

It allows users to plan their journeys and then to select, book and pay for all modes of transport in one place using any iOS or Android mobile device.

The Go-Hi app is produced by regional transport partnership Hitrans in association with the Mobilleo MaaS platform.

Project partners include Enterprise Rent-a-Car and Car Club, Bewegen, Brompton Bike Hire, Stagecoach Bus, West Coast Motors, Inverness Taxis, ScotRail, Loganair, Hotl, Skedgo, Orkney Ferries and Northling Ferries.

The participating transport providers will be able to access data about the demand for their services, helping them to better understand the needs of people in the region and to make more informed decisions about the provision of services.

In the TDP, the Government commits to consulting on a MaaS code of practice which it says will signal the UK's intent for MaaS to "shape the transport outcomes we want".

The guidance will also look to encourage inclusion of carbon data for each route offered to help consumers choose lower carbon journeys.

The Government is also committed to using the ongoing national e-scooter trials to understand their environmental impact, safety and mode shift potential to gauge whether they should be legalised.

Since July 2020, e-scooter trials have launched in 32 regions across England, with more than 60,000 now on UK streets.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL REWARD SCHEME

In the report, the Government also pledges to explore the introduction of a sustainable travel reward scheme supported by businesses, community organisations and charities.

"We are undertaking research in the area and aim to set out plans for piloting next year, before potentially bringing the scheme online in 2024," says the report. "The scheme will look to champion both technological innovation and behavioural science, working with businesses to encourage the public to make use of existing transport infrastructure and services."

Using app-based software, travellers would receive points for journeys made on sustainable modes of transport, collaborating with friends, peers and colleagues to earn rewards as a collective.

Once a group has hit its target, individuals within that group may be able to choose from a range of rewards provided by private sector partners, such as goods and discounts from retailers and service providers.

CHANGES IN SOCIETY BEHAVIOUR ESSENTIAL TO CUT EMISSIONS

While the provision of new technologies will have a key role to play in the decarbonisation of transport, the TDP notes the importance of behavioural science in facilitating the change.

Climate Change Committee analysis has indicated 59% of emissions reductions to reach net zero will involve some form of societal behaviour change.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also commissioned research in July 2020 to understand the complexities and drivers of current and sustainable travel behaviour, the impact of Covid-19 and what interventions will encourage people to travel more sustainably.

The research found there are multiple opportunities to change travel behaviour, but decisions are driven primarily by convenience and cost, not environmental concerns.

"This means to be competitive with the car, public and active travel options must be easy, accessible, reliable and affordable," says the report.

The DfT research found methods to make people feel capable of change included try-before-you-buy schemes to create the understanding and ability needed to use alternatives, as well as linking environmental impact and travel choices more explicitly.

A good first step of doing that could be through journey planning apps that include carbon emissions information for different modes of transport, says the report.

People could be motivated to change by focusing on leisure journeys in the beginning, including cost incentives as these behaviours are less habitual and less entrenched, allowing people to try alternatives when decisions can be more considered and less time pressured.

What telematics can do for your fleet

Sustainability is a hot topic in the fleet industry. With our long-term impact on the environment in mind, the importance of driving change is greater than ever. And as we move closer to the UK's net zero by 2050 target, reducing road transport emissions is a must.

The good news is we can act for change. Small steps like understanding your telematics can provide the insight needed to optimise your fleet and help reduce road transport emissions. Plus, it'll help you push your fleet towards sustainability without overhauling your organisation's operations.

Why use telematics?

When it comes to reducing emissions, introducing telematics can be one of the most impactful changes you can make. Here's how telematics could help you revolutionise your fleet's performance.

1. Assess your suitability to switch

If you're weighing up the switch to electric, telematics can help in your initial suitability assessment. Existing fleet telematics can show if an electric fleet is right for your business, what type of vehicles will fit your commercial requirements, and even where your charge points should be based.

2. Track mission-critical data

If the benefits stack up and you go ahead with fleet electrification, your telematics could become a powerful tool. They can help you monitor energy consumption, battery charge, and manage traffic and route planning. Proactive route planning can also help mitigate against any range anxiety that you may feel in the early days.

3. Inform greater efficiency

Telematics is key to monitoring driver behaviour and creating sustainable driving habits. For example, telematics can identify issues like harsh braking or acceleration. Driver behaviour is crucial to optimising the efficiency of an EV, and telematics can provide the necessary information as drivers adjust to EV driving.

4. Identify issues early

One of the biggest challenges faced in managing a vehicle fleet is dealing with unexpected repairs and maintenance. And with dashboard warning lights often unreported by drivers, little problems can snowball fast. Fleet telematics gives you instant alerts and information on vehicle performance – from battery condition to fault codes. So fleet managers can react to problems, arrange repairs and get vehicles back on the road quickly.

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ELECTRIC FLEET

There's plenty of support available to help with the transition to electric vehicles

INSIDE

Scan here for all Fleet News electric fleet content

HELP IS ON HAND TO HELP Transition to

Fleet decision-makers feeling swamped by adding the challenge of electrification to their already demanding jobs can find plenty of support within the industry. *Andrew Ryan* looks at the key questions to consider

A successful fleet decision-maker has always needed a diverse skillset, with responsibilities including being an expert in safety, driver management, procurement, cost and data analysis to name just a few.

These demands have only increased with the growing electrification of fleets: nearly two-thirds (66%) of Fleet200 businesses earlier this year pinpointed it as one of their major focuses.

Widespread unfamiliarity with the technology means fleet decision-makers have often become the in-house electric vehicle (EV) expert within their organisation, putting them on a steep learning curve.

At the same time they have also had to learn about – and deal with – many new challenges, such as identifying how EVs can be included on their fleet, as well as ensuring there is sufficient charging infrastructure to keep them running.

"Behind any smooth and efficient transition is a well-trained and resourced fleet manager," says Alfonso Martinez, managing director of LeasePlan UK. "They are the backbone of the company fleet, and in most workplaces are considered the go-to person for all matters related to EVs.

"This means they are the first port of call whenever anyone has any questions or issues.

"The trouble is that while they may be EV champions, many fleet managers feel like they lack the sufficient expertise to advise their team with confidence."

A recent LeasePlan survey of 200 fleets found nine out of 10 respondents said they were expected to be the EV expert within their business, but almost one-in-three did not feel they have the knowledge to fully advise their drivers on EVs.

One-in-four (24%) said they would benefit from further training around EVs. When asked what kind of training they would most benefit from, the most common answers were 'how to maximise a battery range' (53%) and 'how to carry out vehicle checks' (53%).

This was followed by 'EV charging' (51%), 'key differences between EV and ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles' (40%) and 'health and safety' (30%).

"Our research reveals a significant knowledge gap around EVs within fleet teams," adds Martinez.

"This is something that businesses urgently

FLEETS MANAGE EVs

need to address, as a successful transition towards a zero-emission fleet requires the right expertise and support to be in place."

Fortunately for fleet decision-makers, plenty of support, information and advice is available from multiple sources.

Many leasing companies offer EV consultancy services, while there is also a number of new entries in the fleet sector with energy companies including E.On, Scottish Power and Drax offering similar solutions.

Independent organisations such as the Energy Saving Trust and Cenex can also be useful sources of expertise and advice, while industry body the Association for Fleet Professionals (AFP) has launched training courses designed at helping businesses transition to EVs.

Its first one, 'Making the switch to EVs', is a four-hour long online course. "As far as we are aware, this is the first training course designed to help businesses make the transition in a structured and informed fashion," says AFP chair Paul Hollick.

"The content taps into experience from right across the AFP and, we are sure, will help anyone planning on adding EVs to their fleet soon which means, in our experience, just about everyone."

AFP has followed this up by developing a course aimed at organisations transitioning to electric light commercial vehicle fleets.

Comprehensive information on fleet electrification is also available through articles in *Fleet News* and on fleetnews.co.uk, particularly in its dedicated Electric Fleet section, as well as through a number of *Fleet News* events.

These include regular round tables which give fleets the opportunity to share best practice and experiences with their peers, webinars and the Fleet 200 Executive Club.

This is a group of the most influential fleets operating in the UK and produces research on key fleet trends.

It also organises events which bring together fleet decision-makers to debate the issues of importance to their businesses, such as electric vehicles, share ideas on new initiatives and industry developments, as well as hear from expert speakers.

As part of our ambition to help support fleets make the transition to EVs, over the next 28 pages we talk to a number of decision-makers with fleets of varying sizes and vehicle mixes at differing stages of their electrification journeys.

These provide real-life examples of how fleets have faced and overcome any challenges, as well as their successes.

Later on in the section, we also look at the key electric vehicles which are being launched in the coming months.

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SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Dan Joyce, fleet director, Kwik Fit (GB) Ltd

Mass-adoption of EVs among our customers' fleets is here and will only increase as we approach 2030.

With attention focused primarily on battery range, charging infrastructure and taxation, the tyre requirements of EVs have flown somewhat under the radar. In addition, many fleet managers are looking forward to significant changes in the wider maintenance requirements for EVs, with fewer replacement parts at the point of service and other factors such as regenerative braking systems delaying brake part replacement. However, not every garage will be ready to work on EVs to a safe and accredited industry standard. It is important that fleets look at these factors when selecting a partner for tyres and SMR.

Kwik Fit has been working with our partners to plan for tyre replacement by ensuring that the correct and specific tyre stock is available in advance in our distribution network and across our centres. While not all EVs require specific tyres, for some popular marques the availability is currently limited to the OE specification. Homologated tyre requirements for electric vehicles represent one of the biggest changes to the tyre replacement market in over a decade. Having the right tyre, in the right place at the right time has never been so important.

Forward planning for demand is key in order to maximise fleet performance and reduce costs. We will continue to utilise the strength of our network, our market leading tyre availability, distribution, and knowledge to help support fleets, and their drivers, seamlessly transition to electric vehicles.

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Sureserve transitions to an ELECTRIC FLEET

Waiting for the right vehicles and technology is a cornerstone of the company's approach to adopting EVs. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Reducing its impact on the environment has long been a focus of Sureserve Group, with a variety of actions having been undertaken in the past including the installation of solar panels at offices, replacing office lighting with energy-efficient LEDs and working to eliminate single-use plastics.

Its fleet operation has a key part to play in this ambition. Part of this has been to use the smallest, most efficient commercial vehicles which are suitable to perform their jobs.

Over the past few years, Sureserve Group has continued to replace its existing fleet with Euro 6-compliant vehicles, with 93% of its vans currently meeting those emission standards.

It has now begun its electrification journey by taking delivery of its first 30 battery electric Citroën e-Dispatch vans in June, along with more than 20 electric cars.

"We have always sought to manage our fleet of commercial and company vehicles to the most efficient standards available, and the addition of the e-Dispatch vans will start the next stage in our journey towards a greener and more economical fleet," says Dean Williams, group fleet manager at Sureserve Group, which has more than 1,700 vehicles.

"As well as the environmental value in using zero-emissions vehicles, we are encouraged by the potential cost savings, and, with fewer moving parts, there's less requirement for servicing, maintenance and repairs."

Sureserve Group has been looking at EVs since the first commercial electric vehicle became available on the market, says Williams.

"The range then was around 50 to 60 miles and we had to look at whether it really suited our purpose," he adds.

"We crunched all the numbers, we looked at the cost of the vehicle, and just felt it wasn't the right time and wouldn't meet our operational requirements."

TRAINING IS VITAL

To help smooth the transition to EVs, Sureserve Group has introduced an online driver training course focusing on the technology through its internal Sureserve Group Academy, which holds internal training on topics such as manual handling and health and safety. The new course gives employees an overview of the technology, best practice advice on areas such as efficient driving, charging and the Electric Juice Network. It also outlines the difference between driving an ICE vehicle and an EV, such as the automatic gearbox, different instrument panels and charging infrastructure.

Since then, the capabilities of electric vans have improved massively with greater range and payloads, and this has allowed Sureserve Group to take on its first batch of fully-electric vehicles.

The drivers who are operating them were selected following analysis of telematics data, looking at how far its vans were driven. Across the group, the average daily mileage is 70 miles.

"In addition to this, as part of our weekly vehicle checks through our FleetCheck mobile app, we've been asking who has access to private parking overnight," says Williams – a key point given Sureserve Group drivers take their vehicles home at night.

"By cross-referencing those two pieces of information, we have been able to build a picture as to what our quick wins were. Who can we get into EVs first?

"I remember hearing a conversation with somebody on a webinar saying 'don't try to tackle the whole project in one go, just do it in bite-sized chunks', and I thought that was very good advice."

MIX OF DRIVING STYLES

The initial 30 EVs are being operated by a mix of engineers and supervisory staff to spread the understanding of the technology, while Williams says the drivers selected also offer a blend of different driving styles – "some are more urban, some are more motorway driving".

This variety will allow Sureserve Group to gain data which it can use as it adds more EVs to its fleet; it already has more on order and expects to take delivery of these at the beginning of next year.

To help its employees charge their vehicles, Sureserve Group has partnered with Octopus Energy to supply drivers with Ohme intelligent home chargers and smart energy tariffs as part of a three-year agreement, which would see it transition 600 vehicles to electric over that period.

"Installations are now well under way at people's homes and we also now have installed chargers at some of our work premises as well," says Williams.

"As part of the package, all the drivers have been given a card for Octopus's Electric Juice public charging network, and that gives them access to multiple suppliers across the UK. That number is growing as well.

"But the emphasis really is on charging the vehicles at home overnight because not only is it the most efficient way, but it avoids any downtime for the engineers throughout the working day as well."

Through the partnership, Octopus is offering Sureserve Group's drivers a bespoke domestic tariff which they can switch to if they choose.

"This will massively reduce not only the cost of charging the EV overnight, but all of their own electricity costs as well," adds Williams.

"The device we're installing allows the driver to plug in when they get home in the evening and set how much charge they need in that vehicle so they are ready for the next day.

"The device automatically identifies the cheapest or best time to pull that energy from the grid."

> "THE FEEDBACK FROM THE DRIVERS ON THE CARS AND COMMERCIALS HAS BEEN POSITIVE"
>
> **DEAN WILLIAMS, SURESERVE**

DRIVERS NOT OUT OF POCKET

Octopus's fleet dashboard platform consolidates the cost of charging on workplace, home and public chargers, and the cost of charging is billed directly back to Sureserve Group.

"The line-by-line transactions mean, through the dashboard, we can monitor our savings, usage and efficiencies, while we are also able to compare what the journeys would cost in ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles so you can compare the savings and the efficiencies of running EVs."

Sureserve Group has also created an EV feedback form for the drivers through its FleetCheck app to allow them to give insight into what their experience of the charger installation was like and their experience of driving an EV.

"The feedback we receive from the drivers is sent back to Octopus and to myself to review and any actions are dealt with," says Williams.

"So far, the feedback from the drivers both on the cars and commercials has been really positive," he adds.

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ELECTRIC FLEET CASE STUDY:
PUBLIC SECTOR FLEET

Hull heads for ZERO EMISSIONS

The city council is accelerating its electrification plans as it aims to be carbon-neutral by 2030. *Jonathan Manning* reports

Tucked into the region with the highest greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, Hull City Council (HCC) doesn't have to look far for reminders of the urgent need to cut carbon emissions.

On its doorstep are the docks and heavy industry of Grimsby, Goole, Immingham and Hull, the giant steelworks of Scunthorpe, plus two oil refineries.

While most of these heavy emitters lie outside the council's area, it is looking forensically at its own environmental performance.

HCC declared a climate emergency in 2019, produced a climate change strategy in 2020 and has set itself the goal of being carbon-neutral by 2030, an aim that puts its fleet in the crosshairs.

The majority of its vehicles are diesel-powered, but the topography of the local authority makes it an ideal location for electrification, says Adam Fowler, senior decarbonisation management officer (transport) at HCC.

The authority covers about 25 square miles and the average annual mileage of its vehicles is less than 7,000 miles.

"Geographically, we almost resemble a London borough – we're virtually all inner city, we have a very small footprint, and from one end of the area to the other measures only eight miles," says Fowler.

Add into the mix the fact the city is flat and has a speed limit of just 30mph on all roads, apart from two which rise to 40mph, and all the ingredients are present for battery efficiency.

"We believe we have a duty to show how straightforward it is to decarbonise for certain scenarios and applications," says Fowler.

The council has a fleet of about 330 cars, vans, buses and trucks supporting a range of services across the city including refuse collection, parks, parking, adult and children services as well as bereavement services and public transport.

It has already replaced about 10% of its fleet with electric vehicles (EVs), and every time a diesel model in the sub-three tonnes sector comes up for replacement, an EV replaces it; typically, a Renault Kangoo ZE, Peugeot e-Expert or Nissan Leaf.

But there is no early termination of diesel models, and no automatic replacement of vehicles – part of the council's fleet environmental agenda is to assess whether its service users still require a vehicle and, if so, whether one which is under-utilised could be redeployed as a replacement, avoiding the cost and carbon footprint of a new one.

50 EVs BY END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

Nevertheless, HCC is planning for all its light vehicles to be electric by 2025, and expects to have 50 EVs on its fleet by the end of this financial year.

To support its requirements, it is installing charge points at two locations in the city – the fleet depot and a council-owned city centre multi-storey car park – as well as a handful of satellite sites.

"We've installed 7kW chargers; our vehicles go back to the depot at 5pm and an overnight charge works well for our users," says Fowler. "We've analysed how the fleet is used and very few vehicles will even need charging each day."

These lower kilowatt chargers have avoided costly

grid upgrades and HCC is paying detailed attention to future-proofing both its sites and its investment in chargers.

"We have experts going in to measure if there will be any power restraints, not just in the next 12 months, but through to 2030," says Fowler.

"We are also recabling some sites even if we're not putting a charge point in yet, so we won't have to dig up the car park again. We're also looking at our asset management strategy – are vehicles based at sites that might not be there in three or four years' time, and, if so, where will they be used and where do we need to install cabling or connectors?

"We don't want to make investment cases that we will regret in five or 10 years' time."

The council currently has 30 chargers, maintained on a service agreement with Swarco, and accessed by drivers via vehicle-specific fobs that allow the council to track where vehicles are being charged and how much power is being drawn.

This data will be vital for decisions about where to site future charge points.

Its next challenge is to develop a policy for HCC staff to use workplace chargers for their own privately-owned EVs, particularly employees who do not have off-street parking where they could install a domestic charger.

HCC leases its vehicles from Kingstown Works Ltd (KWL), a company that is owned by the council, but operates at arm's length. Monthly lease rentals for EVs are higher than for diesel equivalents, due to higher capital costs, but lower service and maintenance costs and cheaper fuelling make them a cost-neutral swap in terms of wholelife costs, says Gary Middleton, fleet manager, KWL.

ROBUST RELIABILITY

Middleton runs the KWL workshop and laughed when asked if sourcing components for the EVs ever poses a problem.

"They never go wrong," he says. "Our EVs have been so reliable. We only bring them in once per year to check them over and I've yet to come across a failure."

This maintenance schedule and robust reliability saves costs associated with vehicle downtime, and helps to offset the EVs' higher lease rentals. The council also intends to keep its battery-powered vehicles for longer than the internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles they replace.

KWL leases EVs to the council for a minimum eight-year contract – with an expectation to extend it – whereas its ICE vehicles are typically replaced at six or seven years.

"We bought our oldest Nissan Leaf in 2010 and it's still out there working. The user says there are no problems with it," says Middleton.

He is deliberately recommending the 75kWh battery variant of the e-Expert, rather than the 50kWh, on the grounds that there will be fewer charge and discharge episodes in its working life.

An overnight charge of the larger battery pack on a 7kW charger is more than enough to fill the batteries and most users are only plugging the vehicles in once a fortnight.

Daren Hale, leader of Hull City Council, with Rosie Nicola, portfolio holder for Environmental Services at Hull City Council

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

Neil McCrossan, Sales & Marketing Director, Northgate Vehicle Hire

As the journey towards electrification continues for light commercial vehicles, it would be fair to say that some of the shortages in vehicle supply may be providing a bump in the road for fleets.

For some, this may raise new challenges in terms of reconsidering the timing for the introduction of electric vans, but advance planning for your whole fleet will provide benefits both now and in the future.

Electric vehicles (EVs) should form part of a wider mobility solution; which means considering aspects such as initial outlay, running cost versus ICE (internal combustion engine) as well as charging at home, work, or when on the go.

Also, you need to consider how to navigate tax considerations for your employees for the vehicles as well as how the electricity used both at the employee's home and work can be paid for within current and future tax rules.

The UK has always been a global leader in transport innovation and we see a period of transition ahead where ICE and electric vehicles will be required and with each having its part to play dependent on the solutions needed by modern fleets.

At Northgate, as well as investing heavily in our fully equipped workshops with trained EV technicians in each, we have also invested in bringing EV infrastructure solutions to our customers. With ChargedEV recently joining the group, we're able to offer a turnkey solution that is hardware and energy agnostic.

We're here to help customers with their transition to EVs by explaining what is needed in areas such as charging infrastructure, energy, billing and how these elements can work with our flexible rental packages.

www.northgatevehiclehire.co.uk

NORTHGATE Vehicle Hire

Vinci Construction builds an ALL-ELECTRIC FLEET

Members of the senior team with the first EVs on fleet, the Polestar 2

Vinci Construction UK leapfrogs PHEV to go straight to full electric as it plans to transition one-fifth of its 1,000 cars by the end of the year. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Vinci Construction UK expects more than 20% of its 1,000 car fleet to be fully electric by the end of the year, despite only beginning its electrification journey with its first deliveries in October 2020.

That was when its international parent company Vinci Group published an environmental ambition to reduce Scope 1 and 2 CO_2 emissions 40% by 2030 from a 2018 baseline.

This has implications for company vehicles and site machinery. The pledge saw Vinci commit to the accelerated replacement of light and utility vehicle fleets by electric or less carbon-intensive vehicles and promotion of eco-driving practices.

"That was the green light for us to start really thinking about electric vehicles (EVs) and it coincided with us wanting to revisit our company car policy and the car choices on our fleet," says Andrew Thomsett, plant and fleet director at Vinci Fleet Services.

These reviews also presented an opportunity to reduce emissions from its petrol and diesel cars as they coincided with the introduction of the tougher WLTP emissions test.

"Generally, the WLTP CO_2 figures were around 20% greater for the same car than the existing NEDC (New European Driving Cycle) rules, but we didn't add 20% on and then publish the same choice list," says Thomsett.

"We took the NEDC figures and either stayed neutral or bettered them with the WLTP figures: that was our first real bite at reducing the emissions of our company cars. At the same time, we started on our mission to find company electric cars we could have."

Vinci Fleet Services buys its company cars and light commercial vehicles and they are managed in-house by Thomsett, fleet operations manager Rob Fellows, fleet procurement coordinator Wendy Howarth and commercial vehicle coordinator Clive Bacon.

The business has eight grades of company car driver and their choice lists are compiled using a wholelife cost model, looking at factors such as capital purchase price, fuel, service and maintenance, vehicle excise duty and residual values.

"Although the capital purchase cost of a battery electric vehicle (BEV) can be £5,000 or £6,000 more than the equivalent internal combustion engine (ICE) car in the grade, when you get to the last column of the spreadsheet, the cost can be less than for a traditional ICE car in whole vehicle life cost terms," says Thomsett.

"It was key for all grades to have the option of having a BEV as their company car, and these are offered alongside a good RDE2 (Real Driving Emissions Step 2) diesel and a petrol option.

"That was one of the early challenges, particularly with the smaller cars and the prestige cars, but this has changed as more models have become available.

"We did consider offering a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) option, but the message we got was that Vinci really wanted to miss that stage out and go straight to full BEV with all the tailpipe environment benefits.

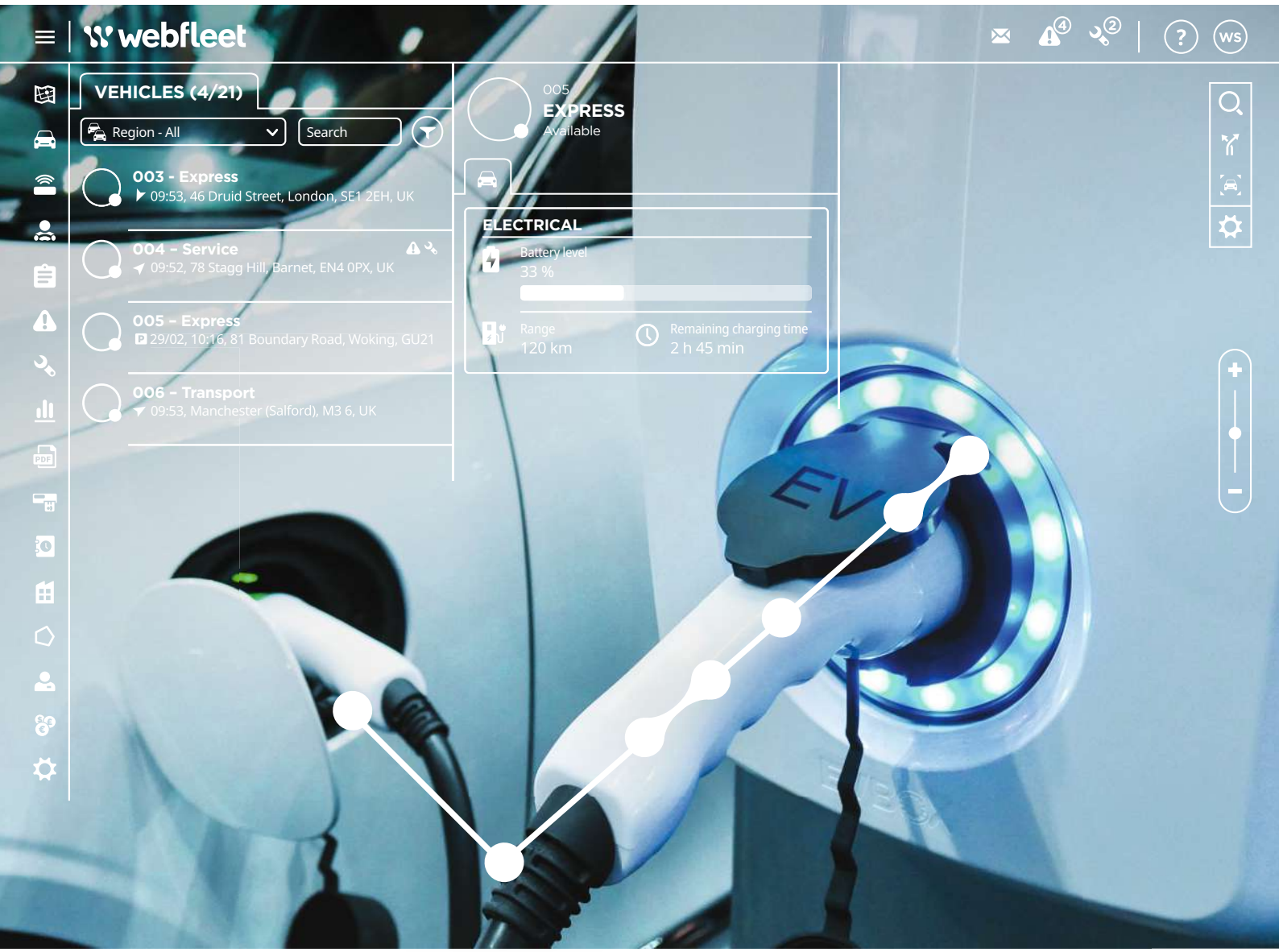
"Plug-in hybrids have a place for those that do a short commute into the office and then back home. But, for us, with company car drivers who may be doing 20,000 miles a year, we didn't think PHEVs would work in terms of true carbon emissions."

Thomsett says the frequent launch of new

webfleet solutions
a Bridgestone company

From lowering emissions to driving a transformative EV fleet strategy

Your ideal partner on the journey to net zero



WEBFLEET, Europe's number one fleet management solution, gives you everything you need to get the full value from your electric vehicles. Our suite of tools help you determine whether EVs are right for your business, while also creating visibility into driving range and charging levels. With WEBFLEET, you can continue confidently towards a goal of net zero emissions.

Let's drive business. Further.

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PLAN FOR THE ROAD TO ZERO WITH OUR TURNKEY SOLUTIONS.

As the journey towards electrification continues for light commercial vehicles, it would be fair to say that it is opening up a host of considerations for fleet operators.

The current shortages in vehicle supply seen across the automotive industry may mean reconsidering the pace at which you plan to introduce change to your fleet, but advance planning is more important than ever.

We see a period of transition ahead where ICE and EV vehicles will be needed and with each having its part to play depending on the solutions needed by modern fleets. Here at Northgate, we can offer both – and we can offer you the widest choice of vehicles tailored to your fleet needs.

Throughout the last year, Northgate has continued its transformation into a specialist B2B customer-centric LCV mobility provider, and as part of this we have been building the foundations for our own electrification journey, alongside those of our customers.

From the very beginning of the journey, we've worked with EV industry experts to ensure that we can support you in the right way. Adding EVs to your fleet should form part of a wider mobility solution.

The evolution in technology means it is important when operating EVs that whole life costs are considered, from initial capital outlay through to running costs versus ICE and residual values. Being able to change up to the latest models as technology improves is an important consideration.

Ownership or contract hire will commit fleets to years in vehicles that will have been superseded by newer more capable and cost-effective models. Northgate flexible hire packages provide the opportunity to change vehicles as technology evolves.

Working closely with OEMs, we're continually adding to our EV range to meet customer needs across all Electric LCV vans, conversions and electric cars. They're available on flexible and minimum term hires so that you can make the right choice for your fleet. Servicing and maintenance is a key consideration for running EVs, so we have invested heavily in our fully equipped workshops with trained EV technicians in each.

We have also invested in bringing EV infrastructure solutions to our customers – for site and home locations. With ChargedEV recently joining the Group, and over 20,000 installations under their belts, we're able to offer a turnkey solution that is also hardware and energy agnostic to suit your needs.

We also have a solution to meet on-the-go charging needs – with a combined fuel and electric charge card available that is accepted at over 1,000 rapid chargers and 3,000 fast chargers.

Our proposition is designed to let customers focus on their business whilst we focus on running their fleets. Northgate customers benefit from services and agility not possible to those who buy, or contract hire their fleets.

We're here to help with the transition to EVs by explaining what is needed in areas such as charging infrastructure, energy, billing and how these elements can work with our flexible rental packages.

Whatever their needs, Northgate customers know they can rely on our dependability and flexibility.

Neil McCrossan,
Sales & Marketing Director, Northgate

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NORTHGATE Vehicle Hire

C BEVs has made the sector a "moving target", with Vinci Fleet Services reviewing its choice list every three months to incorporate new models.

"Traditionally, you may review company car lists once a year, but BEV is such a flexing, changing market at the minute, with so many exciting new models, that we regularly revisit the list."

Vinci Fleet Services took delivery of its first six Polestar 2s going to senior directors of Vinci Facilities, Vinci Building and Taylor Woodrow, showing they were leading by example.

"It didn't take long for everybody else to realise that not only are BEVs a good idea for carbon emissions, but there are tax advantages to driving one," says Thomsett.

"It's taken off and we've never looked back. I've had conversations with other companies who have asked about our experience of taking on BEVs and I tell them we can't stop our employees, they can't get enough of them.

"They've all seen the benefits and, because of the wholelife costs, they can get access to the latest EV cars within their grades.

"We haven't had to promote them, our employees just know they're the right solution."

Vinci Fleet Services has now taken delivery of more than 100 fully-electric cars, with another 90 on order.

"By the end of the year, 20% of the fleet will be full EVs, which is an excellent number for us," says Thomsett.

Key to the Vinci Fleet Services approach is to make the BEV switch as easy as possible.

"Rob and Wendy have been helping employees on this journey by providing step-by-step guides to help them make the right choice for their working life and driving behaviours," says Thomsett.

The fleet team also launched an EV forum on the company's intranet, where drivers can discuss the technology.

"We'll talk to them and guide them through the choices and the different battery sizes, high speed charging, and how to get a wall-mounted charging point at home," he adds.

"We have a step-by-step guide taking them through all the forms, how to decide where you want it and the measurements they need.

"We expect the employees to buy their own wallbox, but we've made it as easy as we can and we've had some excellent feedback."

Vinci Fleet Services has also encouraged the take-up of electric vehicles by widening the criteria of employees who can choose one.

When the EV policy was launched, BEVs were available only to those who could park their new car off the road at their home address for ease of charging, and undertook fewer than 25,000 miles each year. These have since been relaxed.

In the early days, the company was conscious that the infrastructure wasn't as good as it is today and "we wanted our guys to be able to start off in the morning with a full charge", says Thomsett.

"As part of the criteria, we created an EV suitability guide in which we asked questions such as: Can you charge at home? Have you got Wi-Fi? Are your journeys less than 150 miles? Can you charge your car at work? Do you need to rely on public charging points and what is the impact on only using faster charging?"

Thomsett adds: "Initially, we said you could only have an EV if you could charge it at home, but we've now opened it up to everybody. What they must be able to do is demonstrate how they can charge their vehicle.

"It might by that for someone who lives in a flat complex, there are chargers being installed in the flats, or somebody may live local to a charging station that they can use.

"No one is precluded now from opting in."

Vinci Fleet Services operates its cars on four-year cycles, but Thomsett says if the figures stack up, ICE cars could be switched for BEVs slightly ahead of time.

"We will look at each employee case individually, their circumstances and their car to help with the carbon reduction," he adds.

The company also operates 367 vans – all around Ford Transit Custom size – and has begun transitioning these to electric as well. It has its first 30 BEVs on order, with some mild hybrid vehicle on the way too.

"All our vans have telematics fitted and we are using this to look at their mileages to see which vans are suitable to switch," says Thomsett.

"We don't really want to buy any more ICE vans, so when we have older vans that are ready for replacement, but are not suitable for a straight move to EV, we'll probably switch that vehicle from one area to another where an EV can be used. It's about having a fluid van fleet."

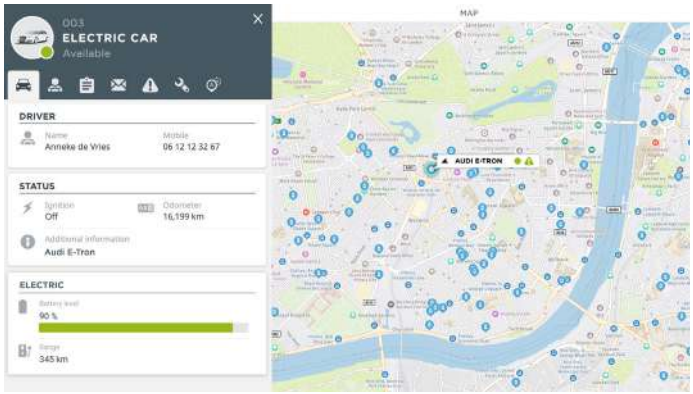
Employees are guided through the EV process step-by-step

> "WE HAVEN'T HAD TO PROMOTE THEM, OUR EMPLOYEES KNOW THEY'RE THE RIGHT SOLUTION"
>
> **ANDREW THOMSETT, VINCI**

Employees are able to familiarise themselves with the new technology in EVs

Is telematics data the silver bullet to optimising fleet charging?

Beverley Wise, Webfleet Solutions sales director UK & Ireland, explains how electric vehicle data can unlock the door to maximising a fleet's electric miles



Are your fleet drivers plugging into off-peak energy to charge their vehicles? Are their vehicles fully charged when they need to be? Are they driving their new high-tech vehicles in the most efficient way to harness braking energy? Are you, as a fleet manager, using the most appropriate charging infrastructure and utilising vehicles in the most energy-efficient way?

The answers to all these critical questions, can best be answered using telematics data.

Furthermore, only by acting on such insights can vehicle range and business productivity be maximised, and downtime and a fleet's TCO (total cost of ownership) be minimised.

Electric vehicle (EV) software solutions are fast evolving and, as they do so, they're rapidly becoming indispensable to operators making the EV transition. It is easy to see why.

The all-seeing EV eye

From the outset, telematics can help paint a detailed picture of driver working patterns and enable businesses to determine where vehicles spend most time, their typical mileage and dwell time.

Such intelligence ensures informed decisions are made about whether vehicles need to use home, office or public charging infrastructure – or a combination of all three.

As a rule, even the cheapest public chargers will be significantly more expensive than home chargers, but charging availability at employees' homes may, in some cases, be limited.

Where charging stations are needed at business premises, telematics reports will help determine how many are required, and whether standard or more expensive rapid chargers are more appropriate. In some cases, a single charger might serve multiple vehicles and rapid chargers may only be needed as back-up.

Charging in action

Telematics data is also pivotal to fleets' day-to-day performance and operation.

Having made the switch to electric cars, functionality such as the Webfleet Charger Connection Report can offer complete visibility over vehicles' charging statuses and remaining charging times to ensure drivers operate the most cost-effective charging practises.

Demands on the electricity grid will normally peak in the early evening, for instance, when drivers are most likely to plug in their vehicle on their return from work. Consequently, charging overnight, when electricity prices are lower, can have a notable cost impact.

The report will also help ensure that charge levels are maintained between the optimal 20% and 80% to minimise battery degradation.

Elsewhere, EV software solutions should also allow businesses to monitor battery levels and remaining driving ranges of every car in real time, while mapped coverage of charging points, accessible to drivers via their connected sat -nav devices, can help signpost the closest charging stations.

Electrifying innovations

Webfleet Solutions' most recent innovation – the Energy Consumption Report – raises the bar even higher, providing an analysis of energy usage in kWh per vehicle, per day. With this information at their fingertips, fleet managers can compare vehicles' energy performance and identify and address cases of inefficient operation.

The report includes a breakdown of the energy used for driving and other purposes, such as the powering of auxiliary equipment.

What's more, it details the kinetic energy recovered through regenerative braking, helping fleets measure and improve driving performance to optimise vehicle kWh.

The UK's electric journey may just be starting, but with such smart data intelligence already available to fleets at the touch of a button, the future of net zero transport appears more exciting than ever.

Blue light service

AIMING TO TURN GREEN

Planning a fleet strategy to go fully electric can be complex enough – but throw some unusual vehicles into the mix and the hurdles to overcome can seem much higher. *Mike Roberts* reports

Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) has committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030 and the role of fleet manager Brian Harwood to help it achieve that goal is no easy task.

His dream is to have a fully electric fleet by then but, in reality, that probably won't be the case despite his best efforts.

AF&RS operates 69 front-line fire appliance vehicles and 70 ancillary/support vehicles (as well as four boats and a hovercraft) across more than 20 stations around Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Harwood joined the service in 2019 when it already operated two electric vehicles (EVs) for community work. He was keen to grow the number of EVs on the fleet and started trials of Nissan Leaf, the Renault Zoe and Kia Niro to get feedback from personnel who would ultimately use them. Initial concerns centred around range anxiety and load size.

"The officers which these vehicles have to support carry around an awful lot of equipment," Harwood says. "If they go to a protracted event, they may have to take their own fire boots, safety helmets, overalls etc., and these take up an enormous amount of space."

The Kia e-Niro's 450-litre boot satisfies most requirements, and telematics data showed that the average vehicle this model is replacing travelled no more than 10 miles a day, assuaging range concerns.

The service has bought four of the cars outright. Two are for use as bluelight station vehicles (duties include ferrying a relief crew to an incident where an appliance is already being used) and, while the remaining two were originally earmarked to replace pool cars, Harwood decided he wanted them to undergo proper testing, so officers are now using them as response vehicles.

The service has also trialled a bluelight-enabled Tesla but has no current plans to bring any onto the fleet despite its huge popularity among staff.

Over the next year three years, Harwood needs to replace about 30 vehicles, a mix of cars and ➲

Brian Harwood with some of the 69 frontline vehicles currently used by Avon Fire & Rescue Service

vans, which are coming up to around 10 years' service with the organisation.

"My ambition would be to make them all electric," he says. "But some replacements might be hydrogen, depending on the type of vehicle."

He has concerns over the use of hydrogen, including how safe it would be to refuel an appliance at the scene of a major fire.

Biomethane is another alternative fuel Harwood will investigate for larger vehicles.

Where an EV or PHEV replacement is available, Harwood would always opt for fully-electric over hybrid as he believes this will force a change in behaviour.

"I wanted to see people make a step change in how they use their vehicles. With a hybrid you can fill it with fuel and forget about charging it," he says.

Another challenge is that many of the vehicles need to have four-wheel drive to cope in severe, wintry conditions. Options currently available in electric form are too expensive for the service to consider. "We're spending taxpayers' money," Harwood points out.

He's also nervous about "buying into a technology that tomorrow could be different again", a dilemma faced by many fleets.

"Over the next two years we'll see more vehicles coming on to the market that have been designed as electric vehicles, so with a better level of technology – and I would hate to be behind the curve when they arrive," he says.

Products for his sub-3.5-tonne vehicles are already available, but the biggest barrier to going fully electric comes with the larger vehicles.

"My strategy is to consider electric or zero as my first choice for every vehicle," Harwood says. "Even if I'm buying a £700,000-£800,000 turntable ladder, I'll ask if that can be a zero-emission vehicle, which, of course, the chances are, it can't be."

> "I WANTED TO SEE PEOPLE MAKE A STEP CHANGE IN HOW THEY USE THEIR VEHICLES"
>
> **BRIAN HARWOOD, AF&RS**

Harwood may perform a juggling act over which vehicles are replaced, holding on to some for longer where there is no suitable replacement and bringing others further forward into the schedule where there is.

However, every decision he makes must centre around safety and ensuring the vehicles are suitable for their role.

AF&RS's fire appliances have an operational life of about 15 years and other specialist appliances, such as the turntable ladder, about 20 years.

Some specialist-build manufacturers are developing greener and, in some cases, electric appliances. Harwood says he is looking forward to appraising these as they come to market.

However, he's realistic that achieving carbon neutrality will come from putting back into the grid rather than having an all-electric fleet. But new vehicles will play a major part in helping the organisation to reach its target.

As stated in the organisation's Environmental Strategy 2020, fleet transport and business travel account for almost 50% of its carbon footprint, with 70% of this from frontline appliances and specialised vehicles, 14% from ancillary fleet vans and cars, and 16% from grey fleet (lease, essential and casual car

users). It adds that the shift towards more sustainable travel options and low carbon transport will play a significant role towards meeting its net zero carbon ambition and its support and commitment to clean air zone (CAZ) requirements – from next year it will come under Bath and Bristol. It will also provide cost savings and greater resilience against fuel price increases.

Having vehicles that cover between 6,000-10,000 miles a year means it's more cost-effective to own them rather than lease them, Harwood believes.

"Also, the one thing we don't have to think about if we own, is whether we're going to have the funding from Government in the next year. If there's a shortfall, there'll be pressure on us to cut costs and minimise expenditure. If that happens then we won't also have a huge leasing bill to pay," he adds.

Harwood is quick to praise the work of AF&RS's property services team for installing electric vehicle charging points at all 'critical sites', meaning at least two vehicles can charge at any one time.

Such infrastructure gives the department the confidence to trial EVs and has allowed them to get where they are today, he says.

Around 50% of its sites have charging points installed and the remainder will have charging capabilities by early next year.

Currently, employees who choose an EV through a staff salary sacrifice scheme are able to use these points.

The service also has its own workshops with technicians currently undergoing training to work on electric vehicles.

Harwood is keen to have dialogue with peers on other forces across the country as the sharing of information, best practice and past experiences could help with a smooth transition.

"I think we're early adopters as a service but I'm looking for others who are on the same journey, as we can learn so much from each other," he adds.

As for the hovercraft, well, that's unlikely to be electric any time soon, but the service's current model is being replaced after 13 years of service, so will benefit from cleaner engines, as will the truck used to transport it from fire station to beach.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

Beverley Wise, sales director UK & Ireland, Webfleet Solutions

"There's a way to do it better; find it," Thomas Edison famously challenged his staff.

This attitude neatly sums up the fleet automotive industry's relentless search for new, innovative ways to usher in cleaner, faster, cheaper and more efficient transport.

E-mobility is already gaining traction, but we're only at the start of the journey. There's an onus on all stakeholders, from Government and industry to business leaders, to come up with solutions to drive change.

The telematics industry is at the heart of this crusade, with Webfleet Solutions' commitment to innovation writ large.

The development of its electric vehicle (EV) solution is a great illustration of how technology can offer businesses a "better way" to fleet electrification.

With telematics data, making the electric transition, developing fleet charging strategies, optimising EV operations and realising the lower total cost of ownership potential suddenly become opportunities, rather than challenges.

Elsewhere, other vital ingredients of transport decarbonisation are seeing similar game-changing advances.

Energy-efficient tyres are being developed with increasingly sophisticated engineering to minimise rolling resistance.

In developing tyres for the world's first long-range solar electric vehicle, for example, Bridgestone combined its revolutionary lightweight ENLITEN and ologic technologies to reduce weight using fewer raw materials, and rolling resistance through innovative tread, larger diameters, high inflation pressures and slim design.

These are exciting times. And, as the industry continues to innovate, fleets that respond in kind by introducing "better ways" to operate will not only realise significant financial and environmental benefits, they will also help secure a more sustainable transport future for all.

webfleet solutions a Bridgestone company

Skills, scale and service

Kwik Fit sets out its stall to become garage of choice for EV adopters

As with any new or rapidly developing market, there are many myths and misconceptions regarding electric vehicle (EV) maintenance requirements. It's therefore crucial to identify the key factors fleets need to consider to ensure their EVs continue to perform in line with driver expectations post-maintenance events.

Choosing the right SMR partner has long been a vital decision for fleet managers, with many hours of analysis spent on it. Paradoxically, a more complex national car parc and varied fleet composition may make the selection of the correct garage for repair a more straightforward choice for EV operators.

Put simply, only a garage with an appropriate automotive accreditation will do; with the IMI recently assessing that only one in 15 members of the automotive workforce are qualified to work on EVs, fleet managers may find their choice constrained by the available skills.

The second but equally important consideration is choosing the best solution for tyres. Tyres for electric vehicles must fulfil their promise of delivering low rolling resistance – making them energy-efficient to maximise battery range – and to support low road noise, all while maintaining optimum levels of grip in the wet and dry – a tall order.

Over the past 18 months, tyre availability, much like vehicle availability and the supply chain across many sectors, has been impacted by a range of macro-economic factors. With movement of goods and labour and extraction and availability of raw materials all affected, simply having the right tyre for every scenario has become a huge challenge in an era of vastly changing customer requirements. It is therefore vital that fleets are able to call on support from partners who can rise to this challenge.

Becoming the garage of choice for EV adopters has been a key objective for Kwik Fit over recent years. Kwik Fit has strategically invested to achieve this objective and become the EV aftermarket leader. Areas of strength include its in-house IMI-approved technical training academies to drive accredited training of technicians, as a result of which it has approaching 600 EV Level 2 qualified technicians, the largest figure in the UK aftermarket.

Unique partnerships with OE tyre manufacturers and stock holding across a network of 11 distribution hubs and 700 centres enable it to cater for pre-booked and on-demand tyre change events. This is complemented by its tyre management support, which ensures it offers the best driver support services, authorisation and management information solutions for partners.

Dan Joyce, Kwik Fit fleet director, says: "We know our customers need the largest skills base and the widest tyre availability. However, our market leadership is not just based on offering scale, we can provide insight, data and flexibility to deliver the best possible all-round service to our customers and ensure they drive away happy every time. We don't rest on our laurels but look to add value every single day; our ability to react quickly to a fast-changing marketplace and commitment to continued tactical investment in our infrastructure underlines our ambition to become EV aftermarket leaders."

Kwik Fit

www.kwik-fit.com/fleet

DPD: delivering A GREEN AGENDA

DPD's fleet of electric vehicles encompasses many forms of transport

Parcel company takes on 1,700 fully-electric vehicles as part of its commitment to be the sector sustainability leader. *Andrew Ryan* reports

DPD was one of the first major UK fleets to commit to transitioning to battery electric vehicles (BEVs), and its progress has been rapid.

"As of January 2020, we had only 149 electric vehicles (EVs)," says Tim Jones, director of marketing, communications and sustainability at DPD Group UK, which operates 10,000 vehicles from 84 locations.

"We have been able to move that forward by working with manufacturers and different companies, and by November this year we will have 1,700 EVs out there delivering up and down the UK," he adds.

"That will take us to around 15% of our total fleet operations being all-electric and clean vehicles.

"For us, this isn't just taking a specific city or a small area and putting EVs in, it's a mass change."

Being a leader in the move to BEVs is now a central focus for the business. The ambition to be the UK's most sustainable delivery company has become the fourth pillar in its company strategy.

Last year, this joined DPD's three-point strategy, which had been in place for more than a decade, of delivering the best service money can buy, using the best technology available and retaining and developing the most customer-centric people in the industry.

It is supporting its sustainability ambition through its Vision 25 commitment, under which it has pledged to 'deliver green' to 25 major towns and cities covering 25% of the UK by 2025 (see panel, page 40). It is backed by a £111 million investment in EVs.

"We've been working with EVs for the past three years and we have learned a lot in that time," says Olly Craughan, head of CSR (corporate social responsibility) at DPD.

The company has trialled and operates a range of EVs, from e-cargo bikes and the Paxster light powered vehicle, to small vans such as the Nissan e-NV200 and Peugeot ePartner.

Three-and-a-half-tonne vans – "the workhorses in any parcel delivery firm", says Craughan – have proved tougher due to a lack of suitable vehicles.

"They are the largest part of our fleet and provide flexibility," he adds. "We don't want to be getting more smaller vans to cope with the amount of parcels we deal with: that just isn't sensible, so we really need access to more 3.5-tonne vehicles."

DPD took delivery of 100 MAN eTGE vans last year, but Craughan says they had to be converted to right-hand drive by MAN because of issues with the availability of 3.5-tonne vans in right-hand drive.

The availability of this size of electric van is increasing, however, and in June DPD ordered 750 fully-electric commercial vehicles from Maxus. This consisted of 500 E Deliver 9s and 250 E Deliver 3s.

"To get our hands on an EV with this kind of capacity and range is a real game changer for us," adds Craughan.

"We've got EVs in every DPD depot already, but they are largely focused on quite compact routes, usually in city centres, where range isn't an issue.

"But this opens up the possibility of clean, green deliveries on a much larger scale."

Jones says the main obstacles DPD has faced so far in its transition to EVs are the cost and availability of suitable vehicles, and charging.

"All-electric vans are, roughly speaking, probably twice the cost of a diesel van and clearly that's

Larger vans have been the biggest issue for DPD on its electric journey

a barrier, but, once you have overcome the initial outlay, it becomes cheaper to run EVs than diesel vehicles," he adds.

"It's about looking at the longer term where you get to the point where you are spending less running these vehicles, and as you start to increase fleet size, that saving may allow companies to fund the initial outlay for the extra vehicles.

"We would also hope that due to the demand, there will be better supply and that manufacturers will move quicker as they do in any market when there's competition. And competition leads to innovation, which leads to a reduction in prices."

DPD prioritises its charging regime as home charge first, then public charging and depot charging as a last resort.

To facilitate this, the company has entered into a partnership with Pod Point, which sees DPD help drivers complete the paperwork to apply for the £350 home charge grant.

It also contributes a further £350 towards the chargers, meaning the drivers do not typically have to pay anything towards them.

> "TO GET OUR HANDS ON AN EV WITH THIS CAPACITY AND RANGE IS A GAME CHANGER"
>
> **OLLY CRAUGHAN, DPD**

While DPD has settled on its charging strategy, Jones says collaboration between companies could help other organisations to make the move to EVs.

"For example, what could help the fleet managers overcome any barriers caused by charging could be big companies and energy providers working together to create an association that people can join which is agnostic, so that their fleet can charge at these points," he says.

"We need one in every city and then one in every town, and then on more or less every industrial estate up and down the country so that we can help organisations move to electric and reduce the need for vans, HGVs and other sorts of vehicles to use diesel."

OXFORD LEADS THE WAY AS DPD'S FIRST 'GREEN CITY'

Oxford has become DPD's first 'green city' with all parcel deliveries now made by fully-electric vehicles. All deliveries will be made from the company's new Bicester eco-depot, which is its first 'net zero carbon in construction' building, as regulated by the UK Green Building Council.

The depot has a fleet of 40 EVs and they will deliver more than 15,000 parcels a week.

"For us to say we can now deliver to a city the size of Oxford using only electric vehicles is a huge leap forward not only for us, but for the sector as a whole," says Olly Craughan. "We are on track to repeat this in nine more cities this year."

The other 24 towns and cities covered by DPD's plan are Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Coventry, Derby, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kingston-upon-Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton and Stoke-on-Trent.

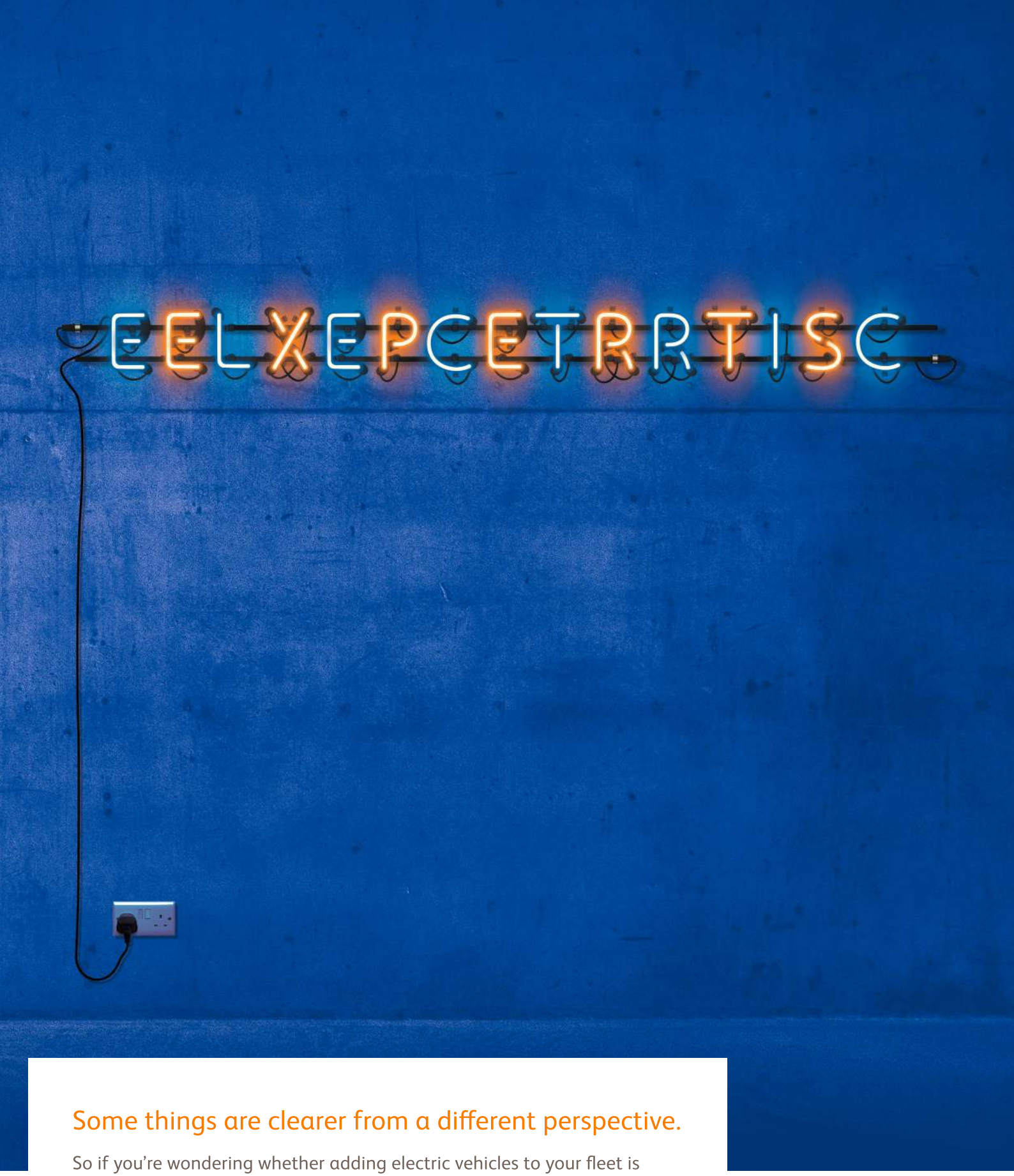
Another key strand of DPD's green delivery strategy is the development of a network of all-electric micro-depots so EVs are located close to customers.

The first of these opened in Westminster in 2018. From here, final mile deliveries are made on all-electric vehicles, while inbound parcels from its London City depot are delivered on fully-electric Fuso eCanter 7.5-tonne vehicles.

It now has four all-electric micro-depots and plans to open seven as soon as the sites become available.

Its first outside London was in Kingston-upon-Hull. Previously, the depot that delivered to Hull was located close to Goole and was more than 28 miles away, which meant BEVs would be on the edge of their mileage range after completing a normal delivery day.

As a result of the change, DPD has reduced the number of diesel vans operating in the city and the unproductive mileage travelling between the Goole depot and Hull by 896 miles per day.



Some things are clearer from a different perspective.

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Figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare fuel consumption, CO2 emissions and electric range figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend on multiple factors, including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles, vehicle load and the starting charge of the battery. The Audi Q4 e-tron is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Zero emissions while driving. Information correct at time of print 20 October 2021. Please consult your Audi Centre for further information. Image for illustrative purposes. Model shown is not UK specification and features optional equipment. ^2021/2022 tax year. BIK tax to increase to 2% from April 2022.

Food for thought from FRUIT 4 LONDON

Fruit 4 London's vans are converted to have a cargo volume of eight cu m

Vehicle-to-grid pioneer has added to the five-a-day goodness of its fruit and veg boxes by undertaking healthier zero emission deliveries. *Jonathan Manning* reports

London-based fruit and vegetable delivery company Fruit 4 London has been at the vanguard of electric vehicle (EV) fleets for almost a decade.

The company bought its first two EVs, a pair of Renault Kangoo ZE vans, back in 2012, long before fleet electrification and public recharging infrastructure had entered common vocabulary.

And now, as private companies and public sector organisations take their first tentative steps towards transitioning from internal combustion engines to battery power, Fruit 4 London has continued its pioneering approach, recently installing five vehicle-to-grid (V2G) charge points at its east London warehouse.

The firm's managing director, Laszlo Mulato, has only one regret about his business's electrification process – he wishes he had started even earlier.

The Kangoo vans have been replaced by Nissan eNVQ200 XL light commercial vehicles, converted by Slovakia-based Voltia to have a cargo volume of eight cubic metres, and Fruit 4 London's deliveries to offices and homes are now undertaken by the company's small fleet of seven electric vans (it also has runs one diesel-powered Ford Transit).

The switch to zero tailpipe emissions has saved thousands of pounds in fuel bills and helped it to avoid paying London's daily congestion and Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charges.

The EVs save Fruit 4 London £2,625 per year in congestion charge fees alone.

The vehicles also feature prominently in the company's marketing and were one of the reasons Fruit 4 London secured its largest client.

"We do not win customers just because we are green, but businesses are trying to make sure their whole supply chains share the same mentality towards the need to reduce greenhouse gases and combat climate change. Everyone has to start thinking differently," says Mulato.

This applies to Fruit 4 London's drivers, too, who appreciate the opportunity to be part of a positive initiative as much as they appreciate how much quieter and easier the eNVQ200s are to drive than the diesel-powered vans they replaced.

"In London, the average speed is only 9mph or 10mph and the number of times you have to depress the clutch and change gears turns driving into physical exercise," says Mulato.

"I remember we used to have a new Toyota Hi-Lux and at the end of the day my knees hurt. I wasn't an old man, but it had such a heavy clutch."

The 'one-pedal' driving style for battery-powered vehicles, lifting off the accelerator to brake, has also saved huge sums in service and maintenance budgets, with the EVs proving exceptionally reliable, and requiring very few replacement parts.

"Not once since 2012 has an EV let me down, apart from the 12V battery which features in diesel and petrol engines as well," says Mulato.

"We kept the two Kangoos for six years and when we sold them the brake pads were still at 60%, and we had used the vans fully loaded in

No missing the colourful Fruit 4 London vans or the sustainabilty messages they carry

London. I don't think we have ever had to change brake pads on any of the Nissans, and one is six years old.

"With the Ford Transits that we used to run, we had to change the brake pads every year - £700 I remember.

"The service and maintenance costs are next to nothing for electric vehicles – virtually nothing can go wrong."

This reliability supports Fruit 4 London's decision to buy its vehicles outright, a strategy that paid off, says Mulato, when Covid-19 struck and the company saw 750 accounts suspended in a day when the country went into lockdown.

Having to pay monthly lease rentals with no revenue coming in would have proved exceptionally challenging.

The company plans to keep its electric vehicles for 10 years.

The high-risk approach of being an early adopter of new technology has not been without its difficulties, however, with Fruit 4 London having to overcome issues to make electric vehicles work for the business.

It incurred re-tooling costs when it commissioned its box supplier to produce boxes that optimised the available space in the cargo area of the eNVQ200, and it has had to be creative and diplomatic to secure the power supply it needs to recharge its vehicles on low-cost electricity overnight at its warehouse.

"We moved into our new warehouse last year and realised that the power supply cables were not strong enough to support V2G chargers," says Mulato. "So we had to go through UK Power Networks, our DNO [distribution network operator] to find a solution and they were coming up with figures of about £60,000 to upgrade the cables and local substation.

> "IT'S AN AMAZING FEELING, NOT JUST SAVING COSTS, BUT KNOWING YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT"
>
> **LASZLO MULATO, FRUIT 4 LONDON**

"A serious amount of work needs to be done to support businesses with cabling. There is enough power to support charging, but the cables and substations are seriously out of date.

"Luckily, we realised that one of our neighbours had a lot of power going into his unit and his business was only using a fraction of it, so we managed to swap electricity supply with the neighbour; we gave him our supply and he gave us his.

"We were very lucky to have such a helpful neighbour; if he wasn't cooperative, you are talking serious money."

The exchange was more complicated than it sounds, with complex, technical forms to complete, and a frustratingly slow pace of change from the energy companies involved.

"It took weeks of hard work by my business partner; it's not easy to work with electricity companies and get them to work together," says Mulato.

The good news is that the five V2G chargers have been largely funded by Innovate UK as part of the E-Flex demonstration project, leaving Fruit 4 London with an installation bill of about £7,000 when each charger would normally cost about £10,000.

"We are doing something good for the environment, storing renewable energy in our vehicle batteries while they are parked, and then supporting the grid when it needs the power. It's a good concept and we are very proud of taking part in it," says Mulato.

The overnight charge is sufficient to fill the EV batteries and range is no longer an issue – their daily deliveries cover 60-to-90 miles, and when fully charged, the vans are comfortably capable of 120 miles.

"Even if it's very cold and you have to have the heating on and do a longer drive, rapid public charging is widely available and reasonably reliable now," says Mulato.

"Drivers stop for a break where the charger is, and with big names like BP and Shell joining the charging game – they are not cheap, but you can charge for 15 minutes and that's enough to get them back."

A wholehearted EV advocate – he also has a Tesla Model S and BMW i3, both charged whenever possible by solar panels on his home – Mulato can't imagine buying another vehicle with an internal combustion engine.

"It's an amazing feeling, not just saving costs, but knowing you are doing something good for the environment," he says.

The vehicle leasing market is changing… and so are we

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions to rebrand as Novuna Vehicle Solutions

The motor industry is experiencing a seismic shift, increasingly transitioning away from petrol and diesel to electric fleets, with drivers taking advantage of the cost and environmental benefits of electric vehicles (EVs).

But it's not just the wider automotive sector that is repositioning itself to address climate change.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions – one of the UK's largest vehicle leasing companies and Leasing Company of the Year, announced that it is embarking on a major rebrand, accelerating its market-leading fleet decarbonisation solutions.

The rebrand to Novuna Vehicle Solutions, which will be fully implemented by March 2022, follows the merger of the business's parent company with Mitsubishi UFJ Lease and Finance Company Limited earlier this year.

This was a significant move for the business, making it part of one of the world's largest and most diversified financial groups.

Jon Lawes, MD of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, explained the thinking behind the rebrand. "The vehicle leasing market is rapidly changing and so are we. Novuna comes from the Latin words – novo (new) and una (together) – which captures the essence of our business and how we work with fleets, creating innovative solutions together and supporting our customers through rapid change."

> "Our new brand name is readily aligned to our market-leading decarbonisation strategy which is delivering cost and environmental benefits for our customers. Novuna perfectly captures the proposition of our business and how we work together and with our customers to become market leaders in electric vehicles"
>
> **Jon Lawes, MD, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions**

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is a recognised electrification leader, offering an end-to-end decarbonisation solution, accelerating the transition to an electric vehicle fleet. This model helps fleets reduce their carbon emissions and transition to cleaner vehicles, by assessing fleet challenges, providing funding, building solutions and managing charging infrastructure, as well as the the back-office management needed to support a widespread adoption of electric vehicles.

"As one of the UK's largest vehicle leasing companies, working with OEMs right across the spectrum to supply and service fleets of all complexities, the Novuna brand provides our business with a clear point of differentiation in the motor industry. Our new brand name is readily aligned to our decarbonisation strategy which is delivering cost and environmental benefits for our customers. Novuna perfectly captures the proposition of our business and how we work together and with our customers to become market leaders in electric vehicles," says Lawes.

From company cars and salary sacrifice through to specialist and modified vehicles, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions is already transforming UK fleets with absolute confidence to achieve decarbonisation targets.

The size and expertise of its new parent company following the rebrand will provide a springboard for the next phase of growth for the business, built on an ethos of consistently exceeding customer expectations.

Novuna Vehicle Solutions will offer competitive funding, fleet management, consultative policy design, EV transition planning and installation of electric infrastructure to get green fleets on the road and fully charged.

From October, customers can expect to see the Novuna brand being introduced on marketing channels, though the full rebrand will happen in March 2022.

The products and services currently offered will remain the same, alongside their account management teams. But, in the longer term, this is far more than a change of name.

"The rebrand marks the start of an exciting new era for our business and our customers," says Lawes. ■

FIND OUT MORE

COMING SOON

Matt de Prez looks at the numerous electric vehicle launches planned over the coming year

BMW i4

Available: November
Range: up to 367 miles

BMW's new i4 electric car will go on sale next month, priced from £51,905. The four-door coupe will occupy the same space as the 4 Series Gran Coupe and is set to rival the Tesla Model 3.

There will be three versions at launch: i4 eDrive40 in Sport and M Sport trim and the i4 M50, the company's first purely electric performance car from BMW M.

The eDrive40 uses a 340PS electric motor to power the rear wheels, while the i4 M50 will come with electric motors at both the front and rear axle with a combined maximum output of 544PS. Both use an 84kWh battery, providing a range of up to 367 miles.

CITROËN AMI

Available: Spring 2022
Range: 43 miles

Citroën will launch its Ami electric city car in the UK in Spring 2022, following strong demand for the niche model.

Officially known as a quadricycle, the two-seater city car is expected to cost around £6,000. Leasing, rental and subscription deals are likely to be offered too.

It is fitted with a 5.5kWh battery that can be recharged in three hours.

In France it can be driven by 14-year-olds, but in the UK you'll need a full car licence to get behind the wheel – which remains on the left side of the car. The car, which is largely made of plastic, can reach speeds of 28mph.

CUPRA BORN

Available: Early 2022
Range: up to 335 miles

The Cupra Born shares its underpinnings with the VW ID3 and was originally set to launch as a Seat model. Now, offered under the Cupra brand, the car takes on a sportier look and features the marque's signature copper details.

Like the ID3, the model range includes three battery choices (45kWh, 58kWh and 77kWh) along with power outputs ranging from 150PS to 231PS.

All Cupra Born models are rear-wheel drive and the brand says it has extensively re-engineered the chassis to ensure that the Born's handling is befitting of the Cupra badge.

GENESIS GV60

Available: late 2022
Range: up to 280 miles

Based on the same platform as the Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Kia EV6, the Genesis GV60 promises a more luxurious take on the compact electric crossover.

Three models will be offered: one rear-wheel drive and two all-wheel drive. Each will feature a 77.4kWh battery, providing a range of up to 280 miles. Charging speeds of up to 350kW can be achieved, boosting the battery level from 10% to 80% in 18 minutes.

The car is equipped with digital side mirrors and auto-flush outside door handles, giving a smoother appearance. It will also feature active noise cancelling and suspension that uses a camera to adapt to the road ahead.

SEE NEWS STORY ON P10

BMW iX

Available: November
Range: up to 380 miles

Divisive looks aside, the iX is an extremely important car for BMW as it showcases the future direction of the brand's electric vehicles.

Utilising BMW's latest architecture, the large SUV packs the latest generation of electric motors, in-car entertainment and driver assistance systems.

The entry-level iX xDrive40 will serve up 326PS and provide a maximum range of 257 miles from its 70kWh battery.

A more potent xDrive50 version will also be offered, with 523PS and a range of 380 miles thanks to a 100kWh battery.

KIA EV6

Available: late 2021
Range: up to 328 miles

Kia's crossover-style EV6 electric car will spearhead a new range of electric models from the brand, each wearing the 'EV' moniker. Six are expected to launch by 2027.

It costs from £40,895 and there are three trim grade and two powertrain options, plus a high-performance GT version. All models are equipped with a 77.4kWh battery pack, which provides a range of up to 328 miles.

One highlight is the vehicle-to-load (V2L) function, which is capable of supplying up to 3.6kW of power to an external device. It could be used to charge another EV if required.

MERCEDES-BENZ EQE

Available: late 2022
Range: up to 410 miles

The electric E-Class counterpart is based on Mercedes' purpose-built electric vehicle platform and promises a range of up to 410 miles. Borrowing much of its design from the larger EQS, the EQE promises a similar focus on in-car technology. Multiple powertrain options are likely to be offered, but only the EQE 350 has been detailed so far. It uses a 90kWh battery and has a power output of 292PS. The EQE is compatible with up to 170kW chargers, enabling an 80% charge in around half an hour.

It's billed for arrival in late 2022, with prices likely to start at around £60,000.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Rob Morris, head of fleet and remarketing, Volvo Car UK

2021 has indeed been a significant year so far. With unprecedented demand, multiple supply and economic challenges and the return to work, it's safe to say there's not been a dull day!

The UK market is buoyant with premium demand up 33% year-to-date. Volvo Cars globally continues to see significant growth with sales up 17.6% for the first nine months of the year.

The XC40 Recharge Pure Electric began deliveries to end-user customers and we're delighted to confirm that our second full electric model, our sleek new crossover, the C40 Recharge Pure Electric will begin first customer deliveries towards the end of 2021.

The C40 is packed full of technology including a Google built-in operating system and is the first new Volvo to be completely leather-free, further supporting our sustainability ambitions.

Our electrification programme continues to evolve further, we've introduced new and improved plug-in hybrid powertrains in our 60 and 90 series models, significantly extending the electric range to 56 miles (preliminary data), lowering CO_2, increasing performance and improving driveability. The result for our business customers is benefit-in-kind tax of just 7%.

One of the big highlights of the past couple of months has been Fleet & Mobility Live at the start of October. We were delighted to be there supporting the fleet industry and engaging with our business customers face-to-face once again.

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Official fuel consumption and CO_2 figures for the Volvo Cars Plug-in Hybrid range*, in MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 83.1 - 313.4 (3.4 - 0.9). WLTP CO_2 emissions 76 – 19g/km. WLTP electric energy consumption 3.5 - 4.3 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 25.6 - 56.5 miles. *Preliminary data for new Plug-in Hybrid models. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption, CO_2 and equivalent electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. Figures shown include battery and fuel powertrains where applicable. 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.

MERCEDES EQB

Available: summer 2022
Range: 260 miles

Slotting in between the EQA and EQC, the EQB is based on the existing Mercedes GLB and shares its boxy styling and seven-seat layout.

The new model will rival electric SUVs such as the recently launched Audi Q4 e-tron and VW ID4.

Two all-wheel drive models will be offered in the UK next year, both using a 66kWh battery, with 222PS or 292PS. Charging can be carried out at up to 100kW, allowing a 10%-80% charge time in 30 minutes.

Mercedes says a long-range version of the EQB, with a larger battery, will also be available.

NISSAN ARIYA

Available: September 2022
Range: up to 310 miles

Nissan will expand its electric car range with the futuristic-looking Ariya SUV next year.

The new model, billed as a coupe crossover, will be offered with a variety of power outputs and battery sizes, giving a range of up to 310 miles.

Its styling takes advantage of the car's electric underpinnings, allowing for short overhangs and a closed grille.

Inside, the Ariya does away with switchgear and, instead, features an array of touch-sensitive 'buttons'. Two 12-inch screens dominate the dashboard, providing digital instruments and infotainment.

RENAULT MÉGANE E-TECH

Available: autumn 2022
Range: up to 292 miles

The Renault Mégane will be reborn as a crossover next year, when it becomes the first of 10 new electric cars from Renault.

It will be the first vehicle to launch using the manufacturer's new electric vehicle CMF-EV platform and will be available with a choice of two batteries: 40kWh for a range of up to 186 miles and 60kWh for up to 292 miles.

The motor delivers either 130PS or 218PS to the front wheels, with the latter providing a 0-62mph time of 7.4 seconds.

Prices are expected to start from £30,000.

TOYOTA BZ4X

Available: summer 2022
Range: TBC

Toyota plans to launch at least seven new electric cars under a new BZ sub-brand by 2025, the first of which will be the BZ4X SUV.

Jointly developed with Subaru, the new model is expected to focus on driver engagement while also providing a large amount of interior space.

Details of the car's powertrain and battery are yet to be confirmed, but the BZ4X is said to provide "class leasing efficiency and a very competitive driving range".

VOLVO C40

Available: early 2022
Range: 260 miles

The C40 Recharge will arrive early next year as an electric-only re-worked version of the XC40 SUV.

It features a coupe-like roofline, with a raked rear end, but retains a raised SUV driving position.

The model was revealed with a 408PS twin electric motor setup and 78kWh battery, the same as the XC40 P8 Recharge and Polestar 2.

It will be designated P8, but lower-powered versions are likely to be introduced during the car's life.

VW ID5

Available: mid-2022
Range: up to 335 miles

Volkswagen will expand its ID line-up next year with the introduction of the ID5 SUV Coupe.

The car is based largely on the existing ID4 SUV and will be the second electric model from VW to be offered in a sporty GTX derivative.

VW has only confirmed details of the ID5 GTX so far, which will use the same 299PS twin motor arrangement as the ID4 GTX. In time, it's likely the ID5 will be offered with the same rear-wheel drive motor and battery options as the ID4.

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As the cost of vehicle parts and repairs increases across the market, effective incident management is a key advantage in reducing the total cost of ownership of a fleet. It is intrinsically linked to many aspects of the total running cost of a fleet such as maintenance, taxation and insurance, yet this cost we can positively and proactively influence.

Through our commitment to refining processes and investing in digital solutions FMG can ensure that costs are expertly controlled at every stage in the incident lifecycle and we'll continually seek new and innovative ways to bring customers complete peace of mind.

While the financial savings speak for themselves, it is the specific elements of service which make or break customer satisfaction and we commit to delivering a simple, seamless and reliable solution which prioritises the exceptional care of the driver.

Andrew Chandler,
sales director, FMG

FMG
THINKING AHEAD

Taking the angst out of incident management

FMG has provided vital support to drivers and fleet managers following vehicle incidents, road traffic accidents and breakdowns for the past 35 years.

We're recognised for providing end-to-end incident management solutions, specialising in mitigating costs and reducing vehicle downtime, for managing recovery, repair and a whole host of legal and third-party services.

Yet where we really stand out is with our ability to operate as an extension of our customers' brand, providing exacting standards of exceptional service, offering fast, empathetic and tailored solutions to support their driver community.

Exceptional driver care

We manage more than 600,000 diverse vehicles, operating on behalf of blue-chip company fleets, major leasing providers and the largest motor insurers and brokers. We are alerted to a new incident every three minutes.

We're also the roadside recovery partner of choice for National Highways and several UK police forces.

We've analysed every type of incident from every angle and empowered our expert service centre teams with intuitive pre-populated systems and the training, knowledge and support required to provide all the care a driver may need.

Our service centre teams are available 24/7, ready to listen, reassure and advise while taking control of putting things right.

The way we triage each driver's call impacts upon the entire life cycle of the claim journey; within an hour, any necessary vehicle recovery and replacement vehicles are arranged, vehicle repair is allocated to the most suitable repairer, our legal experts have assessed liability and we've contacted any third parties to offer our vehicle repair and replacement services.

Investing in a strong and sustainable network

Fleet managers need their business vehicles back on the road quickly, and, as trends in the UK vehicle parc shift, we've prioritised investment and innovation in FMG's repair network to ensure we have the capacity, capability and coverage to provide fast, high-quality repairs for all vehicle types across our UK customer base.

We've supplemented our UK-wide repair network with 68 additional repair sites, through the provision of FMG Repair Services, bringing our total blended (accessible and owned) network to more than 300 UK-wide repairers, with options for mobile and same day repairs too.

With time-critical light commercial vehicle (LCV) use soaring, we have 50 dedicated LCV repair partners and the UK's first LCV mobile repair rig, to minimise downtime.

We've also worked closely with electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers to ensure every element of our EV repair service meets exacting standards and we work in contract with Tesla-approved UK workshops to ensure even the most advanced vehicle systems are afforded the same expertise and excellence in quality standards.

FMG is headquartered in Broad Lea House, Huddersfield

Investing in digital solutions

As new digital technologies start to surface in every industry, we've seized new opportunities to invest in our customer proposition with our own digitalisation strategy gathering pace. Our digital roadmap has included a £multi-million investment in direct integration with customers' own fleet management systems, changing the way we interact and exchange data, creating faster, more robust and future-proof solutions to drive the most efficient resolution of incidents.

Communication, control and choice in a digital world

Self-service technologies have significantly advanced across industries, creating an unsurprising impact on consumer habits and expectations. Interactive interfaces provide customers with new levels of visibility and control, enriching the value of services. This shift has shaped FMG's pending launch of our first self-serve multi-channel communication platform, FMG Connect. Launching this autumn, the platform puts the customer in control, allowing a seamless blend of communication channels to be used to the customers liking. Carefully understanding our clients' needs, FMG Connect both compliments and enhances our existing services by providing autonomy and choice, ultimately delivering a tailored claims experience to suit individuals' preferences.

Andrew Chandler, sales director, FMG

Enhancing risk and ROI

As we increase connectivity to enhance communication with customers, our investment in system architecture and development is bringing exciting innovation to the risk management arena too.

FMG provides a full spectrum of risk management services, across all fleet dynamics – grey fleet, EVs, HGVs, Commercials – ranging from white-labelled fleet-wide risk solutions to individual driver training. Our dedicated Risk Solutions team supports the creation of bespoke solutions, tailored to unique fleet objectives and to the benefits that matter most.

FMG's new and enhanced risk solution is designed to mitigate fleet risk and reduce incidents by ensuring fleet managers get the greatest return on investment from their chosen range of risk management tools, telematics devices, vehicle sensors, dash cams, fuel spend reports, and end of lease information risk. The list goes on!

Additionally, we've worked with experts in the field of fleet risk management to design and develop a market-leading risk management platform, FMG Indicate. Launching this autumn, the platform collects the risk data created, and aggregates, normalises and simplifies it to create one clear picture, via a simple dashboard, to allow fleet managers to clearly identify and analyse their risk profile, with a number of interventions available to actively manage.

For further information contact andrew.chandler@fmg.co.uk

Using lessons from the past, but keeping a close eye on the future

Steve Winter leaves nothing to chance – at the core of his fleet philosophy are planning and preparation. *Stephen Briers* reports

Not simply satisfied with setting British Gas up for its medium-term future by implementing and actioning a robust sustainability plan, including full transition to electric across its near-11,000 cars and vans by 2025, head of fleet Steve Winter is also working on a succession plan to ensure a smooth transition to the next incumbent.

Fleet is undergoing its biggest transformation in a generation, perhaps ever: electric vehicles, mobility, legislation, data and technology are all impacting on the job, adding pressure but also making it a stimulating place to work.

The skills required of tomorrow's fleet manager need to evolve to meet the challenge and Winter, while confident about his own succession planning, questions where the new breed of decision-makers is coming from.

"The fleet industry is full of massive change with unprecedented levels of complexity and change over the past two or three years; the role is developing into something else," he says. "It's almost too big for one fleet manager; it needs to be supplemented by a number of key people to support that person."

Of his own approach, he says: "[Former British Gas fleet manager] Colin Marriott brought me in to be his successor and, for a few years, I was learning the role under him. That was hugely beneficial and was the first thing I thought of when I took the job. More people need to think about these things. This is a stressful job so to have someone that can help you, share the burden and give insight is important."

During his seven years at British Gas, Winter has become accustomed to change. Under parent Centrica, the fleet team has at various times reported into finance, procurement, supply chain and operations. Ultimately, though, the core objective has broadly stayed the same: to deliver an efficient and effective fleet to end users.

"We're now in a group procurement function that looks after a global fleet, but there's no right answer about where it should sit," he says. "We still get involved in each part of the business, such as resourcing, supply chain or procurement - it's a holistic approach. But having these different reporting lines has given me more insight and a broader knowledge of how Centrica works and how the fleet affects each part of the business – operationally, supply chain and procurement."

The processes required to meet the core objectives are shifting, with variations emerging between the company car and van elements of the business.

"Commercial vehicles are what you use to make your business money; the strong drivers are having the best, most efficient vehicles on a TCO [total cost of ownership] model, but we don't give the drivers choice," says Winter.

Conversely, cars are all about choice, and there are differences in the way British Gas procures and leases them, as well as its replacement cycles and whole life cost modelling, which makes it difficult to lump them in with commercial vehicles.

Consequently, Winter has split his team to have one person looking after cars and one on commercial vehicles, to ensure clarity of purpose on costings and procurement.

FleetNews AWARDS Summer Garden Party 2021

FLEET MANAGER OF THE YEAR WINNER: STEVE WINTER

Sponsored by Reflex Vehicle Hire

SPONSORS' COMMENTS:

Reflex Vehicle Hire is honoured to sponsor the *Fleet News* Awards and, in particular, the Fleet Manager of the Year Award, which celebrates the individual who has contributed to the successful running of their company's fleet of vehicles. This accolade highlights the key decision-maker who demonstrates their ability to control costs and is committed to creating a safe and efficient fleet, while also mitigating risks for their drivers and looking at sustainable mobility options for the future. Congratulations to Steve Winter at British Gas for his commitment to electrifying their vehicles and looking at innovative ways of working to create a more efficient and sustainable fleet.

HEAD OF FLEET: Steve Winter
TIME IN ROLE: Five years (in Jan 2022)
FLEET SIZE: 10,900 – 1,400 cars, 9,500 vans
FUNDING METHOD: Operating lease
REPLACEMENT CYCLE: cars – four years; vans – variable

"We are doing a lot more consultative discussions with the drivers about the car choice, because there's a minefield around the number of vehicles available and the legislation changes," he adds.

"Then we look at the direction of the car fleet and the rules around the policy."

The car profile on the fleet is shifting from the biggest, most expensive models to smaller, more efficient options as hybrid and home working result in less travelling. The choice list is helping to drive this while encouraging more employees back into the scheme: full electric and plug-in hybrid models are now the only cars available.

"Our car fleet has grown since the start of the year with people opting back in to take a low or zero CO_2 car," Winter says. "We will probably go EV-only at the beginning of next year or make PHEV a shorter lease of three years to coincide with our 2025 target and to make it a bit more expensive. PHEV is still a stepping-stone for many people – lots of our EV takers previously had a PHEV. They had to have a home charger installed so this approach has worked perfectly."

Of the 270 cars currently on order, 61% are full electric and the rest PHEV.

British Gas has this month launched a salary sacrifice scheme and Winter anticipates strong demand as it offers the entire employee base access to new electric and PHEV cars. A home charger will be part of the lease package.

He also expects it to make a dent in the grey fleet. Employees using their own cars for business purposes are already tightly regulated, with restrictions on age, body type and EuroNCAP ratings, but Winter is considering introducing more rules to dissuade people from buying gas guzzlers, such as reimbursement rates or CO_2 caps.

"We haven't done anything this year, but we do think that our grey fleet will reduce as people choose salary sacrifice, so we will wait to see this impact before taking a decision," he says.

While British Gas is swiftly electrifying its car fleet, the biggest volume to convert is vans. It ordered 1,000 Vivaro-e medium panel vans last year, with 900 delivered, and placed a further order for 2,000 earlier this year. By mid-2022, it will have 3,000 electric vans on fleet.

With a clear strategy, Winter describes the British Gas electric vehicle transition as "business as usual"; the vehicles are on order – although it has had to take some diesel large panel vans on short-term lease while it waits for electric alternatives to come to market – and the charging infrastructure is in place.

He's now switched his attention to the next big project: a root and branch assessment of the entire fleet strategy, including reviewing the elements that are outsourced versus those managed in-house.

"We have board approval to look at our fleet strategy. We have contracts that almost collide so for the next six months or so, we will look at our model," says Winter.

"When we outsourced our fleet management in 2006, it was the right thing to do. But things have moved on significantly in the digital age, so now it's right for us to look at that – do we need to in-source or outsource more?

"We will look at the way we run our car scheme, our accident management, etc, and ask if it's still fit for purpose for 2025 or 2030. We can see changes coming, for instance around vehicle maintenance. I don't think I need to take a van off the road for a day to service it; I'm looking for a while-you-wait appointment that I can plan into an engineer's diary, like I want to plan in a charging session to charge their van. I think we could downtime an engineer for an hour to have their van serviced."

He is currently gaining insight by talking to suppliers and other fleets about their processes and plans to present his conclusions by the end of Quarter 1, with a launch midway through 2022.

The period of self-reflection doesn't mean the company hasn't benefited from its outsourced relationships – far from it. Innovation is built into supplier tenders and is measured during the life of the contract via regular reviews.

"During supplier reviews, we spend just five to 10 minutes looking at the KPIs and SLAs, then the focus is all about what's coming next and how we work together," says Winter. "If you win one of our contracts, we don't expect you just to deliver that for the three- or five-year term; we expect to see progression because that gives you the right to bid for the next contract.

"If you just deliver the same thing for three years, then we'll benchmark or go to market to see if someone else can deliver a better service."

British Gas can point to numerous examples of innovation. A recent example is its surplus vehicle fleet. It has moved the fleet into suppliers, such as accident management repairers and maintenance partners, spreading them around to ensure they are already in location when required.

"I don't have to move them across the country any more; it reduces downtime for the engineer – it's a ready-to-deploy fleet," Winter says.

Then there's the salvage parts policy with Synetiq. British Gas encourages its SMR partners to buy replacement parts from the company to drive efficiencies. It has become a key factor in getting vehicles back on the road quickly.

"Some suppliers are not good at innovation or creativity and some businesses don't know how to ask for it," Winter says. "But some of our responsibility is to help and nurture those creative ideas. Some of our best things have come from sitting and brainstorming what the future might look like.

"If it's done regularly, there's mutual understanding and benefit for the customer and the supplier."

LEARNINGS FROM EV PIONEER

Total cost of ownership has always controlled the British Gas electric vehicle strategy. "It's not in our mindset of doing things at any cost and it's taken a long time to get to where we are today with our maintenance profiles, accident profile and tyre wear," says Steve Winter. "Now we have a product that is cheaper than ICE."

The TCO model needs to include every element "otherwise it will cost you money", including energy prices and the plug-in grants. Incident rates strengthened the financial case: efficient driving styles to conserve range are resulting in fewer crashes, with average repair costs falling by £30-£40. Maintenance spend and tyre spend is also lower. Most British Gas drivers are using home charging, supplemented by occasional use of the public network. Winter is keen to explore the possibility of a fleet charging network, either with employers pooling their workplace facilities or through private suppliers creating timed appointments.

"Workplace charging is a high cost and a long return on investment, but if you open up to other fleets where we can book it and take revenue, it could supplement home and public. But it needs to be tied together especially as batteries increase in size, making home chargers insufficient," he says.

All smiles from Ben Creswick (holding trophy) and his team as they celebrate their *Fleet News* Awards triumph

WINNER:
JCT600 VEHICLE LEASING SOLUTIONS

The personal touch – and the Four Ts – reap rewards

JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions has enjoyed a huge growth period. *Andrew Ryan* discovers the keys to its success

The past 18 months have been a successful period for JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions.

It has seen its risk fleet size grow, its customer base expand by almost 20%, a 100% client retention rate for the second consecutive year and an increasing number of fleets move to sole supply. JCT600 VLS has also launched its £500,000 Origo customer platform, delivering multiple schemes or policies on a single system.

Its progress has been recognised by being named leasing company of the year (up to 20,000 vehicles) in this year's *Fleet News* Awards.

Last year's FN50 research showed JCT600 VLS had a risk fleet of 5,922 cars and vans, an increase of around 4% on the previous year.

And 2021's research – due to be published next month – will show another increase, says Ben Creswick, managing director of JCT600 VLS.

This is due to a number of factors, but primarily the JCT600 VLS team, he adds. "I sometimes talk about the four Ts – tech, team, trust and togetherness," says Creswick. "In this space you are up against big, bank-owned and private equity-owned leasing companies, so to even exist you have to have the best tech, you have to have data security, you have to have all the things they have, because otherwise you'd never get through a tender exercise.

"Trust is our lifeblood and we have the trust of our customers, while togetherness is being together as a group of people as an employee base, but it is also about how we work with our customers.

"However, the most important thing to me is our team. When you have a group of people that have the passion, the culture and desire we have, anything is possible because it creates a natural momentum.

"You should have seen how proud people were in the office that we won the Fleet News Award. These four things are really what we stand for."

Fleet News: Where did the idea for Origo come from?

Ben Creswick: I had been away from fleet funding and management for three years before I joined JCT600 VLS in 2018 and I couldn't believe how much had changed, with WLTP, OPRA, CAFE and this, that and the other: there were more acronyms than you could shake a stick at.

Should a fleet be taking EVs? Should a fleet offer salary sacrifice? What's the impact of WLTP

ORGANISATION: JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions
MANAGING DIRECTOR: Ben Creswick
FN50 2020 RISK FLEET SIZE: 5,922 (cars 4,613, vans 1,309)
FN50 2020 POSITION: 26

going to be and what happens if that legislation changes again? What's the government incentivising? What about people who do big business mileage? There were so many things happening.

Even I was thinking, 'What do you do? Do you stick your head in the sand and hope everything blows over, or is there something else?' That was the turning point and where Origo, which is Latin for 'the source', came from.

It's a bit like in The Matrix. When they want to know something, they go and see the Oracle and she has the answers. I thought it would be nice to have an Oracle that a customer could go to and get the information they need. I spoke to customers across the UK and they wanted something similar as well, so that's what Origo was built for.

It was built as a modular system that could cater for pretty much any individual wanting to source a vehicle.

FN: How would a fleet customer use Origo?

BC: It takes around three months to implement it with a customer. We work with them to customise the platform to determine what the best funding options are for fleets.

Once those and a vehicle choice list have been determined, the drivers can go into the system to look at how different vehicles compare against different funding options.

Drivers can compare costs based on personal and business mileage, tax rate and vehicle preferences with the ability to adjust contracts and even fuel economy to give a realistic figure tailored to their own driving.

It's been a big project getting this right. The right word is probably painstaking because the team meticulously went through every possible combination of everything.

FN: How are you helping fleets make the transition to electric vehicles?

BC: Consultancy is very important. You can push EVs as hard as you want, but if you're pushing it to people who don't want an EV, it isn't going to work. You've got to listen to what the customer is trying to achieve as a corporate from a CSR perspective and in terms of reducing CO_2.

A lot look at the headline rental, see that it's more expensive and think it won't work for them, but if you sit with them you can talk them through the process and the total cost of ownership.

Origo can help because by using the available data on drivers, such as mileage, average trip profiles, their tax rates and running costs, we can then advise on how to transition into an EV world.

We've done that with a lot of customers. Some are moving to 100% EV, but others are choosing different products for different employee populations because EV will not be right for every individual at the moment.

FN: You retained all of your customers in 2020 for the second consecutive year. How did you do that?

BC: At times a customer can suddenly become very clear about the benefits of dealing with someone like us.

I get that if a fleet wants to be part of a big leasing company, they know they are going to be one of many. But can they pick up the phone and speak to their account manager without going through to voicemail or call queuing, when they are really in trouble?

It's at times like that where value comes into question, and when you're tendering out there in this market, there's sometimes a big difference between the price you pay and the value you get.

I think perhaps that's where some of our customers' mindsets move to. Some of those people who were operating multi-bid fleets have wanted to change that structure and we have seen an increase in the number of customers moving to sole supply with us.

FN: You also saw a number of old customers return to you in 2020. Why?

BC: At the end of the day, sometimes you will not be able to hold on to a client forever for whatever reason; their business may be taken over by a different company, for example. Those businesses will leave you, but the professionalism, respect and the service we give them as a departing client means the door stays open.

As they begin to experience life on the other side, they can immediately benchmark what the service is like, and it comes down to that value piece.

They will ring us and usually say, 'Listen, do you fancy quoting us for a couple of vehicles?' and that's often the start of the return of them doing business with us.

Creswick expects to see JCT600 VLS grow further in the next 12 months, although he stresses it will be organic instead of chasing new business.

"I anticipate growth in the wider market, particularly because a lot of the people who took cash are now looking at alternative structures in terms of salary sacrifice for EV, or even just on a business contract hire structure, because the BIK is so minimal now," he says.

"There will also be personal growth in terms of what we secure from a new business perspective.

"Some companies may want to charge around the country with field teams of salespeople and really want to aggressively push and grow, but that's not what we are as a business.

"The one thing I've said to the team is that the most important thing is to look after our existing customers at all times and if we continue to do what we do today, then we will.

"It's also about making sure that you are investing – in both internal and customer-facing systems – to keep delivering the best possible service we can at all times."

FleetNews AWARDS Summer Garden Party 2021

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Very customer-focused, with direct conversations and one-to-one relationships, JCT demonstrated its understanding of the marketplace today and the emerging trends, backed by lots of positive customer feedback. It clearly evidenced its outstanding support for fleets during Covid, including fiscal help.

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

The UK's No1 fleet show delivers telling insights

Fleet and suppliers return to face-to-face contact and discuss the pressing challenges facing business professionals post-lockdown

Fleet decision-makers were given a wealth of priceless information at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live that they can now look to implement into their policies.

Industry executives descended on the NEC in Birmingham over two days earlier this month to hear from a number of experts on a range of topics.

The biggest event of its kind in the fleet industry offered visitors the chance to attend 20 seminar sessions covering the issues and long-term challenges of moving people and goods around.

Scan here to see content from Fleet & Mobility Live 2021

It attracted directors and executives involved in fleet and transport, travel and mobility, procurement, finance and HR and gave them a unique opportunity to debate, discuss, network and negotiate new contract deals with a range of key suppliers.

A number of electric and hybrid cars were on display from the likes of Ford, Nissan, Polestar and Volvo.

Topics covered included transport decarbonisation and what it means for fleets, future tax predictions, driver training and risk assessment challenges brought on by Covid-19, getting the most out of telematics, driver and staff recruitment, how salary sacrifice schemes can encourage employees into electric vehicles (EVs), alternative fuels, autonomous technology and implementing eMobility strategies, among many others.

All sessions were curated for fleet decision-makers by fleet decision-makers, and identified the pressing issues facing fleet and mobility professionals to form the best practice sessions.

The Fleet & Mobility Live Visitor Advisory Board is made up of leading professionals in the fleet and mobility industries to ensure relevant and topical content is delivered in the annual event's three theatre areas: Operational Excellence, Strategy and Benefits Box.

Benefits Box was new for 2021 and was especially tailored for HR and finance executives involved in company car provision, through salary sacrifice or PCH and affinity schemes.

The board will soon begin work on planning topics to be covered at next year's event, taking place on October 11 and 12. Keep up to date with developments by registering your interest at:

fleetandmobilitylive.com/register-your-interest-2022

Each of this year's sessions were recorded and are available to watch on demand. To read more about the sessions and to access the videos follow the Fleet & Mobility Live tag on our website:

www.fleetnews.co.uk/fml

VIEWS FROM THE SHOW FLOOR

"It's one of the first fleet events since lockdown and I'm really excited to be here. There's something for every fleet manager."
Fraser Crichton, corporate fleet operations manager, Dundee City Council

"This event gives our industry the opportunity to come together and look at new ideas, talk about how we're coping post-pandemic and what the future holds for us."
Matthew Hammond, head of fleet, M Group Services

"It's a great opportunity for me to network with a lot of potential suppliers."
Colin Jones, fleet manager- Cancer Research UK

"It's a great venue with loads of great exhibitors. The conversations around EVs and salary sacrifice we've had over the two days have been fantastic."
Matthew Walters, head of consultancy services and customer value, LeasePlan

"There's so much for everyone involved in the fleet industry. There's great networking opportunities."
Amanda Bullough, EMEA benefits lead, Siemens

"It's a good opportunity to get a deep understanding of what's happening in the industry."
Julie Madoui, fleet manager, Kier Fleet Services

"There's a wide range of audience from HR and procurement to fleet managers so, for us, it's the ultimate exhibition."
Ranjit Grewal, head of business development, TCH Leasing

"We've been living in a digital world, so it's nice to be able to reconnect."
Sean Briggs, business development manager, Tusker

TAKING THE SHOCK OUT OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE TYRE MANAGEMENT

The development of battery electric vehicle-specific tyres is bringing a new challenge to decision-makers who are electrifying their fleets. *Ben Rooth* reports

From areas such as charging to driver behaviour to tax considerations, the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is having widespread implications on how fleets are managed.

These changes also include tyre policies. Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) tend to be heavier than their internal combustion engine (ICE) counterparts and the instant torque their motors deliver also places extra strain on the tyres. In addition, a low rolling resistance is key to maximising a vehicle's range.

These demands have led tyre manufacturers to develop BEV-specific tyres which, as well as meeting these requirements, also aim to reduce noise to capitalise on the refinement EVs offer.

These tyres tend to be fitted as standard by car and van makers, but they mean that fleet decision-makers operating BEVs need to ensure their tyre management policies take these considerations into account.

"Tyres are an extremely sophisticated piece of technology which we all too commonly take for granted," says Stuart Jackson, chair of tyre safety charity TyreSafe.

"However, drivers of BEVs must be aware of how different they could be to those on other cars, and, when it's time to replace the original tyres, owners need to ensure they are buying the right specification."

Kwik Fit recommends fleets adopt a like-for-like replacement policy wherever possible, due to BEV tyre development still being in its relative infancy.

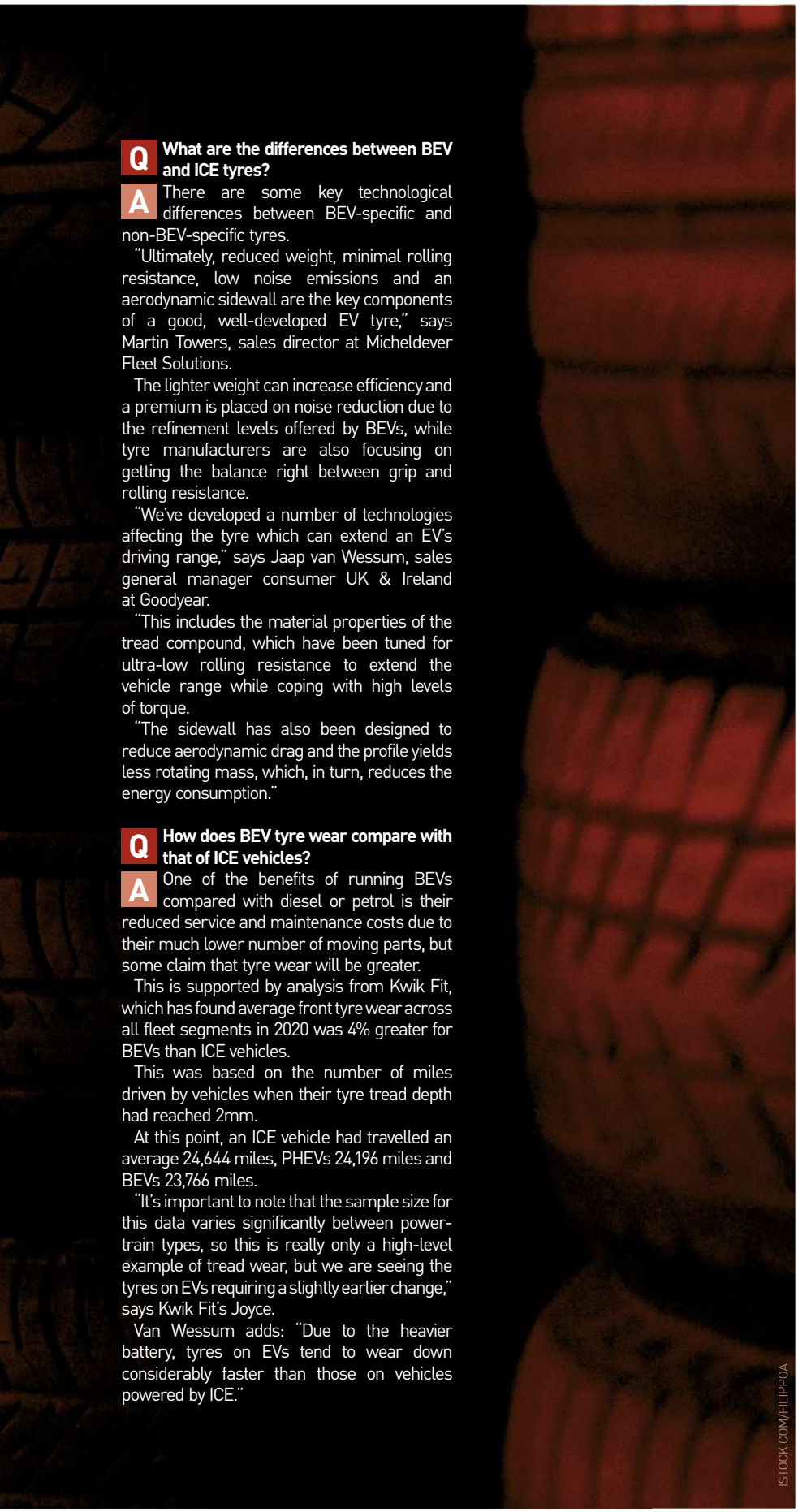
"There may be constraints on homologated tyre availability in the short term as tyre manufacturers scale to meet the demand," says Dan Joyce, fleet director at Kwik Fit.

"As the EV car parc grows, we will see tyre manufacturers increase their development of non-original equipment (OE) alternatives to homologated options and as more data becomes available, we will work with our fleet customers to include these within their policies wherever suitable."

While there are now new factors to consider when considering a tyre management policy, the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) warns fleet decision-makers not to overlook the basics.

"The fundamentals of good practice remain the same as for any other approach to tyre management," says Lorna McAtear, AFP board member and fleet manager at National Grid. "This means safety is the guiding principle and the written policy should be based around factors such as minimum tread depths and regular visual checks."

Here, we look at four key questions facing fleet operators when it comes to BEV tyre policies.



Q What are the differences between BEV and ICE tyres?

A There are some key technological differences between BEV-specific and non-BEV-specific tyres.

"Ultimately, reduced weight, minimal rolling resistance, low noise emissions and an aerodynamic sidewall are the key components of a good, well-developed EV tyre," says Martin Towers, sales director at Micheldever Fleet Solutions.

The lighter weight can increase efficiency and a premium is placed on noise reduction due to the refinement levels offered by BEVs, while tyre manufacturers are also focusing on getting the balance right between grip and rolling resistance.

"We've developed a number of technologies affecting the tyre which can extend an EV's driving range," says Jaap van Wessum, sales general manager consumer UK & Ireland at Goodyear.

"This includes the material properties of the tread compound, which have been tuned for ultra-low rolling resistance to extend the vehicle range while coping with high levels of torque.

"The sidewall has also been designed to reduce aerodynamic drag and the profile yields less rotating mass, which, in turn, reduces the energy consumption."

Q How does BEV tyre wear compare with that of ICE vehicles?

A One of the benefits of running BEVs compared with diesel or petrol is their reduced service and maintenance costs due to their much lower number of moving parts, but some claim that tyre wear will be greater.

This is supported by analysis from Kwik Fit, which has found average front tyre wear across all fleet segments in 2020 was 4% greater for BEVs than ICE vehicles.

This was based on the number of miles driven by vehicles when their tyre tread depth had reached 2mm.

At this point, an ICE vehicle had travelled an average 24,644 miles, PHEVs 24,196 miles and BEVs 23,766 miles.

"It's important to note that the sample size for this data varies significantly between power-train types, so this is really only a high-level example of tread wear, but we are seeing the tyres on EVs requiring a slightly earlier change," says Kwik Fit's Joyce.

Van Wessum adds: "Due to the heavier battery, tyres on EVs tend to wear down considerably faster than those on vehicles powered by ICE."

ISTOCK.COM/FILIPPOA

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Richard Bezzant, marketing director, Michelin UK

At Michelin, offering everyone a better way forward is our mission. Everything we do is focused on making mobility safer, more efficient, more sustainable and more accessible. Thanks to continued annual investment of more than €600m (£510m) in research and development, we can offer a great choice of tyres for every vehicle on the road, including the demands of electric vehicles (EVs).

But, when it comes to choosing and maintaining tyres for an EV, there are additional factors to consider. For example, an EV is likely to be heavier than its petrol or diesel equivalent, so the tyres must have adequate load capacity. EVs also deliver high torque when pulling away from a standstill and, due to having near-silent powertrains, they need quiet tyres.

Many factors will also influence the life of your EV tyres and it is knowing what these are which is important to understand.

Some EVs are designed for efficiency, range and low running costs at relatively low speeds – while others are high performance vehicles and require the handling and traction of a sports tyre.

The good news is that Michelin makes tyres for every situation, whether your focus is on high performance, maximum range or minimum noise.

This includes tyres designed specifically for EVs – developed on the back of more than six seasons of pioneering involvement in Formula E and ongoing development of fuel-efficient tyres for many decades.

MICHELIN

Q What are the effects of fitting non-BEV-specific tyres to a BEV?

A Safety charity Tyresafe warns BEV owners that fitting a non-BEV-specific tyre could result in loss of range, increased noise, accelerated wear and the risk of failing while being driven, which could result in a serious incident.

Micheldever's Towers adds: "Firstly, (non-BEV-specific tyres) will certainly reduce the range the vehicle will be able to travel between charges and this will be true whether you are fitting single, axle pair or full set replacements.

"Secondly, and this is particularly an issue with single replacement due to damage, replacing a BEV-specific tyre with a standard product will cause handling issues.

"This is mainly due to the weight of the tyres, but can also be as a result of the difference in grip, as EV tyres will have far better rolling resistance characteristics than standard ones."

Towers adds there may also be a greater requirement within the EV market to ensure the tread depth on tyres on the same axle does not have too big a differential, as this could also cause handling issues.

"From a regulation and legality perspective, what's important is to fit tyres that are the correct size, load index and speed index applications," he adds. "Something EV drivers should pay particular attention to, however, is the importance of routine tyre inspections."

Brian Porteous, technical manager at Michelin, wants to see more data from "everyday journeys" before he forms a definitive opinion on the impact of fitting non-BEV-specific tyres to BEVs.

"Some BEVs have larger diameter tyres to help reduce rolling resistance, with fewer revolutions and less flexing leading theoretically to reduced tyre wear," he says.

"However, the torque in BEVs is typically higher than for ICE vehicles and they tend to spend more time in urban environments, both of which increase wear.

"For now, it looks like tyre wear rates will likely continue to be dictated by driving style, road conditions and the type of journey, just as they have always been."

British Gas fits all its vans with non-BEV-specific Michelin CrossClimate tyres for the all-year round grip they offer and has found they last more than twice as long on BEVs than on diesels.

"Lots of people say you use loads of tyres on BEVs because they're much heavier, but we're not. It has gone the other way around," says Steve Winter, British Gas head of fleet.

"We're seeing far less tyre wear to the extent that we had Michelin check our tyres because we wanted to be absolutely certain that we were right.

"We reckon our tyres go on now for the best part of 40,000 miles, when previously we'd been seeing them lasting 15,000 miles on a diesel van."

Winter thinks part of this may be because the company is switching from Volkswagen Caddy diesel vans to larger Vauxhall e-Vivaro BEV models – so, instead of using car tyres, their new vehicles use van tyres, which are bigger and have stiffer sidewalls.

"I think the pure electric drivetrains are also a bit more gentle on tyres, because of the way they take up drive, the way it steers and manoeuvres," he adds.

"I also think our engineers drive their BEVs more carefully because they want to maximise their range so they can get home at night."

Q What about special tyres for plug-in hybrid vehicles?

A Unlike for BEVs, tyre manufacturers do not make PHEV-specific products, although they may be fitted with tyres with a higher load rating compared with ICE vehicles to reflect their greater weight.

However, Towers believes fleets certainly need to be "more aware" of the tyres that they are fitting to their PHEVs.

"I believe that they need to have a more product-led approach," he says.

"This means choosing what is right for the vehicle rather than the generic fleet 'one sizes fits all' approach we are currently seeing for ICE vehicles."

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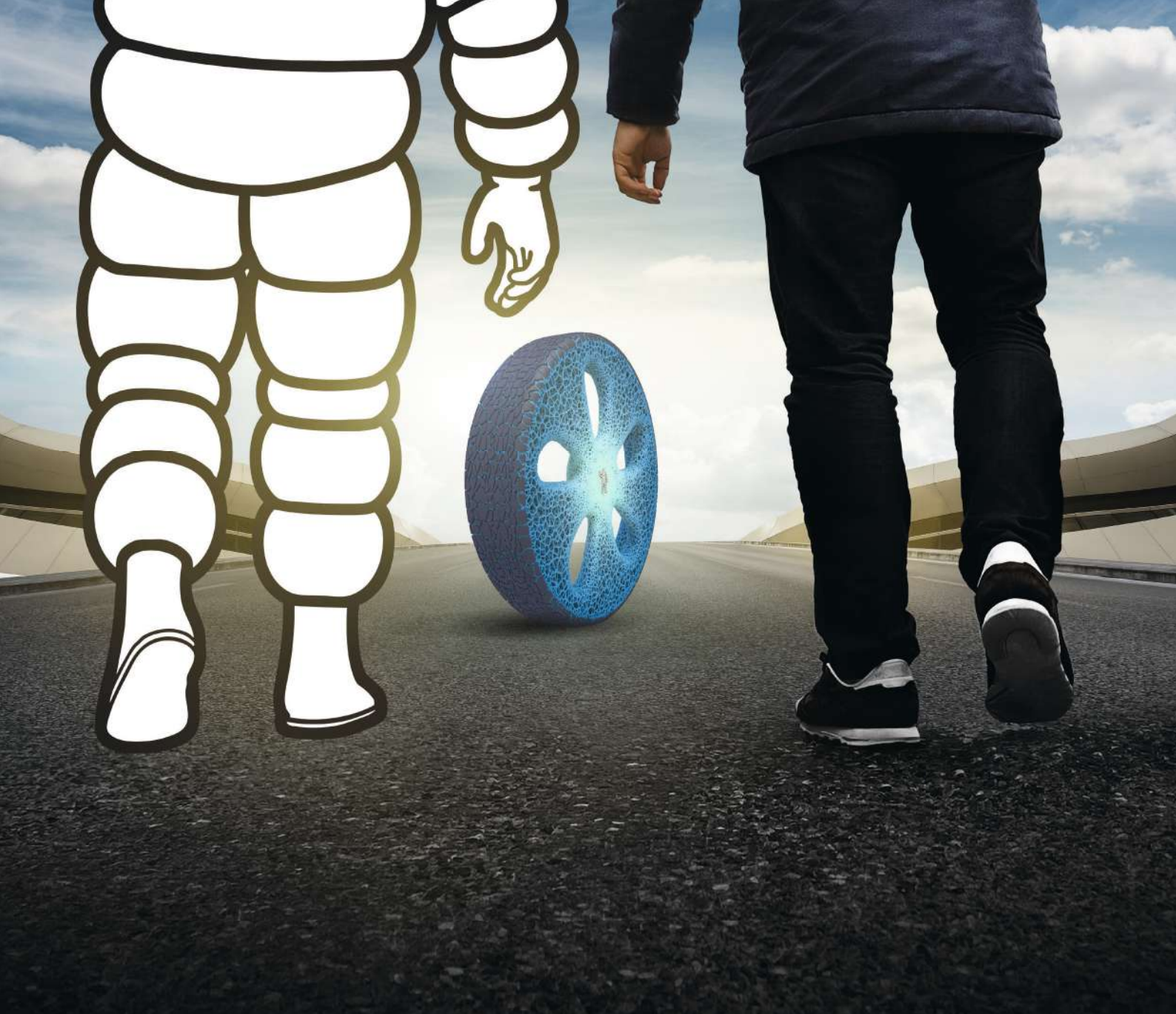

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Reflex Vehicle Hire

FACE facts – how Reflex is helping fleets adapt to change

Fleet operators are used to adapting to the constantly shifting sands of the transport environment in which they work, but the next decade is set to bring unprecedented challenges.

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Fleets have identified four key requirements, summarised as FACE (Flexible, Accessible, Connected, Electric), which can be used to identify the suppliers with the best strategic fit for their needs.

Oliver Waring

1. Flexible

Businesses need to be agile to adapt to change, and that includes their cars and vans. The past few years have highlighted how long-term vehicle funding is inflexible and costly in uncertain times. Contracts that lock companies into three- or four-year agreements for vehicle supply are difficult and expensive to change. But there is a better way. The Reflex way.

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Lisa Spong

"Reflex Vehicle Hire operates a connected fleet that transforms the management of hire vehicles."

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Reflex Vehicle Hire is supporting the industry on the Road to Zero with a growing range of electrified vehicles and initiatives to help fleet managers expand their knowledge of plug-in technology. Our Reflex Renewable Drive programme gets fleet managers behind the wheel of new electric vehicles to expose them to a different driving experience, including recharging. From this foundation, managers can talk to board members and drivers about the road ahead and provide valuable insights on the pros and cons of the change to zero emission transport.

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PEUGEOT 308

The 308 steps up a gear in style and offers greater choice of powertrains

By Matt de Prez

The humble C-segment hatch has evolved in recent years as an influx of premium-badged models has forced mainstream brands to up their game. Peugeot has responded to the trend with the new third-generation 308 by offering a wider choice of powertrains, more focus on ride and handling and sharper styling to boost desirability.

The latest 308 better represents the brand's intentions to ride the coat-tails of the premium segment. Perhaps that's why the new car is the first to wear Peugeot's new badge.

On looks alone the new model scores highly. While it retains some of Peugeot's signature styling details, like the 'tiger paw' rear lights and fang-shaped daytime running lights, the new 308 looks more purposeful and upmarket than any previous Peugeot.

On the inside, Peugeot's unique i-cockpit – a layout that places the steering wheel beneath the instrument cluster – remains, which may disappoint some. We've criticised the set-up in the past for its non-conventional seating position and the same issues are apparent in the new car.

It requires a raised seating position, which goes against the car's sporty pretensions, while the steering wheel must be adjusted to a lower-than-usual spot just to get a decent look at the dials.

Driving position aside, the rest of the 308's interior could easily impress buyers of premium models like the Audi A3 and Mercedes-Benz A-Class.

A key change is the 308's all-new infotainment system, which provides much crisper graphics and, crucially, a more responsive interface. The majority of the car's controls are housed within the touchscreen and are now much more straightforward to access. The system, which is fitted across the range, can also receive over-the-air software updates.

A smaller touchscreen beneath the main 10-inch display provides shortcuts to key functions, which can be customised by the driver. It's a much cleaner solution than physical buttons and offers improved usability.

The 308's upmarket interior is complemented by high levels of refinement on the move. We were impressed at how little wind and road noise is audible while driving at motorway speeds. There's little to criticise when it comes to driveability, in fact. The chassis is well balanced, giving a good degree of ride comfort along with competent handling.

Initially, there's a choice of one petrol, one diesel and two plug-in hybrid engines. A fully electric model will also be offered, in 2023.

The 1.2-litre petrol acts as the entry point to the range. It's a three-cylinder unit, so needs to be revved quite hard to get moving. Still, it serves up 130PS and should be able to achieve close to 50mpg.

Fleets that need a more efficient 308 might be tempted by the diesel, which offers the same 130PS power output as the petrol but should achieve 60mpg. Both come exclusively with an eight-speed automatic gearbox but feel underpowered and unrefined when compared with the Hybrid models.

Offered in 180PS and 225PS guises, they utilise a 1.6-litre petrol engine and electric motor. A 12.4kWh battery provides an official zero-emissions range of 37 miles.

The hybrid models are more responsive, more efficient and more tax friendly, although prices start at £33,000 – some £9,000 more than the base petrol 308.

Despite carrying a weight disadvantage of around 300kg, the extra kilos are not particularly noticeable, and the overall package feels well resolved.

The new 308 represents the next chapter for Peugeot as it becomes a more premium-oriented brand within the Stellantis stable. I-cockpit gripes aside, it's a mighty fine effort.

	FLEET PICK PEUGEOT 308 HYBRID 180 ALLURE
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£33,000
Monthly BIK (20%)	13%/£71
Class 1A NIC	£592
Annual VED	£0 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	TBC
Fuel cost (ppm)	TBC
AFR (ppm)	14
Running cost (4yr/80k)	TBC
CO_2 (g/km)	25g/km
MPG/Range (WLTP)	TBC/37 miles

The steering wheel sited beneath the instrument cluster may not suit all

TOYOTA YARIS CROSS

Low CO_2 emissions give Toyota's first compact crossover an edge in already crowded SUV sector

By Andrew Ryan

The march of the SUV has been relentless over the past few years, with barely a week seeming to go by without the launch of a new model or a facelift to an established one.

Among the latest entrants is Toyota's Yaris Cross. Based on the same platform as the Yaris supermini but offering a higher ride and some styling cues taken from its Rav4 big brother, it is the manufacturer's first compact crossover.

This is an already crowded sector with rivals including the Ford Puma, Seat Arona and Nissan Juke, each offering impressive all-round packages, but the Yaris Cross has an ace up its sleeve – its CO_2 emissions.

These start from 100g/km and, although lower emissions are achieved by compact crossovers such as the Kia Niro PHEV and Hyundai Kona EV, plug-ins like these are not always suitable or available to drivers. They also have higher P11D prices.

Non-plug-in compact crossovers are not able to offer CO_2 as low as the Yaris Cross. Powered by the same 114PS 1.5-litre hybrid engine already seen in the Yaris, it offers drivers lower benefit-in-kind tax bills and gives employers a more environmentally-friendly option.

This is partly due to improvements made by Toyota to the latest generation of its hybrid powertrain.

The manufacturer says these include the lithium-ion battery which can regenerate twice the energy under braking than the previous generation could, offering a higher percentage of EV driving on urban journeys.

Our experience on the test route supported Toyota's claim: on the mix of urban roads, faster A- and B-roads, and dual carriageways, it ran on electric-only for up to half of the trip, returning an average fuel economy of 61.3mpg, close to the official combined figure of up to 64.2mpg.

The Yaris Cross's impressive efficiency was complemented by the driving experience.

For a small SUV, the steering had a nice direct feel to it, while the ride had a decent balance of comfort and sporty handling.

The cabin is a nice place to be as well.

Yaris Cross is 90mm taller than its Yaris sibling so has a more commanding driving position and, as it's a Toyota, build quality is unsurprisingly good.

The interior design is smart and functional and the infotainment system is much-improved compared with previous Toyota models.

Five trim levels are available: Icon, Design, Excel, Dynamic and Premiere Edition. Toyota expects Design to be the most popular, accounting for 50% of sales.

While the majority of models are front-wheel drive, Yaris Cross is also available in Dynamic and Permiere Edition trims with all-wheel drive with a price premium of £2,360.

It also expects Yaris Cross to become its second-best selling model in the UK and, based on our experiences, it should find plenty of customers within the fleet sector.

	FLEET PICK YARIS CROSS 1.5H DESIGN TECH
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£24,435
Monthly BIK (20%)	£98
Class 1A NIC	£809
Annual VED	£150 then £145
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,001 (33%)
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.80
AFR (ppm)	14
Running cost (4yr/80k)	33.93
CO_2 (g/km)	103
MPG/Range (WLTP)	62.8mpg

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward

Something happened recently that has never occurred before in hundreds of thousands of miles of driving all over the world: I had a tyre blow out on the motorway. I was only going at 64mph and managed to get the car onto the hard shoulder, not a smart motorway, fortunately.

I called the breakdown assist number and within 45 minutes a truck arrived and took us to a place of safety (the services) but could not take us home. He just operated locally.

We tried to find a tyre from a local stockist, but Saturday afternoon, none were open, and of course, no spare wheel, and the tyre was well beyond repair. The car was a test vehicle from the manufacturer's press office, so it was decided after many phone calls to leave the car at the services and be collected many hours later by the manufacturer's Assist company.

I got a lift home with a friend, not an ideal situation.

In this instance, nobody got hurt, we got home and the car made it back to the garage. But the attitude of 'I don't need cover, because it won't happen to me', has certainly changed. I have also changed my mind on smart motorways, as I did think what a good idea using all lanes, but seeing all those vehicles hurtling past within inches of the car on the hard shoulder was quite frightening, and would be terrifying in a live lane.

SMMT test day

I went to SMMT Test Day North at Wetherby Racecourse, where many manufacturers brought their latest models. But it was noticeable just how many electric vehicles were there; you could see them, but couldn't hear them, and they tend to sneak up on you in the paddock area. But it was also good to see (and hear) some fairly high-powered petrol-engined cars. When one 'fired-up' everyone stopped to listen to the roar and the exhaust note, a pleasant change.

ID4 and Enyaq

I've had a VW ID4 and Škoda Enyaq on test, both pretty much the same technology and both impressive. But I was pleasantly surprised just how quickly they charged using a local 50kW charge point, around 40 minutes to get in 150 miles. Charging from home is ok, but experience has taught me to use the 50kW chargers, when possible, sit in the car, do a bit of work, catch up on emails or go shopping.

CITROËN C3 AIRCROSS

Aircross facelift is more about improving the interior, but the front end is bolder

The facelifted C3 Aircross has been given a more aggressive look

By Matt de Prez

In line with Citroën's commitment to provide affordable and comfort-focused cars, the C3 Aircross has been given a mid-life facelift.

A bolder front end gives the car a more aggressive look than before, but the cute compact SUV has lost none of its charm and retains its curvaceous and quirky appearance.

Most of the changes focus on making the C3 Aircross a nicer place to be. Top-spec models are now fitted with the carmaker's Advanced Comfort seats, which debuted in the C4 Cactus and now feature across its line-up.

There is also a redesigned centre console, which incorporates cup holders and an enclosed storage compartment, to aid practicality.

Specification has been boosted, with parking sensors, LED headlights and smartphone connectivity fitted as standard to all models.

There are three powertrain options. The sweetest is the 110PS PureTech petrol with a six-speed manual gearbox. It's not a particularly engaging car to drive, but it whisks along happily enough with reasonable mid-range power. CO_2 emissions are a tad high, at 134g/km, due to a lack of hybridisation, but low prices mean benefit-in-kind figures remain competitive.

For those that want more than 60mpg, the BlueHDI 110 remains available as one of the few diesel-powered compact SUVs still on offer. The engine noise disappears on the move, although it lacks the rev-happy character of the petrol.

The only self-shifting C3 Aircross is the range-topping PureTech 130. The six-speed automatic suits the car's easy-to-drive nature perfectly, but bumps it into the 32% tax band.

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTD

The GTD is a real driver's car with great fuel economy, ride comfort and practicality

GTD is our pick of the Golfs, however the benefit-in-kind tax rate may be a deal breaker

By Matt de Prez

The Golf GTI may have become the ubiquitous hot hatch, but it wasn't until the sixth-generation and the introduction of a GTD model that company car drivers could enjoy the benefits of Volkswagen's sporty-yet-practical hatch.

With 200PS available from its 2.0-litre diesel engine, the latest GTD is the most fun-to-drive version to date. It's equipped with a seven-speed DSG and delivers punchy performance.

In fact, the torquier diesel actually feels more brisk in real-world driving than its more powerful petrol-powered brother. It picks up and gets going with nothing more than a brush of the throttle.

Where the car really shines, however, is its long-distance fuel consumption. You can easily achieve 60mpg in the GTD, with even spirited driving netting a figure close to 50mpg.

With CO_2 emissions of 136g/km, thanks to a lack of hybridisation, the GTD attracts a benefit-in-kind rate of 31% – around £172 per month. That's still £500 per year less than a GTI, but no match for the plug-in hybrid GTE's £42 per month figure.

There's no denying the GTD's credibility as a driver's car. It feels planted, aggressive and, most importantly, enjoyable, while delivering outstanding fuel economy, ride comfort and practicality.

If we had to pick a 'hot' Golf purely on the merits of how good it is as a car then the GTD would be our pick of the range. However, despite having the cheapest list price of its siblings, the tax advantages of the GTE are too significant to overlook.

HONDA CR-V

Easy to achieve fuel economy claims in this sweet-handling compact SUV

By Jake Groves

Honda has completely refreshed its compact SUV, the HR-V. It's now only available as a hybrid as the brand moves to make all its models electrified by 2022, and this latest HR-V values simplicity and practicality over everything else.

Honda says the first demonstrators will arrive next month, with the first customer deliveries in the first months of 2022.

In the UK, there are three HR-V variants – Elegance (starting at £26,960) is well-equipped with a nine-inch infotainment system, heated front seats, keyless entry and start and parking aids; Advance (from £29,210) includes a clever air diffusion system that blows air around the car rather than directly at the occupants, a heated steering wheel, wireless phone charger and hands-free tailgate; Advance Style (from £31,660) is all about visual upgrades.

Inside, you sit high looking through a short windscreen and at a well-organised dashboard. There's a new-generation infotainment system similar to that originally found in the Honda E, which is high up in your eyeline and the part-analogue, part-digital instruments are easy to read, if a little plain.

Instruments are easy to read, if a little plain

The top half of the dashboard makes use of high quality, soft padded materials and a thick-rimmed steering wheel. That material quality lowers the further down you look – the centre console is trimmed in very scratchy plastics.

There are plenty of storage cubbies, including good-size door bins and spaces for phones and similar small items below the infotainment screen.

Rear space is impressive, with only headroom for the tallest of adults being affected ever so slightly by the HR-V's sloping roofline. Honda's Magic Seats allow you to flip up the seat bases so you can stand tall things in the rear footwells, but the boot's 316-litre load area is paltry, even compared with the form-over-function Vauxhall Mokka or Nissan Juke – despite the Honda being around 300mm longer than both of these rivals.

That hybrid powertrain is shared with the Honda Jazz, albeit with a modest power boost. That means there's a 1.5-litre petrol engine, a battery pack and two electric motors driving the front wheels. A total of 131PS is available, meaning a 10.6sec 0-62mph time, a fuel economy claim of 52.3mpg and CO_2 emissions of 122g/km.

It's not very fast, but the hybrid powertrain works best in town – utilising instant acceleration from the electric motors. There's a completely seamless transition between electric and engine power, too.

But there's not a great deal of difference between the economy, normal or sport drive modes. However, that fuel economy figure is easily achievable, along with Honda's claim that the hybrid system in the HR-V 'achieves a higher proportion of electric drive time' than other hybrids. We managed 53mpg during our test – better than the combined claims – and that's with us accelerating hard on some twisty country roads in sport, as well as coasting through sleepy towns and motorway driving in eco and normal modes.

The biggest disadvantage is how loud the engine is when you really want to accelerate; even slight inclines wake it up and, if you want to maintain your speed, the engine emits a loud groan.

But the HR-V makes up for this in the way it drives. It feels assured and solid on the road, with impressive ride quality regardless of the road surface. We'd safely say it's one of the sweetest handling small SUVs on the market right now.

The HR-V, then, will really appeal to those looking for a user-friendly and low cost fleet family car.

	FLEET PICK HONDA HR-V ADVANCE
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£28,985
Monthly BIK (20%)	28%/£135
Class 1A NIC	£1,120
Annual VED	£170 then £145
RV (4yr/80k)	£10,077/34%
Fuel cost (ppm)	12
AFR (ppm)	14
Running cost (4yr/80k)	39
CO_2 (g/km)	122
Mpg	52.3

VOLVO XC60

New engine in the PHEV versions means the BIK tax bill will be halved

By Matt de Prez

The bumpers have been updated as part of the XC60's refresh

It's not often that we test a new car, only to find out the manufacturer has subsequently made further revisions to make it a more compelling choice. But, that's exactly what's happened with the new Volvo XC60.

Well, I say new, it's really a mild facelift – refreshed bumpers, updated specs and a new Android-based infotainment system are the key highlights here. Otherwise, the XC60 remains a comfy, elegant and practical SUV.

It's a different story with the plug-in hybrid models, however.

Initially, only one was offered: the 400PS T8, acting as the range flagship. Volvo has since added a more potent Polestar-engineered version and a lower-powered and more affordable T6.

The big news is that all XC60 plug-in hybrids built from November will be fitted with a new 18.8kWh battery, which boosts the zero-emission range to 46 miles – dropping the car's benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax from 15% to 7%.

While the cars we tested missed out on the battery upgrade, the XC60 still impressed. The new infotainment system is a welcome addition, bringing a higher resolution instrument cluster, built-in Google Maps and Google Assistant voice control. It provides enhanced usability when compared with the outgoing Sensus set-up, albeit with slightly cheaper-looking graphics.

Inscription models offer a more cushioned and relaxing ride, while R Design versions feel sharper. We'd advise against derivatives that come with 20-inch-and-larger wheels, as the ride is more jiggly and tyres will cost more to replace.

While mild hybrid petrol and diesel options are also offered, it's the three plug-in hybrid models – priced from £53,020, that make sense for fleet.

AUDI Q3 45 TFSI E

Battery or engine power? This elegant SUV will decide for itself which mode is best

By Mike Roberts

The sloping roofline might not suit tall travellers in the back seats

On looks alone, the new plug-in hybrid Audi Q3 TFSI e SUV is impressive, but add an 11% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rate on entry-level models and it has all the ingredients for a great fleet offering.

The four-cylinder 1.4 TFSI petrol engine powering both new Q3 models contributes 150PS output, and this is supplemented by the 85kW of power delivered by the electric motor. Together, they generate 180kW of system power (245PS).

We tested the range-topping Vorsprung and were impressed with its performance. With an official range of 28 miles on the battery and CO_2 emissions of 46g/km, this variant falls into the 13% company car BIK rate, while some models lower down the range have emissions of 36g/km and an official battery range of 31.7 miles so sit in the 11% band. P11D prices start at £38,280 for the Technik, climbing to £49,720 for the Vorsprung.

Acceleration was impressive and the car engaging to drive. We left it in auto mode for most of our journeys, so the car decides for itself whether to use battery or engine power – such is the smooth transition between the two that, without looking at the display unit, we couldn't obviously tell which one it had chosen.

The car has a nice-looking interior; all the dials and switches look and feel well built. A downside for some drivers is the boot space, which, with the inclusion of a battery, has reduced from 530 litres to 380.

The sloping roofline also means rear headspace can be compromised for taller rear passengers, but if you're a passenger of average height then it won't be a problem.

As you'd expect, our almost £50,000 range-topping model came packed with optional extras including adaptive suspension with damping control, panoramic glass sunroof and a Sonos sound system. Driver-assist features include Audi park assist, a 360-degree camera and adaptive cruise. As standard, every model gets cruise control, lane departure warning, rear parking sensors and pedestrian and cyclist detection.

AUDI E-TRON GT

'Crazy supercar' is a joy to use on a daily basis, but it lacks practicality

By Matt de Prez

Audi's e-Tron GT is an interesting concept. Not least because as little as three years ago it was nothing more than that – a concept – but now it's a fully fledged member of the Audi line-up.

Think of it as a sort of electrified cross between an A8 and an R8, with head-turning looks, effortless cruising capability and brutal acceleration.

While the e-Tron GT is not the first all-electric Audi, it was the first to be built from the ground up to be electric. Of course, a lot of the work done under the skin was by Porsche, because the e-Tron GT's sister car is the Taycan.

Pricing starts at more than £80,000, so this isn't a replacement for the A6 TDI. Rather, it serves as a flagship model to showcase what Audi's next-generation of electric models will offer.

Drivers fortunate enough to see it on their choice list will not be disappointed by the car's capabilities. And that's not just dynamic performance. Aside from its ultra-wide body being a tad tricky to squeeze into parking spaces, the e-Tron GT is an absolute joy to use on a daily basis.

The interior would benefit from some additional storage space

It's interior, while befitting of a car that can easily cost six figures with a few options, remains conventional in its layout and offers high levels of comfort on long journeys.

In terms of efficiency, there's more positive news. While the close-to-300-mile claimed range is a little out of reach in most circumstances, we were comfortably getting 250 miles from a charge and, on a longer trip, saw consumption of 3.3mi/kWh.

Charging is pretty straightforward too. There's a connector on both front wings, so you don't have to worry too much about how you park. The car also accepts rapid charging at speeds up to 270kW, adding 80% in less than half an hour.

Our test model was specified in range-topping Vorsprung trim, which includes air suspension and four-wheel steering. The resulting ride and handling characteristics are impeccable. Weight is always going be a factor in a car with a 93kWh battery and the e-Tron GT tips the scales at around 2.3 tonnes. Yet, it hides this remarkably well.

Power output is rated at 476PS, from the car's two electric motors. But up to 530PS can be deployed in short 'overboost' bursts. Floor the throttle and the e-Tron GT can reach 60mph from rest in four seconds. It's equally as rapid in the mid-range, although heavy-footed drivers will notice the battery level depletes almost as quickly.

An optional sound generator delivers a satisfying hum that accompanies the acceleration, making the car feel more conventional. It also utilises a two-speed gearbox, which gives the sensation of a kickdown function in a normal automatic.

Practicality is not the e-Tron GT's strongest attribute; it would benefit from some additional storage space in the cabin and rear seat passengers may find it a little cosy. The boot is fairly narrow, with a small opening, but it does offer 405 litres of space. There's an additional storage area under the bonnet, which is a good place to store the charging cables.

On the one hand, the e-Tron GT is a sensible electric saloon with attractive running costs but, on the other, it's a crazy futuristic supercar.

	FLEET PICK AUDI E-TRON GT QUATTRO
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£81,860
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£14
Class 1A NIC	£113
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£32,088/39%
Fuel cost (ppm)	5.5
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	79
CO_2 (g/km)	0
Range (miles)	298

SUZUKI SWACE FINAL TEST

HYBRID SZ5

By Jeremy Bennett

As we bid farewell to the Swace after a six-month loan the country is in the grip of a driver/fuel shortage, Brexit-related, media-induced spasm of panic buying at filling stations.

The combination of a 101PS, 1.8-litre petrol engine and a 71PS electric motor (aka 'normal hybrid') means Suzuki can claim an impressive, combined cycle 64.2mpg for the Swace with a total range of more than 700 miles on a full tank.

Thankfully, in completing a week of driving nearly 400 miles, I achieved 63.1mpg.

The cost of fuel was £39.29. Petrol and diesel prices have been increasing, from a relative flatline, since about November. A month previous the cost would've been £38.93, a year ago £32.70.

The Swace's drivetrain technology is good for the nerves right now and your finances in the longer term. Let's not forget its CO_2 emission figure of just 99g/km – respect for the planet and a respectable benefit-in-kind rate for 2021/22 of 23%. And that 1.8 engine is your only choice.

We say goodbye grateful for Swace's simplicity in providing economic and environmental benefits.

VW GOLF

GTE 1.4 TSI PHEV

By Matt de Prez

It's been busy at *Fleet News* and the Golf GTE has had its fair share of work, getting me to numerous events as well as running personal errands.

I've managed to clock up more than 1,000 miles in just a few weeks. With October bringing both sunshine and showers, darker evenings and cooler mornings, the GTE has taken all in its stride.

How efficient is it? After five months, I'm happy to report we've averaged 55mpg. Even the longest journeys, where the battery ends up fully depleted, have returned more than 50mpg.

The Golf always sets off in EV Mode, unless the battery is flat, offering a realistic range of around 28 miles. The engine kicks in automatically when the charge level reaches 10%. You can also choose Hybrid, by touching the Drive Mode button, for a mixture. We tend to use the latter, making use of the petrol engine for motorways and keeping the electric range for lower-speed work. If you use the sat-nav, the car will work out the best mix for you.

Aside from some slightly intrusive tyre noise on rougher motorway surfaces, the Golf is proving to be a perfectly adept long-distance car.

VOLVO XC40

T4 R DESIGN

By Mike Roberts

It's a great feeling travelling around your local area in a car using battery power with zero emissions.

It's how I would do all my city/town driving in our long-term plug-in hybrid Volvo XC40 if I could. But, along with an estimated 40% of the population of UK households, I don't have access to off-street parking

A public footpath lies between my front door and on-road parking so I can't have charging cables trailing from plug to car socket – I don't want to be responsible for tripping up neighbour Violet as she makes her way to the shops. My garage is away from the house and doesn't have electricity.

I've heard there are frames you can erect over the footpath to carry the cables, or pipework can be laid underneath the tarmac, which seems a bit drastic. It's a conundrum. How do your drivers overcome this? Suggestions welcome.

Experiences like this demonstrate why PHEVs are a useful stepping-stone to going fully electric, which in my case, I simply couldn't do, however big my desire to help the planet.

My lack of charging facilities, however, does not take away from the sheer joy I get from driving this car (albeit mostly in petrol mode).

I've attended a few concerts recently, most resulting in late-night motorway journeys home which have been a pleasurable experience thanks to the Volvo's high-level of comfort and excellent ride quality. The lane-assist feature has come in particularly handy in foggy conditions.

In fact, after several weeks in the car I've started considering which optional extras (and there are many on this test car) I couldn't do without – I'll share my findings soon.

Volvo is taking the XC40 for some routine maintenance – which was flagged up on the centre display and on a phone app. It's temporarily swapping it for a more powerful T5 version. I look forward to comparing the two.

Scan here to read extended test drives and previous reports

ŠKODA OCTAVIA IV

FINAL TEST

SE L 1.4 TSI PLUG-IN HYBRID

By Sarah Tooze

Our time in the Škoda Octavia plug-in hybrid hatchback has been brief – just three months – as we previously had the estate plug-in hybrid on test for six.

We preferred the hatchback's styling with its swooping roofline and larger Becrux anthracite multispoke wheels (a £910 option on our SE L model) and, although the estate offers a 640-litre boot (seats up), we still found the hatchback's 450-litre boot ample. In fact, it's one of the main reasons to choose the Octavia hatchback over Volkswagen Group stablemates the Seat Leon eHybrid and Volkswagen Golf plug-in hybrid. The Leon's boot is just 270 litres while the Golf is only marginally better at 273.

However, the Leon and Golf are still more desirable than the Octavia, which is reflected in the pence per mile (ppm) depreciation figures for four years and 80,000 miles on the running costs tool on the *Fleet News* website.

The Golf Style has the lowest depreciation at 28.88ppm, while the Leon in FR guise is 30.34ppm and the Octavia is 31.18ppm. The Octavia is more frugal for fuel at 8.43ppm, compared twith 8.52ppm in the Leon and 8.61ppm in the Golf.

It is on a par with the Leon for service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs at 3.90ppm (the Golf costs 3.91ppm).

For overall ppm (not including Class 1A NIC, VED or insurance), the Golf is the cheapest to run at 41.40ppm – 2ppm less than the Octavia (43.51ppm) and 1ppm cheaper than the Leon (42.76ppm).

All three offer 40-plus miles electric range (in the real world we had a range of 34 miles in the Octavia), putting them in 7% benefit-in-kind tax bracket. A 20% taxpayer will pay £460 in the Leon, £464 in the Octavia and £470 in the Golf.

For employers, NIC is again lowest with the Leon (£318), but the Octavia is just ahead of the Golf at £320 (versus £324).

MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

By Andrew Ryan

In a previous report, I've mentioned how our Mazda MX-30 mixes new with old, with the use of cork trim harking back to the manufacturer's origins as a sustainable cork company providing a stark contrast to its modern fully-electric drivetrain.

The interior also has another throwback to what seems like a previous era of cars – an infotainment system which doesn't rely on a touchscreen.

Instead, it uses a rotary dial positioned in the centre console just ahead of the gear selector.

I'm a big fan of this as I often find touchscreens fiddly to use, particularly when the vehicle is moving.

Menus on the infotainment system are arranged in a commonsense manner and it's proved easy to find any trip information I've been looking for, set destinations on the sat-nav, switch radio stations, change vehicle settings and so on.

The display on the screen itself is sharp and enhances the already impressive user experience.

One of the other benefits of this Mazda's set-up is that it allows the screen to be positioned right at the top of the centre console which makes it easier for me to glance quickly at it while driving.

FORD TRANSIT

CUSTOM TRAIL 300 L1H1 DOUBLE-CAB-IN-VAN 2.0 ECOBLUE

By Trevor Gehlcken

After six months, I am preparing to hand the keys of the Transit Custom back. So, here is my verdict.

It's the most luxurious van we have had on long term test, so Ford will not be surprised to learn that I love it to bits – so much so that a journalist from a rival publication phoned to ask me what the chances were of buying it when I had finished with it.

It's a van that has just about everything you could imagine as standard. Leather seats for six, more techo goodies than you could shake a stick at, around three cu m of loadspace in the back and a silky smooth diesel engine that won't leave you standing at the traffic lights Wacky Races-style.

It's been a faultless performer over 9,000 miles.

However, the bare floor in the back is quite badly scratched where I've been lugging heavy items in and out, so I'd recommend choosing a plastic or wooden floor to keep it fresh. And, rather annoyingly, on the near side of the van, some errant motorist has added a dent and two scratches.

These two problems apart, the Transit Custom goes back with my praises ringing in its 'ears'. In fact, I'm still toying with the idea of buying it myself.

SEAT LEON

1.4 E-HYBRID FR

By Gareth Roberts

Fully charged, the Seat Leon plug-in hybrid offers a claimed 40 miles of zero-emission driving. Three months into its tenure on the test car fleet, the best return remains at 30 miles.

With a round-trip to my office of 28 miles, it means it is possible to make the return journey in pure electric mode without the need to charge the Leon at work.

Plug it in, however, and the battery will be replenished in just a few hours, giving the ability to make even more of the 12.8kWh battery.

A full charge takes around three and three-quarter hours using a 3.6kW charging point or wall box unit. The car can also be recharged using the mains power supply at home, though Seat says it will take five hours and 48 minutes to fully recharge via a three-pin plug socket.

Assuming a tariff of 17p/kWh, filling it up from empty at home would cost £1.96, equating to 6.4p per mile. Take advantage of your electricity provider's cheaper night-time rate, however, and you'll bring those costs down.

A tariff of around 10p/kWh enables you to fully charge the Leon's battery for approximately £1.30, equating to about 5p per mile.

When travelling longer distances, hybrid mode enables the Leon to switch seamlessly between petrol and electric power.

The 12.8kWh battery and 85kW e-motor are supported by a 1.4-litre petrol engine, which drives the front axle through a six-speed twin-clutch automatic gearbox.

Combined output is a respectable 201PS and 258lb ft of torque and, with both power sources working together, 0-62mph can be achieved in 7.5 seconds.

The car's battery manager function enables it to automatically switch between electric and petrol power to achieve the best combination of fuel economy and battery life.

It is also possible to choose hybrid mode for parts of a journey that are on the motorway, saving the batteries for use in urban areas.

AUDI A3 FINAL TEST

40 TFSI E (204PS)

By Luke Neal

The Audi A3 40 TFSIe S Line has been on our test fleet since March and in the past six months has covered around 1,750miles. The majority of these have comprised short trips by colleague Sarah Tooze who was able to fully take advantage of the A3's 37-mile full electric range while also raving about the reassurance of the 1.4l petrol engine.

Sarah's charge time was around five hours using a domestic socket, which may put off drivers who don't have access to a fast charger.

However, the MyAudi app allows you to set the time and charge when it is convenient for you.

The Audi sits squarely as a Mercedes-Benz A250e rival. I had the pleasure of driving the A250e earlier this year. Both cars offer almost identical engine size, CO_2, price and EV-only range.

They have similar boots (the A250e is 30 litres larger), levels of interior space and comfort for passengers, and both offer similar levels of tech.

So, it comes down to personal preference. The Mercedes just edges ahead of the A3 for me in the upmarket feel and attention to interior detail which offer more of a sense of occasion than the Audi.

HYUNDAI TUCSON

PHEV ULTIMATE

By Stephen Briers

The long-term average fuel efficiency on the Tucson has now edged north of the 50mpg mark.

Spurred on by the fuel delivery crisis, a more judicious and diligent approach to charging has boosted the number of miles of fuel- and emissions-free driving on our plug-in hybrid.

Hyundai has got lots right with the Tucson, underlined by the fact the car is its biggest selling UK model. It's a pleasure to drive, particularly on long journeys.

However, as we enter our third month with the Tucson, it's a good time to reflect on some of the areas this aspirating premium challenger falls a little short compared with the best of German.

First, the default position for electronic handbrake hold is off, which means you have to switch it on for every journey. Second, the handbrake doesn't always engage when ignition is switched off. It's erratic: sometimes it engages, sometimes it doesn't.

We've also encountered a few technical gremlins. The speed camera alert sometimes picks up the wrong limit, lane-keeping assist is a little eager to engage and collision alert can sound unnecessarily.

WHICH EV IS BEST FOR YOUR FLEET?

www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data

Whether you are beginning your research or you have a good idea of what you're interested in, the electric car and van data tool can help you with all the essential information, from range, tax and charging data* for electric cars and vans to stats on acceleration, cargo volume and the number of seats.

Data supplied by EV-Database (EVDB)

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A SPECIAL REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY FleetNews

THE TRANSITION TO ELECTRIC

A look at the latest car and van to blaze Ford's 'all-electric by 2030' trail

In association with

Ford

Ford Mustang Mach-E – the thoroughbred EV

Ford's new all-electric SUV matches style and performance with highly competitive wholelife costs

FORD MUSTANG MACH-E
Usable battery: 70 kWh or 91 kWh (2022.25MY)
Range: 248 to 379 miles*
Benefit-in-kind tax: 1% (2021/22)
Order lead time: about 30 weeks
RRP: from £41,330

The only complaint that Ford received about its new Mustang Mach-E is highly revealing about the step change that the new all-electric car represents in terms of technology and design. The customer had a security light on their driveway, triggered by a movement sensor, and all through the evening their drive was cast in light as neighbours sneaked a closer look at the new, zero emission SUV.

The car allies elegantly sculpted lines, blistering acceleration (standstill to 62mph in just 5.8 seconds on the extended range AWD) and an exceptional range of up to 379 miles* between recharges to deliver premium performance. Carrying the legendary Mustang name, the Mustang Mach-E is the first pure electric stepping stone in Ford's commitment to offer battery electric (BEV) and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) across its entire UK car range by 2026, and BEV-only by 2030.

But with RRPs starting from £41,330, the Mustang Mach-E also represents something of a departure for Ford from its core fleet models, even if robust residual value (RV) forecasts and low service and maintenance projections are delivering attractive wholelife costs.

Neil Wilson, Ford Fleet Director, said the early indications are positive that the Mustang Mach-E has broad appeal across the fleet market.

"We are delighted that we have taken orders from a diverse range of fleet customers across many sectors – many of whom have not purchased a Ford passenger vehicle for some time," he said.

These include conquests from premium brands switching to an electric car for the first time, and seizing the opportunity to drive a luxury car with a 1% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax charge (BIK rates were correct at the time of printing and are based on taxation rates for 2021/22 tax year), as well as the first generation of EV adopters looking for a more aspirational car second time around.

Providing key information and demonstrator models to leasing companies has helped to secure the Mustang Mach-E highly competitive lease rates, catching the eye of user-choosers and delivering a convincing order take.

"Strong RVs are the result of a great product and we are already seeing that in the values and lease rates we are experiencing from all our funding providers today," said Wilson.

Ford is also, he added, 'laser-focused' on the quality of its channel mix, which means no Mustang Mach-E models are being supplied to short-cycle

* Based on full charge. Estimate range using Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP). 379-mile range applies to RWD model with extended range battery.
** RWD/AWD standard range only. Charge power can decrease with increasing state of charge. Actual charge times and charge speeds can vary based on different factors such

> "We are delighted that we have taken orders from a diverse range of fleet customers across many sectors – many of whom have not purchased a Ford passenger vehicle for some time"
>
> Neil Wilson, Ford Fleet Director

sectors, such as daily rental, which might undermine its residual values.

The Mustang Mach-E battery is backed up by an eight-year/100,000 mile Ford Warranty, which is reassuring for both its fleet and subsequent second-hand owners, while over-the-air software technology updates mean these first Mustang Mach-Es will have the same sophisticated systems when they are defleeted in three or four years' time as the 2025 version.

"We are confident that our strategy will support the strong residual values we are seeing today over the coming years," said Wilson. "So far, the RV forecasts are excellent and very well positioned versus other EV models."

The fewer moving parts in an electric motor should also translate into substantially lower service and maintenance costs, with Wilson suggesting scheduled servicing could be up to 50% cheaper than combustion engine vehicles. The SUV's advanced SYNC connectivity will also help fleets to minimise downtime, with on-board sensors able to detect and diagnose the earliest indications of a developing fault, so that it can be corrected over the air, or fixed in a workshop at the driver's convenience.

The biggest day-to-day savings, however, will be from the cost reductions of electricity compared with petrol or diesel, particularly if company car drivers can plug in their Mustang Mach-E at home. The Ford dealer network can provide a Ford Connected Wallbox enabling drivers to schedule the most efficient time to charge via the FordPass app and take advantage of off-peak electricity tariffs.

"We've engineered the vehicle in a way that enables customers to recharge the battery overnight with a wallbox – even the RWD Extended Range variant with up to 379 miles of range," said Wilson, adding that the all Mustang Mach-E models are supplied with both home and public charging cables to make it as easy and convenient as possible to recharge the batteries.

On the road, Ford is a founding member of the IONITY network of ultra-high speed chargers, where Mustang Mach-E drivers can enjoy a discounted tariff, although there are currently only 15 IONITY stations in the UK. The Mustang Mach-E is capable of recharging from 10-80% in just 38 minutes** at a 150kW rapid charge point.

Range should not, however, be an issue; even the standard range RWD model is capable of a WLTP-tested 273 miles*** between plug-ins, while the Extended Range model's 379 miles* is surely farther than any driver can realistically drive in a day. One recently set a new world record for EV efficiency by driving 840 miles from John o'Groats to Land's End with just 45 minutes of charging.

"The Intelligent Range predictions (of the FordPass app) can calculate the range remaining based on a driver's previous driving habits, weather forecasts and crowdsourced data collected from other Mustang Mach-Es," said Wilson.

as weather, temperature, driving behaviour, etc.
***Based on full charge. Estimated range using Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP). Actual range varies with conditions such as external elements, driving behaviours, vehicle maintenance and lithium-ion battery age.

FORD E-TRANSIT
Battery: 68kWh*
Range: up to 196 miles
Max payload: van – up to 1,758, chassis cab – up to 2,090
Loadspace: up to 15.1m3
Body shapes: panel van, double cab in van and chassis cab
Options: Three lengths, two roof heights
RRP: from £42,695
Order: from Q4 2021
Deliveries: from Q2 2022

Leading the charge: Ford E-Transit

Available as an all-electric van, double cab in van and chassis cab, the light commercial vehicle combines excellent loadspace and payload with a range of up to 196* miles

The demand for electric light commercial vehicles (LCVs) is soaring as cities introduce clean air zones and businesses commit to net zero carbon targets. But the specialist use cases and round-the-clock operation of LCVs make this a far more technically difficult sector to supply than the electric car market, where the sweetener of 1% benefit-in-kind tax** has swiftly overcome range and recharging anxieties.

As a leading force in the UK for LCVs, Ford's unveiling of the all-new, all-electric E-Transit, available to order from Q4 2021 with first deliveries Q2 2022, promises to be a decisive move in the decarbonisation of vans.

The manufacturer already has the Custom Plug-in Hybrid van in its range and is pursuing a similar launch strategy with the E-Transit, putting a demonstrator fleet of vehicles through their paces in a programme of real-world trials with businesses involved in different industries.

"As we move into full-scale production, we will be rolling out further long-term fleet demonstration opportunities with a broad range of customers," said Neil Wilson, Ford Fleet Director. "We believe that trialling the product will be our best tool to support decisions on transitioning to EVs as customers can get real-world experience for their particular use cases."

Importantly, while fleets currently have a handful of electrified panel vans from which to choose, the E-Transit will also be available as a chassis cab version for conversion to individual fleet requirements.

"We recognise that many of the vehicles will need some kind of conversion and we have already held Europe-wide virtual conversion briefings to ensure our converter partners are EV-ready to support customers with dedicated upfits from day one," said Wilson.

Ford has already committed to having a zero-emission pure electric or plug-in hybrid option for each of its van models within the next three years, although the demanding use cases for some LCV operators means that diesel will have to remain an option until a comprehensive range of zero emission capable vehicles becomes available, said Wilson.

"Many of our commercial vehicle customers have average daily distance and load carrying or conversion requirements that are challenging for most current electric vehicles (EVs), and businesses are having to wait for capable vehicles to enter the market place or continue to choose diesel in the short term," he added. "For some customers a blended approach of EV and diesel will be the most appropriate in the short term."

Available in three lengths and two roof heights, the E-Transit should be suitable for a wide range of fleet applications. With its batteries neatly tucked below the main body of the vehicle, the LCV offers between 9.5 and 15.1 cubic metres of loadspace and a payload of up to 1,758kg, while its maximum range stretches to 196 miles* between charges, although this is optimistic given real-world driving and loads. Fleet decision-makers can also select options that will extend its practicality further, such as the Pro Power Onboard, which can deliver 2.3 kW of electricity without the need for a separate portable generator, so drivers and crew can plug drills, saws and laptops into the onboard 230-volt socket.

Ford have announced RRP starts from £42,695 for the E-Transit, which should be available with a Government grant of £6,000 (up to 35% of its price), but Wilson expects fleet customers to look beyond its acquisition price, which will be more expensive than diesel equivalents, and focus instead on its wholelife costs. The

manufacturer has developed a dedicated cost comparison tool to give businesses an accurate insight into the financial implications of switching to EV.

"With significantly reduced costs of operation coupled with its outstanding capability, for many customers, E-Transit will be a rational business decision," said Wilson.

Maintenance costs are projected to be 40% lower than diesel equivalents, and the new electric van benefits from a one-year, unlimited mileage service interval, which will save SMR costs and vehicle downtime.

Ford is also undertaking a huge training programme to ensure that it will have more than 200 certified, authorised repairers trained specifically to work on its electric vehicles, prior to the E-Transit's launch.

"Our Transit Centres remain at the heart of our support network for commercial vehicle customers, and the teams will be fully trained and prepared for the E-Transit when it arrives, building on their experience with the Transit Custom plug-in hybrid over the past two years," said Wilson. "E-Transit customers can be confident that our extensive dealer network will be there to support their service and maintenance requirements."

The biggest operational savings (beyond avoiding daily fees as high as £12.50 to enter low emission zones) is likely to come from the cheaper costs of electricity compared with diesel. Ford has developed charging solution packages for both depot- and home-charging to help customers take advantage of the lowest energy tariffs, and has also invested in comprehensive training and support materials to help customers understand which charging solutions will be most effective and cost efficient for them.

"We understand that deciding when the time is right to transition to electric commercial vehicles will perhaps be the most significant challenge facing our customers over the next few years, and from a product perspective we have designed the E-Transit with its suite of connected services to make this transition as simple as possible," said Wilson.

* Based on full charge. Range quoted for best performing variant, Medium Wheel Base, Medium Roof Cargo Van, 390 Series, Speed Limited to 90kph. Targeted estimate range applies to an available configuration (and is based on CAE modeling using WLTP test procedure). Actual range varies with conditions such as external elements, driving behaviors, vehicle maintenance, lithium ion battery age and state of health.

** BIK rates were correct at the time of printing and are based on rates for 2021/22 tax year.

"Deciding when the time is right to transition to electric commercial vehicles will perhaps be the most significant challenge facing our customers over the next few years"

Neil Wilson, Ford Fleet Director

E-TRANSIT TRACKING AND TELEMATICS

Every E-Transit will be equipped with a FordPassConnect modem, giving fleet managers access a wide suite of tools to boost operational effectiveness, via Ford Telematics for larger customers and FordPassPro for small fleets.

This will be the first Ford commercial vehicle to feature the manufacturer's new SYNC 4 communications system, which is able to deliver over-the-air updates, meaning the E-Transit's software and performance can improve over time, without the need for downtime in a workshop.

And there are further uptime benefits, too, from the FORDLiive connected system.

"FORDLiive unlocks the power of connectivity, using real-time health data from the vehicle to help customers run and maintain their vehicles, reduce breakdowns and time-consuming workshop visits, and achieve quicker servicing and repair times," said Neil Wilson, Ford Fleet Director.

Drivers also gain from the new SYNC 4 communications and entertainment system, which delivers cloud-enhanced navigation for the most efficient routes plus enhanced voice recognition. They can even schedule their preferred temperature in the cab, while the vehicle is charging, so it can get the heating or air conditioning just right using power from the grid rather than vehicle batteries, to maximise range.

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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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jaama fleet, leasing and hire software innovators
JCTODD VLS TRUSTED Vehicle Leasing Solutions
lytx.
Zenith Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

The rise of the grey fleet: mitigating your business risk

The increasing prominence of the often poorly defined 'Grey Fleet', has been quite astonishing. The combined impact of Brexit and the global pandemic have seen wholesale changes to the way people work, and while the rise of the grey fleet was already an established trend, the pandemic has dramatically accelerated this shift. With fewer company vehicles and changes in the way people work, grey fleets are widely becoming a default solution.

Why does this matter? Well, it's largely about your duty of care as an employer. If an employee is involved in an incident while driving for work, the company or organisation could be liable for any damage or injuries that occur. As an employer managing a grey fleet, it's more difficult to have proper oversight of the safety of vehicles being used, and driver behaviour. So, companies and organisations that rely on a grey fleet must be proactive in managing this risk, or they could be held accountable.

Driver training is one of the best ways to reduce overall fleet risks and can not only improve driver safety, but it can also ensure compliance with legal obligations and duty of care responsibilities. Through the provision of regular training, it is possible to promote a culture of compliance amongst employees while also demonstrating that the business or organisation is committed to minimising risks to employees. Implementing a driver training programme can also help to reduce costs while providing grey fleet managers with real peace of mind.

Download our new whitepaper, 'The Rise of the Grey Fleet', here: https://www.drivetech.co.uk/downloads

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Long-term vehicle rental that supports businesses during uncertain times

Uncertainty is a fact of business life, but we seem to be having to deal with more of it than usual at the moment.

Rising costs due to a shortage of new vehicles, supply chain issues and the recent panic buying of fuel are not just impacting consumers; companies are having to plan for every eventuality too.

So, how do you keep a business that relies on its vehicle fleets staying as agile and responsive as possible?

Flexibility is the key.

By not committing to outright purchase or restrictive long-term leasing arrangements, a business can ensure it has the right vehicles when they're needed. Long-term, flexible rental can help to protect the bottom line too – keeping hard-earned cash where it is needed most, to grow the business.

Ways in which Europcar's long-term solutions can support a business:

- 'Upfleet' or 'downfleet' at short notice. With no upfront payment costs or exit fees (after an initial rental period) vehicles can be returned and you only pay for the days used.
- Have access to a wide choice of new or nearly new vehicles which come with a variety of mileage options.
- Maintenance, insurance and tyres can often be included in the price which means everything is taken care of in the event of a breakdown.
- No nasty surprises. Fixed monthly prices mean companies can control costs.

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Smartphone apps are good for driver – and vehicle – wellbeing

By Martin Evans, managing director, Jaama

With so many of the nation's company drivers being remote from their businesses during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, it has meant that many fleets have had to adapt and change in order to maintain controlled, yet remote, visibility of their vehicles and drivers.

Many fleets have been used to passing paperwork between the driver and the fleet office, but that simply wasn't possible during the recent pandemic.

At Jaama, there is a vision of the paperless office and recent functionality including Signable – electronic document signing has been described as 'impressive' and 'ahead of other solutions' by forward-thinking businesses such as Octopus EV.

Smartphone apps have also come into their own and have been vital for many fleets to remain compliant during the pandemic. They have been at the heart of helping fleets remain in contact with their drivers. The driver can carry out their daily vehicle inspections, take photos of any defect, record mileage and even report accidents using a smartphone app. All instantaneously without generating a heap of paperwork.

The communication works both ways as fleet teams can push out vital health and safety or vehicle information direct to the driver's smartphone or tablet such as contact details for accidents and breakdowns.

Overall, an app is great for providing operational information to the driver and collecting vehicle information, which is important in helping to improve safety and compliance levels.

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Provide employees with the right tools to choose and manage their vehicle

By Martyn Smith, head of systems & data, JCT600 VLS

Your new car scheme – whether it's a simple improvement to include PHEV/EVs or you're launching something completely different – will need a system that can deliver this easily and effectively to your employees.

It needs to be user-friendly but also technical enough to help them make an informed decision from the options available to them; ultimately making a complex process, simple.

The best kinds of systems do more than just provide your drivers with the ability to choose a car from a list.

Look for a portal that can:

- Be a single platform to deliver all options available to the employee in one place.
- Tailor the employee's wholelife cost, including fuel, as well as business/private mileage and their expected real-world running costs.
- Enable your employees to compare the cost of different vehicles and policies (if available to them) side-by-side.
- Make the user journey simple, educate them through the process and ensure all relevant documentation is agreed to and auditable.

These criteria are exactly what we had in mind when we developed Origo, our state-of-the-art driver system. It was designed to easily deliver all car policies within a single portal for drivers to access all the services they require on existing vehicles, order new vehicles and track any existing orders.

Designed to display side-by-side comparisons of vehicles from your policy, it provides each employee with a real-time, personal wholelife cost calculation to make the right choice for them.

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How a more connected approach can help lower risk – and insurance costs

Insuring a fleet can be expensive. Average repair costs have increased by up to 40% in the past eight years and liability disputes can drive up expenditure for both fleets and insurers. Connected technology is already helping insurers by providing information about First Notice of Loss (FNOL) – automatically sending notifications when a black box captures unusual G-force readings as a result of sudden braking or impact – but now it's possible to go further.

Machine Vision and Artificial Intelligence (MV+AI) technology has become a key enabler in providing today's fleet managers with an understanding of what's really happening both inside and outside the cab and to see when something is about to happen, not just when something has happened. First Notification of Risk (FNOR) uses MV+AI to identify incidents or distracted driving in real-time. Drivers can be alerted, and accidents prevented from occurring. At the same time, managers and insurers are kept informed about trends of risky behaviour. After an incident, we have information not just about what has happened, but why.

This is also delivering benefits when it comes to lowering insurance costs. FNOR data can provide insurers with complete visibility over the fleet's safety profile, as well as access to live, real-time footage.

Finally, managers are kept informed about trends of risky behaviour which can be monitored over time – whether that's a peak in risky driving behaviours on a particular day of the week, or a pattern of behaviour that indicates a lower level of driver risk.

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EV: why choice drives demand

The reality is that across all fleet sections we need to switch thinking from low-emission to zero-emission right now. We know it's not always viable to make a full transition straightaway, especially with different asset types and driver segments to consider.

The good news is that by creating a neutral cost position and future-ready policy, you'll enable your people to take up an electric vehicle (EV) when it works for them, so they can be introduced to your fleet gradually.

It's all about enabling choice. Employees migrate to EVs as company cars because they want a sustainable option but also because of the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax benefits. The driver's own cost position promotes this behaviour.

At Zenith, we advocate using wholelife cost when maintaining a company car fleet. An EV is particularly advantageous here when considering the cost of fuel versus charging, BIK and National Insurance contributions.

We've supported many customers to incentivise EV take-up by splitting their policy, which offers employees a slightly higher allowance for an EV compared with an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle.

This gives them the opportunity to drive a car with a longer range (diminishing range anxiety) and better specification.

You may also consider permitting a trade-up for an EV, which might not be available on the company's ICE policy to bring EVs within reach for more of your eligible people.

Lastly, a salary sacrifice car scheme could be the best way of encouraging the transition to EVs across all your employees,

By Alan Bastey, customer relationship director, Zenith

without the associated responsibility, administration and cost. It's the benefit everyone is talking about. It works for the employee and employer on every level; cost, compliance and sustainability and it's an area where our team's knowledge is second-to-none.

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PLUS: NEED TO ACCELERATE HGV DRIVER TESTING • GET MORE OUT OF TELEMATICS • LOGISTICS UK Q&A

GOVERNMENT MUST DO MORE TO ACCELERATE HGV TESTING

Research reveals some drivers are having to wait up to 24 weeks before test takes place

By Gareth Roberts

The Government is being urged to do more to solve the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driver shortage or risk the prospect of similar supply chain problems that led to the fuel crisis.

Petrol stations ran dry as panic buying gripped the nation, with Army personnel needing to be deployed to drive fuel tankers due to a shortage of qualified drivers.

The shortage illustrated the acute pressure the commercial fleet industry is under to attract new drivers and retain existing employees.

However, the lack of HGV drivers is nothing new. Over several years, the Government was warned of the mounting threat to the supply chain, with an aging driver population, poor working conditions and the high cost of training, resulting in a growing number of unfilled roles.

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) now estimates that shortfall to be around 100,000 drivers. Pre-pandemic it was about 60,000.

Research published in August by Transport Intelligence, however, suggests that the driver shortage is not a UK-only problem.

400,000
shortfall in drivers across Europe

20%
pay increase in the past two months

It estimates that across Europe, there is currently a shortfall of more than 400,000 drivers, with the most heavily impacted European countries being Poland, Germany and the UK.

Covid-19 and Brexit have exacerbated the issue in the UK, leading to the Department for Transport (DfT) extending drivers' hours temporarily, before introducing a raft of measures as the crisis deepened.

They included a streamlined HGV driving test, which ministers claim will provide additional capacity for 50,000 HGV tests per year, recruiting more examiners and issuing temporary visas for foreign drivers.

Following weeks of lobbying by the commercial fleet industry, the DfT relented and said that 5,000 HGV drivers would be able to come to the UK for three months in the run-up to Christmas, providing short-term relief for the haulage industry.

However, that was quickly extended to six months for 300 tanker drivers (from the beginning of October to the end of March 2022) and five months (from the beginning of October to the end of February 2022) for 4,700 foreign food haulage drivers.

Abbey Logistics has 10% of its fleet parked up in depots, not able to transport goods, and has more orders than capacity to move products

> "WE WILL NOT ATTRACT THE DRIVERS QUICKLY ENOUGH TO FIX THE PROBLEM"
>
> **STEVE GRANITE, ABBEY LOGISTICS**

GOVERNMENT MEASURES 'NOT ENOUGH'

Speaking at a fringe event at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, Steve Granite, chief executive officer of Abbey Logistics, warned that measures being implemented by the Government were not solving the problems being seen on the ground.

Abbey Logistics, with a fleet of 350 trucks and 600 tankers, and a work-

force of 600 employees, is one of the UK's largest bulk liquid and powder food transport providers, serving some of Europe's biggest manufacturers.

Granite, who is also chairman and founder of not-for-profit group Think Logistics, which connects employers with schools and colleges, said: "We have 10% of the fleet just parked up in depots, not able to transport goods and we have more orders than capacity to move products."

He explained: "It's a major challenge to attract and retain new drivers, because it's so competitive in the market with drivers being incentivised by supermarkets offering £4,000-£5,000 'sign-on' bonuses.

"It's a daily struggle to keep hold of the workforce we have and every company in the sector has the same challenge."

Abbey Logistics has increased pay for its drivers by more than 20% in the past two months. Some competitors, said Granite, had increased salaries by as much as 40%.

He told delegates at the Tory conference fringe event that his business had also overhauled shift patterns to offer drivers more flexible working, while hauliers were investing in facilities to attract more women into the sector and retain existing drivers.

However, he said: "All of these things do not fix the problem. That's where we look to Government for support."

The benefits of increased testing capacity, for example, were not being seen on the ground, according to Granite, with 14 drivers at Abbey Logistics alone waiting to take a test.

"The whole process of bringing a driver from a car to a HGV is way too slow and there's not enough capacity," he said. "No matter how fast we move, no matter how high we put (pay) rates, we will not attract the drivers quickly enough to fix the problem.

"We need access to a bigger labour pool – not for three months, not for six months – people who can drive trucks are skilled workers."

HGV TESTING TIMES VARY

Almost two-thirds (62%) of HGV test centres across the UK currently have a waiting list of at least 11 weeks, with some test centres facing a 24-week wait, according to a freedom of information (FOI) request.

The research, from Driver Hire Training, revealed that the average waiting time across all UK test centres was nine weeks.

The highest waiting times were found in Aberdeen, Lerwick and Machrihanish, where there is a currently a waiting time of 24 weeks for a HGV driving test.

Cumbria, the Isle of Wight and South Yorkshire were revealed as the UK counties with the average shortest waiting times of just one week.

John Keelan-Edwards, group technology services director at Driver Hire Training, warned: "Key shopping dates, such as Black Friday and the festive period are coming up, which is always a busy time for the supply chain.

"We can guarantee this is only going to be adding more pressure, with the increasing number of people shopping for these events online."

He said it was "no surprise" to see the waiting list for exams is still up to 24 weeks in some areas, as coronavirus is continues to add pressure to examiners up and down the country.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's

It was great to see the Commercial Vehicle Show back up and running again this year, with plenty of premieres and first reveals. Highlights of this electric vehicle (EV)-dominated show included:

Ford

The all-new E-Transit had its first UK outing. Powered by a 68kWh battery with outputs of 184PS and 269PS, the E-Transit will have a WLTP range of 196 miles. There will be 25 variants across 350, 390 and 425 GVMs. Competitive pricing, starting from £42,695 (ex VAT) should see the E-Transit become a popular choice among fleets. Production starts in February 2022.

Vauxhall

The new Vivaro-e Hydrogen van made its debut. It will be available in the UK from early 2023. The Vivaro-e Hydrogen fuel cell system has a 249-mile range, with refuelling in as little as three minutes. Also on the stand was its comprehensive range of electric vans, including the 171-mile Combo-e, the 205-mile Vivaro-e and making its world premiere, the 139-mile Movano-e. Also on the stand to gauge interest, was a Vivaro-e Chiller Box van converted by Paneltex.

Toyota

The Proace City Electric van with a range of up to 170 miles also made its debut, while the world premiere of the Corolla Touring Sport Commercial e-Hybrid van took many by surprise. The UK-built van has a start price of £22,134 CVOTR.

Maxxus

On its 100% EV stand, Maxxus showcased a new e-Deliver 3 L1 dropside with a 943kg payload and an L1 H2 van with a 925kg payload. Both were powered by its 52.5kWh battery and are due to be launched during Q4 this year. A tipper variant is likely to follow soon.
Meanwhile, away from the show...

Rivian

US electric vehicle company Rivian, based in Normal, Illinois, is looking to build a vehicle assembly plant in Bristol after talks with UK government ministers. The construction of an EV factory could include a sizeable aid support package, offering Rivian notable subsidies to build the vehicle manufacturing facility in the UK.

Glass's

Part of Autovista Group

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q We have vehicles that are fitted with tachograph units, but they are not used. Is there a requirement for these vehicles to be presented every two years for a tachograph inspection/ recalibration?

A Where a tachograph is fitted to a vehicle (subject to the domestic rules, but is not used to produce a legally required record), the operator and driver should ensure that the tachograph is properly calibrated and sealed. The tachograph does not have to be recalibrated, provided the seals remain intact and the vehicle remains out of scope of the EU rules.

Q We are after some advice on using a forklift truck on the road, from site to site. Does it need to be registered with Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and are there any other requirements?

A For a FLT to be used on a public highway, the vehicle must meet the Construction & Use Regulations requirement for that type of vehicle. In this case, the vehicle must have headlights, tail and brake lights, indicators, number plate light and a horn. The vehicle would also have to be registered with DVLA and have road tax.

ISTOCK/BRAUNS

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Changes to The Highway Code

The Highway Code applies to England, Scotland and Wales and is essential reading for all road users.

The most vulnerable road users are pedestrians, particularly children, older or disabled people, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. It is important that all road users are aware of The Highway Code and are considerate towards each other. This applies to pedestrians as much as to drivers and riders.

Knowing and applying the rules contained in the code could significantly reduce road casualties. Cutting the number of deaths and injuries that occur on our roads every day is a responsibility we all share.

The Highway Code can help us discharge that responsibility.

Many of the rules in the code are legal requirements, and if you disobey them you are committing a criminal offence. You may be fined, given penalty points on your licence or be disqualified from driving.

In the most serious cases you may be sent to prison.

On September 14, 2021, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) published changes to The Highway Code.

The changes, which became applicable immediately, refer to guidance on smart motorways. A total of 33 existing rules were amended and two new rules introduced.

The changes are aimed at improving awareness of the rules concerning motorway driving and:

- Offer clearer advice on where to stop in an emergency.
- Highlight the importance of not driving in a lane closed by a red X.
- Highlight the use of variable speed limits to manage congestion.
- Provide updated guidance on key factors that contribute to safety-related incidents, including unroadworthy vehicles, tailgating and driving in roadworks.

The two new rules (270 and 275) have been introduced to ensure that drivers understand the use of emergency areas on hard shoulders and offer advice on identifying the safest places to stop in the event of a breakdown or incident.

New Rule 270 adds images and ensures readers understand emergency areas are located along motorways without hard shoulders, or where the hard shoulder is sometimes used as an extra lane.

It also aims to help readers recognise an emergency area and reinforces that they are for emergency use only.

New Rule 275 ensures readers understand that a place of relative safety is where the people and vehicles involved in a breakdown or other incident are less likely to be at risk from moving traffic.

It also informs readers that the safest place to stop in the event of a breakdown or incident is a location which is designed for parking.

As a result, on motorways and other high-speed roads, the safest place to stop is a service area.

Other places of relative safety on motorways and other high-speed roads include lay-bys, emergency areas and hard shoulders, although it notes that hard shoulders provide less protection than other places of relative safety.

WINNER: VAUXHALL VIVARO-E

ABOVE: Vauxhall Motors sales & marketing director James Taylor celebrates with the team

SPONSORS' COMMENTS

FMG is proud to sponsor the Alternate Fuel categories at the *Fleet News* Awards 2021. We believe in the importance of cleaner fleets, and we are delighted for the Vauxhall Vivaro-e to be announced the winner in this category. Winning commentary included recognition for its excellent range and payload capability, impressive torque in Eco mode and regenerative braking system. We were impressed with the high levels of technology the van is able to demonstrate, and congratulate Vauxhall on leading the way over its PSA siblings.

A strong range of models combined with perfect timing has hit the spot for Vauxhall's electric vans. *Stephen Briers* reports

Vauxhall has made a bold play in the electric van market, launching the Vivaro-e in 2020 followed by the Movano-e and Combo-e this summer, giving it a full battery-electric option across its light commercial range.

Its timing has been impeccable, as major corporates clamour to secure volume to meet their ambitious transition plans, none more so than British Gas whose initial order for 1,000 soaked up Vauxhall's initial supply.

It has since ordered an additional 2,000.

With range of up to 205 miles from the larger 75kWh battery (143 miles from the 50kWh), the Vivaro-e has caught the imagination in the medium panel van sector, helping to push range sales up by almost 50% year-to-August.

"We're the first mainstream manufacturer to have a full EV range," says Brad Miller, brand manager, commercial vehicles. "And all three models are very competitive on whole life costs."

Fleet News: We've seen some big fleet orders placed for the Vivaro-e; what's driving take-up?
Brad Miller: We are seeing clean air zones across the country with zero emission zones to follow. Fleets with a national footprint don't like to site vehicles geographically; many want to swap by 2025 to ensure they are prepared for the zones and to meet their sustainability targets.

FN: What share of Vivaro registrations does electric account for?
BM: Electric penetration this year in the model line-up is 14%, but the future order bank is 28%. We expect it to be 50% by the end of next year. It's helping to bring new conquests as well as existing customers and has a 27% share of the electric van market. We are also bullish about the opportunity with Combo-e, especially as there is a lack of competition in that segment right now.

There is no reason why its appeal won't follow a similar trend. And with production moving to Ellesmere Port next year, it will also reduce the logistics for customers.

FN: Are fleets choosing large or small batteries?
BM: We believe 78% of our customer base would be OK with the 143-mile range [of the smaller battery] and 87% would be OK with the 205-mile range. For 13%, the current range is not suitable for their operations. We are seeing 78% of customers going for the larger battery option. People are prioritising range.

FN: Tell us about the new Vivaro-e platform cab.
BM: The idea came from a supermarket that was concerned by online grocery sales from its rivals. They wanted to improve their business model with more local deliveries. It's insulated, not refrigerated, but we are working with our converter partners to come up with new opportunities – there are a few variants we can add to the body.

FN: Are you seeing any changes to operating models as fleets transition to electric?
BM: Companies that are bringing electric onto their fleets quickest are adapting their business model to get the best from the vehicle, such as journey times and distances. Most fleets have gone for a four-year lifecycle.

FN: Fleets are eager for electric large panel vans – does the Movano-e answer their prayers?
BM: Usage is very different on a large van and we are less bullish about the penetration in the model mix.

Orders are open now and production starts in September for first deliveries at the end of this year or early 2022.

It will be available only with the large battery (offering range of up to 139 miles) because we don't think the small battery is competitive enough. We will also offer a Movano-e chassis cab, chassis crew cab and platform cab.

FN: Does hydrogen offer a better solution for larger vehicles? Your hydrogen Vivaro offers 249 miles of range and three-minute refuelling.
BM: The Government sees it as a mainstream solution for HGVs because electric vehicles take too long to charge, and you also have the reduced payload. With our Vivaro-e Hydrogen, we are offering the customer choice.

We expect most to go for electric because it suits their capability – while the 205-mile range comes down for motorway driving, it is 30-40% higher on the city cycle, so ideal for urban work. But if you are doing high mileage and high-speed mileage in areas where the EV charging infrastructure isn't fantastic, then hydrogen is another option.

Miller adds several Vauxhall customers believe hydrogen is the solution for their fleet and some are starting to commission their own on-site fuelling systems. The van is already available in Germany; the next step is to bring some right-hand drive models to the UK – likely to be early 2023 – before starting full scale production.

"The total cost of ownership can work on specific usage patterns – it's equitable," Miller says.

UNLOCKING YOUR FLEET EFFICIENCY

Correct use of monitoring and tracking technology can transform a fleet's operation, making it more efficient and cost-effective than ever before. *John Lewis* reports

With labour shortages biting hard, truck and van fleets need to make the best, most efficient use of the drivers that are available to them.

A telematics system can bring benefits, but not always on its own, says James Wyatt, channel sales manager at Webfleet Solutions.

Distribution operations should consider marrying it with routing and scheduling software to achieve optimum performance, he advises.

While a routing and scheduling package enables you to plan all your deliveries in advance, you need telematics in place to enable you to reorganise them quickly if things suddenly change – if Insulate Britain protestors decide to block the M25, for example.

Being able to see the location of all your vehicles means you can reallocate resources in real time, adapting to changing conditions.

Combining route scheduling and telematics data can also help you determine whether your fleet is the right size for the tasks in hand.

"I know of one company that was able to reduce the number of vehicles it ran from eight to five by using this approach, and without any loss of efficiency," says Wyatt.

Such a reduction means major savings on fuel, maintenance, insurance and vehicle excise duty.

A PLANNING TOOL

Telematics technology is becoming more effective as a planning tool as well as for day-to-day management.

Industrial supplies specialist Thomas Graham can testify to this. Stocking everything from angle grinders to mesh panels, it has recently opted for a telematics package from Trakm8 to help it manage its 49-strong fleet.

"With our business, demand for particular goods can fluctuate on a day-by-day basis, so we've decided to integrate the Trakm8 Insight Optimisation platform into our activities," says transport manager Mark Barron. "We need to create more efficient route plans.

"It will help us to replace what was previously an entirely manual process with one platform.

"It will allow us to assign drivers, vehicles and deliveries automatically while finding the most efficient route possible, saving on fuel costs."

The increased integration of routing and scheduling with telematics is scarcely surprising given the explosion in home delivery fuelled by the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising demand for same-day deliveries.

"You now have to plan in real time," says Pol Sweeney, vice-president sales, Europe, the Middle East and Africa fleet solutions at Descartes.

"What's going to happen in the next hour is what matters, and telematics allows you to be better informed about what's going on with your vehicles and drivers."

Telematics technology does not need to be complicated to install. Trakm8's Connect 330 unit fits into a van's onboard diagnostics port and streams tracking, CANbus and driver behaviour data.

With more than 1,000 vehicles, Autoglass has used the data it provides to help cut speeding and idling time, which wastes fuel as well as increasing emissions.

The fleet's speed limit compliance score is now at 98%, while idling time is down 50%.

Fleet manager Andrew Ertl says: "We've reduced costs accrued from accidents and insurance claims."

Webfleet has been enabling truck fleets to download tachograph data remotely for several years, which is another aid to efficiency.

"There are still companies that send their directors out to download it manually, going from vehicle to vehicle every weekend," says Wyatt. "Doing so is a huge waste of the time of valuable employees."

MULTIPLE WAYS TO MORE EFFICIENCY

Downloading tachograph information, analysing it and drawing any Drivers' Hours infringements to the attention of those who have committed them is vitally important to ensure compliance with a firm's O-licence undertakings. It can also help a transport manager run the fleet more effectively.

"Webfleet can display an onscreen map which shows how far each driver can travel before they run out of hours," says Wyatt.

This overcomes a problem that managers regularly face on a Friday afternoon: being told by drivers that they have insufficient hours to take on another job when the reality is that they do, but want to knock off early.

Ensuring maximum use is made of the hours drivers have in hand matters now more than ever, given drivers are in such short supply.

"I've seen firms err on the side of caution in this area because they're worried about

breaking the Drivers' Hours rules, but underutilising their resources means that they're not running at full efficiency," Wyatt says.

Telematics can be used to monitor a vehicle's onboard functions, and help nip trouble in the bud before it becomes serious.

"Eighty per cent of truck breakdowns are tyre-related, but when a tyre deflates, it often happens slowly," Wyatt points out.

If the vehicle is fitted with a pressure monitoring system then telematics may be able to take the data it produces and warn the fleet manager that a tyre is losing air.

The driver can then be instructed to get the truck to a safe place – a motorway service area, for example – and rendezvous with a tyre technician so that appropriate action can be taken.

The alternative could be a blow-out leaving the truck stranded at the side of the road.

Earlier this year, Microlise launched Trailer Brake Performance Monitoring, an addition to its Trailer Telematics programme.

The data it gleans can be analysed to determine when the brakes are likely to require attention, which aids forward maintenance planning.

Trailer Telematics can incorporate a camera which watches the cargo: a deterrent to thieves. It can also monitor the temperature of a refrigerated load and trigger a warning if it starts to defrost.

Andrew Tavener, UK head of marketing at Descartes, adds: "Telematics enables you to check the temperature of a refrigerated vehicle's load area when the cargo is unloaded."

That could be vital information should there be any subsequent dispute about the condition of the consignment when it arrived.

Telematics can be used to keep a remote eye on fuel and AdBlue levels, adds Mike Hemming, technology champion at Fraikin.

"I know of one occasion when a truck driver rang his boss to report a problem with his truck only for the telematics system to reveal that the AdBlue tank was empty and the truck had gone into limp-home mode.

"The driver said he didn't realise the truck needed AdBlue!"

Being able to see what the problem was remotely, however, meant there was no need for a technician to be sent out.

IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE

The ability of telematics to show where a vehicle is and how long it has been sitting there makes it easier for distribution companies to charge demurrage – the cost of having a truck stand idle at a delivery point because it is waiting to be unloaded.

An entitlement to levy such a charge may be written into a distribution contract, but the amount can be disputed.

Telematics can provide the supporting evidence.

It can also be used to refute spurious claims by members of the public that an operator's van or truck dented their car when it was actually several streets away.

Telematics systems can be employed to monitor driver behaviour, identifying incidents of speeding and excessively harsh acceleration, which can then be brought to the individual's attention, possibly with the aim of providing some remedial training.

Such on-highway antics increase fuel consumption and wear-and-tear on the vehicle, and could result in an accident, but managers may be wary of highlighting them in the current climate.

Truck drivers who feel their conduct is being questioned may respond by walking out and going to work for a competitor, and may be impossible to replace.

Wyatt is aware this is a concern, but argues that no responsible company should continue to employ somebody who is clearly likely to be involved in a serious collision sooner or later, and may be refusing training.

"You don't want people like that driving for you, and you may be better off leaving the truck parked up and turning work away," he says.

Hemming adds: "If you've got some new truck drivers then you can use telematics to

"THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY THAT TELEMATICS CAN BE USED TO ENCOURAGE BETTER BEHAVIOUR AT THE WHEEL"

MIKE HEMMING, FRAIKIN

ISTOCK.COM/DALPHASPIRIT

see how well they are driving and offer them some coaching if necessary.

"If you are going to do this, however, then it makes sense to provide them with a smartphone app so that they can see what their manager can see as far as their performance is concerned.

"That way, they know there is no hidden agenda."

BETTER BEHAVIOUR

There is more than one way in which telematics can be used to encourage better behaviour at the wheel.

PN Daly designs, constructs, repairs and maintains gas, water, electricity and telecommunications networks and uses Ctrack telecommunications technology to help manage its fleet.

The operator has complemented it by having Ctrack's Driver Behaviour Indicator installed in more than 150 vans on a contract with a water company.

As a consequence, the rate of at-fault collisions has fallen by 50%, says Ctrack.

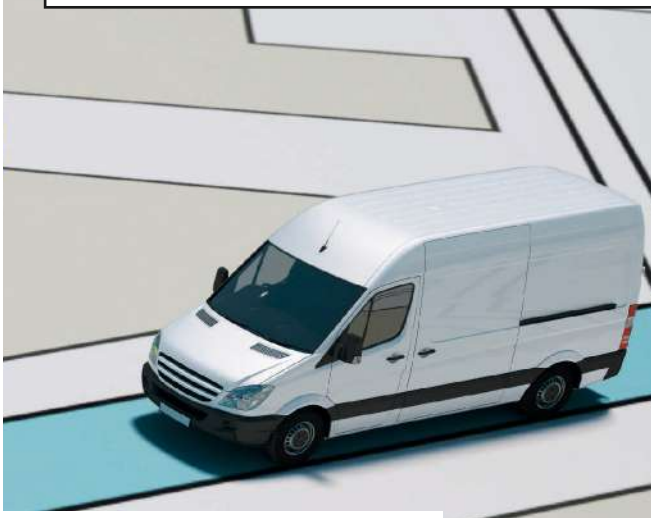
The indicator uses an in-cab green, amber and red display to caution drivers who engage in everything from brutal acceleration to hurtling over speed bumps. Infringements per mile have declined by nearly 25%.

There is nothing to stop fleets rewarding drivers who perform especially well, says Sweeney.

League tables which highlight those who are most fuel-efficient and have the fewest accidents have become increasingly common, with prizes for the high achievers.

Telematics systems are increasingly being used in conjunction with onboard cameras which can scan the road ahead, and sometimes keep an eye on the driver too.

> "WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE NEXT HOUR IS WHAT MATTERS, AND TELEMATICS ALLOWS YOU TO BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR VEHICLES"
>
> **POL SWEENEY, DESCARTES**



Thomas Graham has opted for Trakm8's RH600 dashcam telematics device while Bridgestone-owned Webfleet has come up with an integrated video telematics package in conjunction with Lytx.

Autoglass's deployment of the Connect 330 device – referred to earlier – has been made more effective because it has been combined with Trakm8's Roadhawk dashboard camera, says the fleet operator.

With 380 vans, housing association LiveWest has been rolling out a video telematics system from VisionTrack using a VT2000 connected dashcam. It intends to have nearly 50% of its fleet equipped by the end of the year.

A key aim is to help LiveWest prove where liability lies if there is an accident, by using video footage. Fleet manager Paul Ayris says: "It provides us with the added context needed to challenge fraudulent, exaggerated and 50/50 claims, and we expect it to help reduce insurance costs."

Cameras can also help ensure that drivers are not blamed for incidents that turn out not to be their fault, says Hemming.

Safety and construction products and services supplier BCS Group has taken on 50 long-term rental light commercials supplied by Europcar. They are all provided with a telematics package from Geotab plus a dash cam from SureCam.

Speeding, harsh acceleration and braking are monitored, as are failures to use a seatbelt and long periods of engine idling.

"It has led to a reduction in both fuel usage and minor damage to our vehicles," says Nathan Phipps, BCS fleet supervisor.

Awareness that a vehicle is equipped with a camera makes it less likely that a fraudster will attempt to stage a crash-for-cash collision.

It should also prompt whoever is at the wheel to drive just that bit more carefully.

Webfleet can display an online map showing how far each driver can travel

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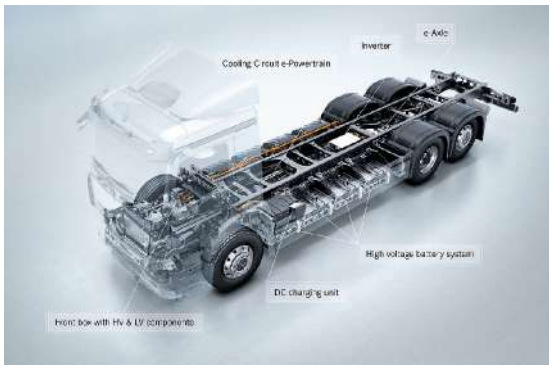
MERCEDES-BENZ eACTROS

Can eActros provide the answer to the question of how to achieve zero emission goals?



By Tim Campbell

It appears obvious the passenger car and even the light commercial vehicle markets are going headlong into battery electric vehicles (BEVs) as their solution to drive zero tailpipe emissions.

Of course, that's no surprise as the sale of new diesel and petrol cars and vans will be banned from 2030. But what happens as we go up the weight range where the decision to ban the sale of diesels has yet to be finalised here in the UK?

The question of 'when' is the conundrum facing all the light and heavy truck manufacturers. Then, if we factor in that virtually every European country could choose a different timescale to introduce the ban, the plot thickens. Although it should be kept in mind that the EU has determined 2040 should be the end date for new diesel truck sales.

As a consequence, every truck manufacturer is in the unenviable task of deciding which technology to invest in and, perhaps more importantly, which will win out in the long run at key weights?

This was the basis of a recent visit to Daimler's research and development centre in Germany, in which there was the opportunity to drive its latest generation eActros and also take a ride in the Gen2 Hydrogen Fuel Cell tractor unit.

As with many major European truck manufacturers, Mercedes-Benz Trucks is committed to the target of achieving locally CO_2-neutral road freight transportation using a mixture of both battery and hydrogen-based fuel cell technology.

Indeed it has already committed to completely decarbonise its European product portfolio by going over to electrically-powered trucks by 2039.

THE eACTROS

The first time Mercedes-Benz Trucks hinted it was working on an electric truck was at the 2016 Commercial Vehicles IAA in Hanover when a 'concept' urban truck was presented.

Following this, 10 prototypes of the eActros (dubbed the eActros innovation fleet) went into customer trials in Germany and other European countries from 2018 onwards.

These helped the research and development team start to understand the operating intricacies of an urban heavy duty electric truck.

After three years of testing in a real world environment, the second generation eActros had its world première at the end of June 2021 and will form the basis of its electric heavy duty electric truck offering along with the eEconic and a long-haul version for the next few years.

At a recent press event there was an opportunity to take a couple of three axle rigids out on the road and, more interestingly, with two power settings.

These are based around a modular battery system following the basic philosophy of the whole Daimler Group used in passenger cars, vans, buses and, of course, trucks.

In the case of the eActros each NMC battery pack is rated at 105kWh and dependent on the version, they use three or four battery packs offering 315kWh or 420kWh.

eACTROS 300 6X2

The eActros 300 6x2 uses the three battery pack system and has two maximum vehicle lengths of 8,700mm and 9,300mm based around wheelbases of 4,000mm and 4,600mm respectively.

It is rated at 27 tonnes gross vehicle weight and has a payload of 17.7 tonnes on the shorter wheelbase. This is reduced by 100kgs on the longer version based on the M ClassicSpace cab with strangely enough an 'engine' tunnel of 170mm.

The plated axle weights are eight tonnes on the front, 11.5 tonnes on the middle and 7.5 tonnes on the rear, but this can be upgraded to eight tonnes.

The 315kWh battery pack is connected to not just one motor but two, and these are rated at a maximum of 400kW with a continuous power setting of 330kW.

There's also a two-speed transmission helping to maximise the range of power settings and speeds necessary to deliver a smooth and practical driving experience.

Of course, electric vehicles are as much about the range and charging capabilities as they are about the driveline specification and the eActros is no exception.

The motor/battery combination results in a range of approximately 185 miles with a maximum speed of 89kph (55mph) just under the legal limit.

The eActros can be charged with up to 160 kW and the three battery packs need around 75 minutes to charge from 20% to 80% at a normal DC rapid charging point with a charging current of 400 A.

One of the many urban myths surrounding electric vehicles is that they cannot power auxiliary equipment, but this isn't the case with the new eActros and many modern electric vans and trucks in general.

The eActros has an 'engine' PTO rated at a low powered peak of 32kW and 20kW continuous, and a high powered peak of 52kW with a continuous power of 30kW.

eACTROS 400 6X2 EXTENDED RANGE

The extended range eActros is based around the 300 model but is slightly longer at 9,600mm overall due to the longer 4,900mm wheelbase and while the gross vehicle weight remains at 27 tonnes, its payload is 16.6 tonnes.

The rest of the 'mechanical' specification remains the same but as the '400' nomenclature alludes, the battery capacity has been upgraded by adding a further 105kWh module taking the power to 420kWh, increasing the range to around 250 miles and extending charging by an extra 25 minutes.

DRIVING

Stepping inside, any Actros driver would recognise the cab interior, but perhaps the biggest change is the display in the standard interactive multimedia cockpit of the eActros which keeps the driver up-to-date on the charge level of the batteries and the remaining range, as well as the current and average energy consumption in kWh per 100 kilometres.

The standard safety equipment includes the external acoustic vehicle alerting system for improved audio detection, for example by pedestrians and cyclists, not to mention the side-guard assist S1R system for enhanced safety when turning off to the nearside, and the fifth-generation active brake assist with pedestrian detection.

A hardly audible hum signals the eActros is ready for work and a quick blip of the throttle sees the truck accelerate almost silently.

As the vehicles also have mirrorcam there wasn't even the standard door mirror noise – a very different experience indeed.

The turn of speed linked to unrivalled responsiveness coupled with an almost silent operation made for a very pleasant drive and will indeed herald in a new age of electric trucks operating within an urban environment.

Let's just get the infrastructure right!

THE LAST WORD

LOUISE WHITEHOUSE

MANAGING DIRECTOR, FLEET MAINTENANCE EUROPE, FEDEX EXPRESS

The Women's Inclusion Network she helped establish in FedEx is a 'WIN':win in the eyes of Whitehouse who is proud to have become the first female MD within the logistics company

What advice would you give to your 18-year-old self?
No one is perfect. Take every opportunity to get to know yourself and never stop striving to be the best you can possibly be. Lastly, be confident in your own ability.

Which song would you have on your driving playlist?
Californication by the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

What is your first memory associated with a car?
In the early 1970s, my dad had a red convertible MG Midget which I always thought was incredibly cool (and still do).

Your favourite movie quote?
The famous quote from the movie *Dirty Dancing,* 'nobody puts Baby in the corner.'

If money was no object, what would you do?
It's no secret I love planes. The Concorde was one of my favourite planes, and I always dreamed of flying on it. I love travelling, but did not get the chance to fly supersonic. Imagine what a difference it would make if package deliveries could travel across the Atlantic by Concorde.

Which book would you recommend people to read
I would recommend *Peak Performance in 60 Seconds* by Chris Walton – a brilliant read.

What are your hobbies and interests?
I love live music concerts and festivals, cooking, travelling and, since lockdown, walking.

What is your pet hate?
Something that particularly irritates me is people who are disrespectful.

If you were made transport minister for the day, what would you change?
First, I'd invest more and speed up the infrastructure required for EV charging and hydrogen refuelling stations. I'd also remove all VAT and duty on alternative fuel vehicles to give everyone the opportunity to purchase a zero-emission vehicle.

Why did you choose a career in fleet management?
I love the dynamics of the transport sector. It's such an interesting and rewarding career. The industry plays an important part in everyone's day-to-day lives and a reliable fleet is a key part of this.

How did you get to where you are?
I started in operations, holding various management and leadership roles within the company. I worked my way through the ranks, learning about all different aspects of the business and then took the opportunity to move to fleet management five years ago and haven't looked back – I absolutely love it. I'm proud of becoming the first female MD within FedEx Express Operations in the UK.

Three words to describe FedEx?
Innovative, agile and inclusive.

Who are your career influencers?
The two or three who spring to mind have all been firm, but fair, leaders, who have supported my development and pushed me to achieve my goals. In the early days of my career, my general manager at Birmingham Airport gave me the autonomy to learn and develop.

What makes a good leader?
A good leader should make employees feel they are appreciated and have a sense of belonging; that they are being treated fairly and respectfully. Leaders need to be able to help team members grow, have trust, empathy and fun.

What advice would you give to fleet newcomers?
Work hard but smart and learn how fleet fits into the overall business. Focus on learning about future technologies, think about the next 10-plus years and how technology will change operations. Lastly, ask questions and learn from those around you. I founded and continue to lead the Women's Inclusion Network (WIN) at FedEx in the UK, which is established to increase, advance and retain the number of females at all levels of the organisation.

Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO_2 emissions: 0 g/km. Electric energy consumption (combined): 20 to 21 kWh/100Km / 2.9 – 3 miles/kWh. The iX xDrive40 electric range: 246-257 miles. The iX xDrive50 electric range: 366-380 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The iX is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

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