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# THE BIG PICTURE

Back in 2015, *Fleet News*, ACFO (now AFP) and BVRLA called on the Government to introduce a number of safety measures as part of our Fleet Manifesto.

They included reporting of at-work vehicle crashes within RIDDOR (reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations) and the re-introduction of road safety targets, as well as exploring ways to investigate crashes to determine cause. Other organisations, including safety charity Brake, RAC Foundation and TRL, have also long supported the creation of a crash investigation board.

Seven years after our initial calls, the Government has finally announced it will set up a Road Safety Investigation Branch (RSIB – see page 12).

Long overdue, but better late than never. These bodies play a vital role in other industries, notably aviation and rail where the crash incidents and annual deaths are far lower than on UK roads.

Their purpose is to look into collisions, establish the cause and identify any common themes (but not to attribute blame or liability) and to share any learnings that could minimise or eliminate the likelihood of such incidents recurring. It is, in truth, a no-brainer.

The Government was finally stirred into action by the fact that the year-on-year reduction in road deaths and serious injuries has stalled. It actually stalled a decade ago (apart from 2021 when Covid lockdown resulted in lower traffic volumes), so it has taken some time for the realisation to sink in.

The RSIB won't be created until the policy is published in the Transport Bill, so we are still a few months away from it becoming a reality, and the Government needs to recruit a specialist team of inspectors.

Our hope is that its recommendations will help fleet operators to reduce risk and raise safety, supported by revisions to infrastructure, signage and signalling that will undoubtedly form part of a more holistic solution. Ultimately, success will be measured by the number of deaths and serious injuries beginning to fall again.

Sadly, the Government doesn't go as far as introducing the reporting of at-work vehicle crashes within RIDDOR or the re-introduction of road safety targets, but it's a start.



**Stephen Briers,**  
group editor,  
*Fleet News*



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**Burning question:**  
Have you ever disliked something, or someone, then changed your mind?

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Economics: did it for 'A' Level and was bored out of my mind; now fascinated by it

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Couldn't abide gin until I was recently persuaded to try it again

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Often. As a general rule, I'm always suspicious of new people until I know them better

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Nickelback... not sure why they get so much hate

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Yes, electric cars

Photos istock, Chris Lowndes

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Red wine, I can't get enough of it now

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I used to have a real downer on sprouts until I realised that they didn't have to look like wilted small watery cabbages after cooking (school dinners). Now, I'm happy to eat them

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# Manufacturers prioritise retail buyers over fleets

Private registrations grow market share as companies struggle to source cars

By Gareth Roberts

**M**anufacturers are prioritising private consumers over fleet customers as they struggle to fulfil orders for new cars due to ongoing shortages of essential components.

New data, from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), shows that private registrations have increased by 4.7% in the first half of 2022, compared with last year.

However, core fleet registrations – classified as ‘leasing/contract hire and fleet other’ by the SMMT – fell by 13.6%.

New car sales to other fleet sectors were also down, with registrations to Motability falling by more than a fifth (21.2%), and by more than three quarters (76.5%) to the rental sector.

Overall, just in excess of 802,000 new cars have been registered from January to June – a 12% decline on the 909,000 registered in the same period last year.

Core fleet market share, however, remained static, accounting for a third (34%) of all new cars sold, while private registrations grew market share by more than eight percentage points, from 43.5% to 51.7% year-on-year, to now account for more than half of the market.

When taking into account all fleet channels, total fleet and business registrations accounted for 55.9% of

the market in 2019, when almost 1.3 million cars were registered to fleets.

However, the sector’s market share has been steadily declining since. In 2020, with manufacturers severely impacted by Covid-19 and 400,000 fewer company cars finding their way to fleets, market share fell to 54.1%, before falling again last year to 53.2%, with a 4.5% year-on-year decline in fleet registrations, as the global semiconductor shortage slowed production.

However, SMMT data suggests that, so far this year, the decline has been even greater, with a 9.4 percentage point swing away from fleet to retail, resulting in fleet and business registrations now only accounting for 46.5% of the market.

Vehicle Remarketing Association (VRA) chair, Philip Nothard, said: “To some extent, it makes sense for manufacturers to do this. New car supply is poor, and factors such as the ongoing semiconductor shortage and the war in Ukraine are unlikely to significantly improve any time soon.

“Carmakers are simply maximising their profit potential.”

## FOCUS ON PRIVATE SALES

Looking at individual carmakers, Volkswagen Group brands Audi, Škoda and Volkswagen showed some of the biggest declines in core fleet sales compared with the performance of private registrations.

Core fleet sales for Audi declined by almost a third (29.2%) in the first half of 2022, compared with the same period last year, while private registrations increased by 5.7%, according to the SMMT.

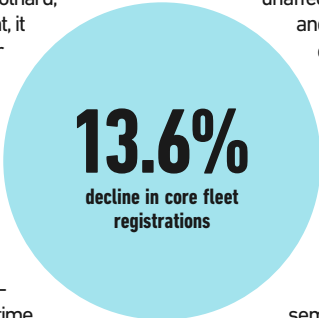
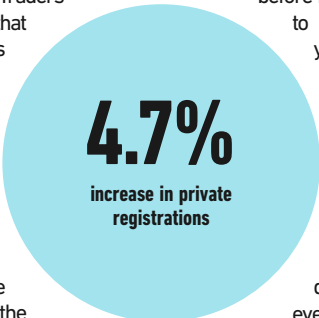
At Škoda, the disparity was even greater, with core fleet registrations more than halved – declining by 58.6% – while private registrations grew by 9.7%.

There was a similar decline in core fleet registrations at Volkswagen. SMMT figures show they fell 59.1%, year-on-year, while private registrations also declined, but by a much smaller margin, recording a 9.6% dip.

However, a Volkswagen Group spokesperson insisted that, when comparing sales with 2019 – a year unaffected by lockdowns – and comparing retail customer to corporate sales, there is “no significant difference” between the performance of the retail and corporate sales channels.

He added: “While the semiconductor situation is gradually improving, we expect it to remain volatile through the second half of 2022, with a

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significant improvement not expected until sometime in 2023.”

Kia reported a 55.8% increase in core fleet registrations alongside a 20.5% increase in private sales, bucking the trend, but acknowledged the prioritisation of the retail market over fleet.

Speaking to *Fleet News* at Company Car in Action (CCIA), John Hargreaves, fleet and remarketing director at Kia Motors UK, said the manufacturer would be attempting to control some of the fleet channels a “little bit more, because we do not want to get in a position where we have orders with no realistic chance of supplying them in a sensible time frame”.

He explained: “We are going to try





More private buyers are getting that happy 'new car feeling' than fleet customers

to take some of the heat out, but at the same time we will keep a presence in all those markets.

"We will not be avoiding rental, we'll just be doing a little less over the rest of year. We won't be pulling out of Motability, we will probably have fewer models on offer."

He added: "The ethos for us is to be consistently present, but possibly scaled back a little bit for the rest of the year."

In terms of new product, such as new Niro, Hargreaves said after being available to private customers, it would be made available to the fleet market in the next "month or two".

"We want to give retail customers a chance to have that car and then we

will introduce it into the fleet," he said.

Vauxhall's core fleet registrations fell by just 7.9% in the first half of 2020, but private sales were up 27%.

It was a similar story at fellow Stellantis brand Peugeot, where its core fleet sales were down by more than a fifth (21.5%), while private registrations were up by 12.2%.

Ford, meanwhile, saw core fleet registrations fall by 17%, compared with a 12.5% decline in private sales.

#### IMPACT ON FLEET OPERATIONS

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), said: "We are hearing many stories that suggest the situation is worsening, at least for certain businesses, and

show no apparent signs of improving.

"Some fleet managers are telling us that drivers are having to go through the process of choosing a new car half a dozen times before finding one for which a manufacturer will even provide a production slot – and that date is likely to be a year or more away. Other manufacturers have closed their order books either completely or for certain models."

Hollick says plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) have become very difficult to acquire, with production being skewed away from them towards EVs, because of the Clean Air For Europe (CAFE) regulations, which set average emissions targets for manufacturers.

"Even when cars can be obtained, they are often being delivered without meeting the order specification," he continued. "The wrong colour is fairly commonplace, but equipment is often missing – parking sensors seem to be a particular issue – with no resulting adjustment in price.

"All of these problems exist for petrol and diesel cars but can generally be doubled for EVs."

#### RENTAL SUFFERING MOST

Leasing company Ogilvie Fleet says each fleet sector is suffering to differing degrees, with rental hardest hit.

Sales and marketing director Nick Hardy said: "It's a challenge that we have to face every single day, but ↻"

Cars are like gold dust at the moment and if it's more profitable to push product into retail, can you blame the manufacturers for doing it?"

He also highlighted how private new car purchases normally came with a part-exchange deal, allowing dealers to replenish used stock which is in short supply.

He explained: "The vast majority of people will part-exchange, so the dealer gets two profit centres not one."

**SHORTAGE OF USED CARS**

The shortage of new company cars finding their way on to fleets has meant they have been left with little choice but to continue operating their existing cars for as long as possible.

"The situation creates two sets of problems," Hollick explained. "The first is that the car is ageing and difficulties with keeping it on the road in a cost-effective manner increase over time."

Some cars are now being operated into their fifth year and will probably still be on the fleet in their sixth, because they cannot be replaced.

"These are uncharted waters in maintenance terms," he continued. "The second is an employee satisfaction issue."

"Drivers who are keen to move into EVs but simply cannot get hold of the right model are having to continue to pay benefit-in-kind on ageing and increasingly unattractive diesel models, with no solution in sight."

Historically, fleets have also provided a steady supply of cars into the used sector, but this has fallen massively in recent years as new car production has declined since the start of the pandemic.

**KEEPING VEHICLES LONGER**

That creates a problem for the used car market because private buyers tend to hang on to their vehicles for a year or two longer.

"The cars that they push into the used market when they get a new model tend to be older, and then they

will keep hold of that for longer in turn," said Nothard, who is also insight and strategy director at Cox Automotive (see alongside).

"The vehicle life model that we have seen for decades, and which has served the used car market with a predictable flow of stock no longer fully exists, and this will undoubtedly constrict future supply."

There is even the possibility, he says, that fleets could become "habitualised" to operating cars for more extended periods, which would also have an impact on the used market.

**NEW CAR MARKET OUTLOOK**

Given the ongoing impact of supply chain constraints and broader macro-economic factors, the SMMT revised its market outlook for 2022 in April, with 1.72 million new cars now expected to be registered during the year, down from the 1.89 million predicted in January.

While this still represents a 4.5% rise on 2021, it highlights the effect the semiconductor shortage is still having on supply as well as anticipated impacts from rising living costs.

"I think this is the new norm," said Hardy. "I think the years of 2.5 million new car registrations have gone and they're not coming back."

"They're not coming back because manufacturers have seen the light. They're asking themselves 'why would we build more cars, when we can build profitably, charge more and sell less, and we're better off for it.'"

Hardy does believe, however, that manufacturers will increase production so factory order times for vehicles improve from the wait of more than a year currently being seen for some models.

"From a fleet perspective, the lead time for a factory-built car used to be eight-12 weeks, now it's 12-15 months," he said.

"I think they'll get production to the point where, if you want a new car specced to how you want it, you'll be waiting six-nine months."



**“I THINK THE YEARS OF 2.5 MILLION NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS HAVE GONE AND THEY'RE NOT COMING BACK”**

**NICK HARDY, OGILVIE FLEET**

**'Push' or 'pull'? That's the question facing the new car market of the future**



**PHILIP NOTHARD, INSIGHT AND STRATEGY DIRECTOR AT COX AUTOMOTIVE**

Many of the changes we're experiencing in the market result from key trends that we have been discussing for several years.

While the short-term influences we're experiencing accelerated the pace of change, the direction of travel is something we've been anticipating for some time. Furthermore, the factors impacting the sector today, such as the semiconductor shortage, the war in Ukraine and the cost of living, are short-term impacts, and in time will pass.

In 2018, global light vehicle production stood at just less than 96.9 million units. In 2019, it dropped slightly, to almost 92.2 million. In the first year of the pandemic, light vehicle production worldwide dropped precipitously to just 77.7 million units, and production recovered somewhat in 2021, but only to 80.1 million.

So, when we add up 2018 and 2019 and compare that figure with 2020 plus 2021, the global automotive industry has produced approximately 31 million fewer vehicles. Although we believe production will gradually increase over the coming years, it will certainly not make up for this loss, even if we return to the 90 million units annually.

The top five European markets registered 6.5 million fewer vehicles in 2020 and 2021 compared with the previous two years. And indications are a further 1.1 million were lost in the first quarter of this year alone. Today's new vehicles are tomorrow's used, so it stands to reason that as we move forward, we'll begin to see further pressures as the impacts of this shortfall become evident.

The pressure is being felt most keenly in the zero-to-six and sub-12-month market. But as time goes on, we will begin to see this affecting other age segments starting with the one-to-three-year sector over the next 24 months. But, the effect of shortages will inevitably trickle down to the late three-year and eventually to the three-to-five-year market.

The current economic factors are likely to last for at least the next 12 months, and with consumer confidence in decline, we are likely to see a reduction in the number of units sold this year. These factors combined are causing a realignment in used vehicle values, and prices in wholesale and retail markets are softening. We've been warning that the significant rise in used vehicle values was unsustainable, and it looks like the end is in sight.

But while prices may be easing, the lack of vehicles entering the market means they aren't falling off a cliff.

The fundamental question is: Will the future of the new vehicle market be 'push' or 'pull'? Will we return to a market with high volumes of pre-registrations, much tactical activity, heavy de-fleeting, and unattainable targets?

Many commentators believe this is the case and that OEMs haven't learned their lesson. When supply returns, we will again become a 'push' marketplace. However, I believe some OEMs may return to volume, as it's the business model they understand best. Others will remain driven by demand and, therefore, by profitability.

The emergence of a 'pull' market over the mid- to long-term would have a significant effect on the used-vehicle market as well: as scarcity moves from the primary to the secondary lifecycle of vehicles, residual values are likely to go up.





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**Arnold Clark**  
VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

# Fleet bodies lobby for 'doesn't cut the mustard' AER to be increased

Almost three-quarters of fleets believe electric reimbursement rate should be 10ppm or more

By Gareth Roberts

**T**he fleet industry is hoping that real world analysis of the cost of fuelling an electric vehicle (EV) will persuade HMRC to overhaul the advisory electricity rate (AER).

Having amassed almost 100 case studies, a delegation from the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) and the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) will meet HMRC officials this month to present their findings.

The two fleet bodies have been in discussions with tax officials to build a case to raise the AER – used to reimburse company car drivers for the cost of charging an EV – from the current rate of 5 pence per mile (ppm).

A call for fleets to share real-world examples of drivers, who were out of pocket from the current AER, was made last month (fleetnews.co.uk, June 22).

"It really struck a chord," said AFP chair Paul Hollick. "We've got quite a lot of real-life examples where AER hasn't been working."

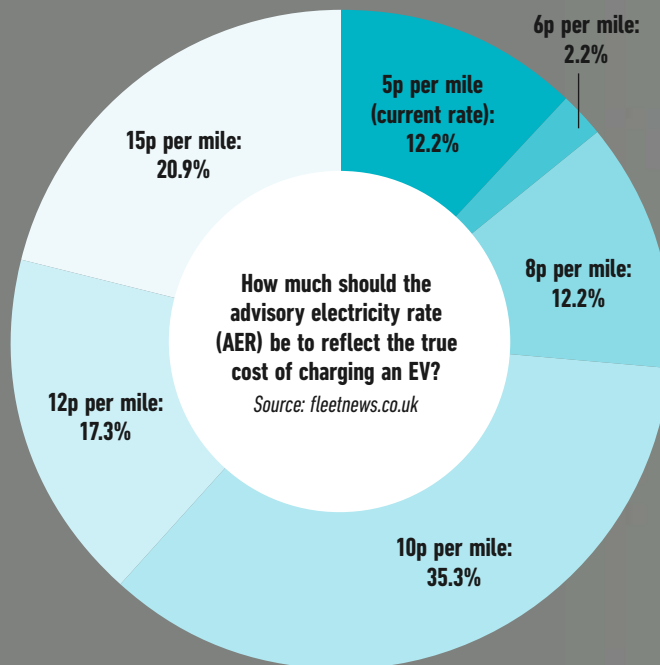
The AER was introduced in 2018. It was calculated using two key elements: the average cost of electricity in the UK from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); and average efficiency figures based on what battery electric vehicles (BEVs) were on the market.

Both of these elements have changed fundamentally over time.

In 2017, the average cost of standard electricity in the UK was 14.4p per kWh and was used to calculate the first AER, which was introduced in September 2018. The current AER is based on the 2021 average UK price of 18.9p/kWh.

Shortly after the annual average figure was published late last year, the AER was increased for first time, from 4ppm to 5ppm (fleetnews.co.uk, November 24, 2021), thanks to a campaign again orchestrated by the BVRLA and the AFP.

However, energy prices have increased significantly since that



calculation was made. The energy price cap increased by 54% in April 2022, and higher wholesale prices, especially after Russia invaded Ukraine, have led some to speculate that the cap could increase by a further 40%-50% in October.

Based on the increase in the energy price cap, which took effect in April, the average cost of electricity in the UK is now closer to 28p/kWh, almost double the 2017 figure.

Similarly, the range of BEV vehicles available has dramatically increased across both number of models available as well as the types of vehicles.

A representative bundle of vehicles available in 2018 was able to travel, on average, 4.63 miles/kWh – a representative bundle in 2021 has an average of 3.69 miles/kWh.

With more vehicles having larger, heavier batteries and a greater proportion of SUVs in the model mix today, this will have changed further.

Hollick told Fleet News at 10, the monthly webinar discussing the latest industry topics, that the 5ppm AER rate "doesn't cut the mustard".

"When you add in EV highway

charging as well, which could be up to 75p/kWh, it becomes really expensive," he said.

Tom Rowlands, MD of global EV solutions at Fleetcor, has been working with the AFP, sharing real-world data from its fuelcard business Allstar.

He told *Fleet News*: "When you look at the cost of home charging versus on the road, you can be talking hundreds of percentage points difference in terms of the expense."

"If you have someone who constantly has to charge on the road, because they don't have a home charger, then they're going to be completely penalised by the (on-the-road) rate versus someone who can charge all the time at home on an EV specific tariff."

Just one-in-eight drivers (12.2%) thinks the current 5ppm reimbursement rate reflects the true cost of charging an EV, according to a *Fleet News* poll.

Almost three-quarters (73.5%) of respondents believe it should be 10ppm or more, while one-in-five (20.2%) says it should be three times the current rate, with drivers

receiving 15ppm to cover their charging costs.

"A lot of drivers are moaning about being under reimbursed," said Hollick.

The current AER will be reviewed when BEIS publishes the annual, average electricity rate later in the year, and is expected to be increased.

However, Hollick said: "That's too late. We need it reviewed on a quarterly basis or even monthly right now."

The AER equivalent for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, advisory fuel rates (AFRs), are reviewed every three months.

Hollick is hoping HMRC can find a different set of indices than the annual figure from BEIS to review the AER on a more frequent basis, with energy price cap data from Ofgem a possible solution.

He is also hoping to persuade HMRC to define what would be a good at-cost calculation for those fleets which want to pay a different amount to the published AER.

"I know every case is different, but we need better clarity on actual cost and better indices," added Hollick.

National Grid fleet manager, Lorna McAtear, told Fleet News at 10 that one problem with reimbursing drivers at actual cost is getting receipts from charge point providers.

"The onus on companies is the burden of proof, but the more cars you have, the higher the risks and the more challenging the burden of proof is," she said. "If you've got a handful of vehicles then it becomes a little bit easier to manage."

McAtear says there are several options open to fleets to pay an at-cost reimbursement rate, including using fuelcards or specialist mileage data management companies.

National Grid is looking at several options and is considering taking fuel cost data from its own internal systems on a monthly basis and then using that to determine a lump sum payment made to each employee through their salary.

Hollick concluded: "Most fleets want to reimburse costs at the AER rate, but the downside is it's not fair and equitable at the moment."





“THE MORE CARS YOU HAVE, THE HIGHER THE RISKS AND THE MORE CHALLENGING THE BURDEN OF PROOF

LORNA McATEAR,  
NATIONAL GRID

## FLEET STREET

A monthly look at the big topics in fleet



By Paul Hollick,  
chair, AFP

**Fleet question:**  
How can I encourage my grey fleet drivers into lower

carbon vehicles?

Private cars tend to be older and more polluting than their company car equivalents and, for businesses that really care about their environmental performance, but make extensive use of grey fleet, this is a very pertinent question.

The solution that is perhaps most eye-catching – and becoming quite widely adopted – is a salary sacrifice scheme. At a time when benefit-in-kind tax rates for electric cars are low, this is an attractive way for an employee to leave their old, dirty model behind and get behind the wheel of a new, zero emissions vehicle. Many sal/sac providers look after virtually every aspect of scheme management, minimising the burden on the employer and adding to the attraction.

Other ideas can be effective, but involve compromises. A pool fleet of low emission vehicles could be created for employee use but this can be expensive, especially when considered in terms of utilisation, as well as creating possible managerial issues around ensuring the vehicle is kept in good condition.

Short-term rental is a further option although getting hold of hire cars is not necessarily easy and suppliers may simply be unable to provide the flexibility you need.

Finally, consider extending your fleet. Where employee cars are widely used, it can mean you are already spending quite a lot on reimbursing mileage costs. It may be worth undertaking an analysis to see whether company cars are a better option for some employees. This will not only help your environmental profile but also provide much greater control over other areas that are tricky to manage under grey fleet, such as vehicle, licence and insurance checks, as well as ensuring drivers are safe behind the wheel.

■ For further details about the AFP, visit [www.theafp.co.uk](http://www.theafp.co.uk).

# Plans to introduce Road Safety Investigation Branch welcomed

New independent body is expected to play major role in shaping future safety policies

By Gareth Roberts

**R**oad safety and driver training groups have welcomed the launch of an independent body to investigate the cause of collisions.

It's hoped that the new Road Safety Investigation Branch (RSIB) will help reduce crash-related deaths and injuries by identifying themes and common threads across incidents.

The unit will also look at the safety implications of changing technology, including the arrival of driverless vehicles.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "After a steady decline in roads deaths up to 2012, for the past decade the number of annual fatalities has sat stubbornly around the 1,750-mark."

Lower traffic volumes, thanks to the pandemic, saw that fall to 1,560 deaths in 2021, according to new data from the Department of Transport (DfT).

However, Gooding says that "post-pandemic we are likely to see the death toll rise again".

He explained: "To get back on a downward course we need to do something radically different, which is exactly what this new approach is

New body to identify common crash themes and assess new technology



about. The rail, aviation and marine investigation branches are internationally renowned. If the roads version has anything like their success, then we will all benefit from having markedly safer roads."

Seb Goldin, CEO of Red Driver Training, says the comparison between the new road safety team and the Air Accidents Investigation Branch, is also pertinent, given the rise in semi-autonomous driving technologies and the prospect of fully-autonomous vehicles.

He explained: "One of the key considerations in any kind of air-related accident is did human error play a part? Was it down to the pilot or the co-pilot, or was there a systems problem?"

"If we can get that approach into a world of road collisions, it makes a lot more sense, particularly with the amount of tech that is going into vehicles now."

Drivers are currently not required to show competence with semi-autonomous controls in a vehicle.

"The driving test has only just caught up with people using sat-navs," continued Goldin. "But we're getting in new cars and vans where some of these semi-autonomous technologies are now standard.

"What we'd like to see is them being incorporated throughout the life of the learner driver through

into the corporate world as well."

Currently, data and evidence is collated using in-depth study programmes, the Collision Reporting and Sharing System (CRASH), Forensic Collision Investigation reports and Prevention of Future Death reports.

Government expects the RSIB to use this data alongside that from insurance companies, vehicle manufacturers, the emergency services and the NHS to deepen the body of evidence on incident causes and improve road safety.

According to ministers, "the branch will not identify blame or liability and so does not replace police investigation. It will, instead, draw on all the available evidence to make recommendations to improve road safety and mitigate or prevent similar incidents in the future".

David Walker, head of road and leisure safety at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), says that, as the DfT statistics suggest, the "continuing level of road harm" across the UK requires "new insights".

"The introduction of an independent body with a singular focus on the causes of these incidents is a positive step, especially as the UK adapts to a rapidly changing transport environment," he added.

"The branch should be equipped with powers akin to other transport

investigation branches, including compulsion to provide evidence, ensuring it has a suitable scope to make recommendations. This approach has had proven benefits in the maritime and aviation sectors."

The decision to establish a new branch follows a public consultation, which showed strong support for a road safety investigation team.

It also comes after the conclusion of a four-year pilot programme – the Road Collision Investigation Project – which was led by the RAC Foundation and involved three police forces: Dorset, Devon and Cornwall; Humberside; and West Midlands.

The project received funding from the DfT and National Highways, and was backed by the National Police Chiefs Council.

The RAC Foundation, which has been arguing for a Road Safety Investigation Branch for many years, publishing a report calling for its formation in 2017, hailed the pilot programme a success.

Gooding said: "Working with three police forces and many other experts we have demonstrated that there is a strong case for implementing a fresh approach to the way we investigate the causes of death and injury on the road network."

The DfT expects to include measures to enable the creation of the branch in the forthcoming Transport Bill.



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# Delivering the goods

Self-driving technology is more likely to be used in transporting goods and people on fixed routes than in on-demand robotaxis, a leading pioneer tells *Andrew Ryan*

**O**ne of the popular visions for the future of self-driving vehicles is the robotaxi, an autonomous car which can be summoned on demand to give its passengers a lift to their desired destination.

However, this is unlikely to be the most practical, or useful, application of autonomous driving technology, according to one of the industry's leading pioneers.

"I'm of the opinion that we're probably not going to see cars carrying people autonomously any time soon," says William Sachiti, founder of Academy of Robotics, which is developing the autonomous Kar-go delivery vehicle.

"The reason why I think this is if you ask the question: what problem is trying to be solved?"

"The idea of summoning a vehicle to take you somewhere is already being done by services such as Uber, where you press a button on your phone and a driver turns up.

"No one wakes up and thinks 'my Uber is a terrible service, I wish someone made a better system'. People, generally, quite like it.

"When disruption happens, you find a part of it tends to come from someone waking up and thinking 'I need that in my life'.

"But no one thinks they need a self-driving car. It may be ok to have and it has its advantages, but if you look at the model of any sort of ride-hailing service, I don't think Lyft or Uber have been profitable on an annualised basis yet.

"So the model you want to replace doesn't actually make any money. So why are you doing it?"

Instead, Sachiti feels the more immediate future for self-driving technology will be in moving goods from A to B and people along set routes (see P18) with services such as shuttles.

He says an example of how it can be used to transport goods is the work Academy of Robotics is doing at RAF Brize Norton, the UK's biggest airbase at around 1,000 acres.

## SOLVING ISSUES

"The issue they were trying to solve is that they've got highly-skilled personnel who need to send stuff across from one side of the base to another," adds Sachiti.

"It takes 20 to 30 minutes to get there, and another 20 or 30 to get back, so you end up with highly skilled personnel spending time running errands. What we did was to get our car to do these trips instead.

"In these types of circumstances, automation is easy for logistics as the vehicle goes on the same route over and over.

"Even if it's 30 or 50 routes, they're still the same routes, so it's much easier than having to deal with new surroundings and why implementations of moving things from A to B makes sense."

Sachiti says the direction that legislation and technology for self-driving vehicles is being developed also points more towards fixed routes and transporting goods than robotaxis.

There are plenty of other examples of real-world trials in the UK of how autonomous driving technology can be used to transport cargo.

Oxbotica has recently completed the deployment of a zero-occupancy fully-autonomous vehicle on public roads in Oxford – the first of its kind in Europe – as part of a collaboration with AppliedEV.

The project sees Oxbotica integrate its autonomous vehicle software with AppliedEV's programmable and configurable electric vehicle (EV) platform.

The platform is configurable for specific applications such as logistics or industrial, and is offered with all-wheel drive in either off-road or on-road specifications.

It uses a combination of radar vision and laser-based sensors to provide the vehicle with an understanding of its surroundings, with multiple artificial intelligence (AI) applications continuously checking and explaining decisions.

"This Europe-first trial positions the UK as the number one destination for autonomous vehicle development and leapfrogs us towards commercialisation and the subsequent economic benefits in this hyper-growth technology category," says Gavin Jackson, CEO of Oxbotica.

"Our zero-occupancy, all-electric, fully-autonomous prototype is exactly the new-type vehicle that will







Wilko is investing in StreetDrone autonomous vehicles

form the mainstay of the transportation industry for decades to come.”

Industrial logistics and goods deliveries will be the first industries targeted for deployment – Ocado Group aims to use the vehicle from 2023 – with continued growth expected in further industries as the number of vehicles produced increases.

The trial in Oxford follows two years of extensive trials by Oxbotica to define its robust safety case and develop its system architecture, in both off- and on-road operations across the UK, Europe and North America.

### RISE OF THE ROBOTS

Another example of how autonomous technology is being used in the UK to deliver goods comes from the Co-op, which began using Starship Technologies’ robots for groceries and packages locally in Milton Keynes in 2018.

It has since expanded the service to Northampton and – in May – to Cambridge.



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“The move also supports Cambridgeshire County Council’s environmental agenda which includes a focus on reducing short car journeys and improving air quality,” says a Co-op spokesman.

This use of smaller, autonomous vehicles to deliver items straight from shops to local destinations will mark a return to neighbourhood-centric shopping, says Holly Watson Nall, lead product development engineer at autonomous vehicle developer StreetDrone.

“Hyperlocal deliveries essentially means you don’t need large-scale distribution centres. You can operate in a really local area in around a three kilometre (1.8 miles) radius and it also enables stores to pick and pack at a store and deliver to locals,” she adds.

StreetDrone is developing a small, electric autonomous vehicle called Pix-E, which has a top speed of 20mph and eight secure lockers to carry goods in. It aims to deploy the vehicle on UK roads by the end of 2023.

StreetDrone estimates that, with research showing home deliveries are set to double by 2030, clean, electric driverless technology such as Pix-E has the potential to remove up to two billion car journeys dedicated to shopping from UK roads every year and remove up to seven million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the atmosphere.

High Street retailer Wilko last year announced a £3 million investment in StreetDrone.

Wilko CEO Jerome Saint-Marc says: “This form of technology will allow small independents to compete on a level playing field with large online retailers by reducing the cost of home delivery and giving communities more ways to access their neighbourhood shops.

“But, critically as the volume of doorstep deliveries increases, it is incumbent on everyone to design solutions that enhance, not detract, from our neighbourhoods.”

StreetDrone is also developing autonomous technologies to use in industrial logistics, delivering goods in environments such as ports, freight yards and manufacturing facilities.

One of the projects it is working on is at Nissan’s



**Bots mean skilled personnel no longer act as delivery staff at RAF Brize Norton**

Sunderland plant. StreetDrone is one of the automation partners operating driverless yard tractors that move containers of vehicle parts from delivery warehouses to assembly lines.

The company says the repetitive driving of articulated goods vehicles along an arterial route on the site is managed by robots that are a useful substitute for scarce truck drivers.

**WIDER APPLICATIONS**

Self-driving vehicle technology will also be used in many other applications, says Sachiti.

“Making a car drive itself is no different to making robots navigate around supermarkets or a hospital,” he says. “I think you’ll find more autonomy will be used in places where there is a need, and I don’t see us at home needing an autonomous vehicle to take us to work.”

Autonomous technology is already used in a number of industrial areas, such as mines and warehouses and Ocado is one of the companies looking at how its can be used in other applications.

“We spend a vast amount of effort moving groceries around from the warehouses through to

customers,” says Alex Harvey, chief of advanced technology at Ocado Technology.

“There’s a huge opportunity for us with automation in our logistics operation, not only in terms of reducing costs, but also improving the proposition and providing even tighter timescales for delivery.

“All the way through the Ocado corporation, we heavily leverage automation, from receipt of the goods from a supply chain all the way through the warehouse to the last mile delivery and the last metre delivery through to a customer’s doorstep.

“The warehouses need robots with autonomous mobility to allow them to move in unstructured environments.”

Ocado is also looking at how the technology could be used to deliver groceries to people’s doors, not just to the street outside.

“When it comes to moving people, they’re happy to come out of the door and get into a vehicle,” says Harvey. “When it comes to groceries – and the average grocery basket has 50-plus items, chilled, ambient and frozen – we have to maintain the quality of the goods all the way through to the customer’s doorstep.”





## TOMORROW'S FLEET: SELF-DRIVING VEHICLES

"Now, my totemic example is a frail old granny at the top of a block of flats.

"It is unacceptable to ask her to walk down several times to pick up 10 bags, so we need to be able to develop robotic systems that, ultimately, can deal with the unstructured environment after getting out of the vehicle and being able to go to someone's doorstep whether it be navigating drives, parked cars, pets, children, toys or your neighbours, whatever it is."

### MOBILITY CONCEPT

Ocado is not alone in wanting to adopt autonomous technology in non-vehicle applications. Earlier this year Hyundai unveiled its future mobility concept, which included autonomous vehicle technology.

This revolved around the development of two

modular platforms which could be attached to a variety of objects to enable them to move autonomously.

These included passenger pods to transport people, as well as industrial applications such as autonomously moving luggage around in hotels, as well as other usually inanimate objects.

"From small tables to larger containers, our platforms make mobility extremely expandable," says Dong Jin Hyun, vice-president and head of robotics at Hyundai Lab.

"It's this ability that makes configuring spaces on demand possible. This includes living spaces, workplaces and even retail areas.

"Consider the example of business sharing office space: different businesses may need to change the layout of an office to suit them: the use of our Plug

& Drive modular platform can move the fixtures and furniture for them.

"In the world to come, you won't move your things, they will move around you. It's this ability that makes changing configuring spaces on demand possible."

Sachiti adds: "Self-driving car tech will be piggybacked to bring us many more things, just like the smartphone brought us all the great apps we love today such as Uber, Airbnb, Facebook and Instagram – it's all because of smartphones.

"Self-driving car tech will change our lives, not so much self-driving cars."

Oxbotica has trialled fully autonomous vehicles on public roads in Oxford



## EXPECT TO SEE INCREASE IN AUTONOMOUS SHUTTLES IN NEAR FUTURE

Autonomous shuttles carrying passengers on predetermined routes could become a common sight in cities in the future, says William Sachiti, of Academy of Robots.

"If you look at London, for example, the legislation is changing and speed limits are all becoming 20mph, so cars are being slowed down," he adds.

"The next step you are going to get is dedicated lanes for autonomous vehicles (AVs) – similar to bus lanes – and these will be used by shuttles that can do specific routes: imagine a tube route underground, but with a shuttle you can jump into.

"Within about three years, you will start to see more of these shuttles implemented in small clusters. Certain towns or regions will have AV-only lanes, and then you might find that extends to an A-road where one lane is AV-only.

"I think that is how it will spread. It will take up to 10 or 15 years to see AVs everywhere, but it will be pockets of progress as opposed to everywhere blanket."

Overground autonomous mass transit trials are already running in the UK, with the CAVForth pilot service taking place in Scotland later this summer.

Run by Stagecoach, in partnership with Fusion

Process, Alexander Dennis and Transport Scotland, this will see five single-deck autonomous buses operating over the Forth Road Bridge between Ferrytoll park and ride in Fife and the Edinburgh Park rail and tram interchange.

The buses are fitted with CAVstar, Fusion Processing's sensor and control technology that enables them to run on preselected roads without the safety driver having to take control.

Once operational, the buses will provide a service capable of carrying up to 36 passengers over the 14 miles across the bridge, with capacity for more than 10,000 passengers a week.





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Talking about

# DEGRADATION





# ATTENTION

Just like lithium-ion batteries in mobile phones, those used in vehicles lose capacity over time. **Andrew Ryan** looks at why this happens, what it means for fleets and how they can help minimise the impact

**W**e've all had first-hand experience of battery degradation – fresh from its box, the battery in a new smartphone seems like it will last forever.

Over time, however, the phone needs to be charged more often as its battery capacity reduces. This is also true of batteries used in electric vehicles (EVs), which share a similar chemistry.

In the case of an EV, though, the reduced capacity means the vehicle will suffer a decrease in range, while there are also concerns battery health will adversely affect an EV's residual value (RV).

However, this is not an issue many consumers currently worry about, says Chris Plumb, senior valuations editor at pricing guide Cap HPI.

He adds: "In the future, we believe that battery degradation data for used electric vehicles is likely to be just as important as mileage is for ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles as the used buyer will want to know the state of health of the battery/vehicle they are purchasing.

"However, in today's market, where nearly all new BEVs (battery electric vehicles) are supplied with an eight-year battery warranty, consumers appear to be less concerned."

In this feature, we look at the five big questions fleet decision-makers should be asking about battery degradation.

## 1 WHAT IS BATTERY DEGRADATION AND WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Degradation is the loss of capacity and power within a battery and occurs due to an array of chemical processes within its cells.

It happens either through the ageing of a battery over time when it is not in use – called calendar ageing – or the charging and discharging of it – known as cycling ageing. Both are unavoidable.

Calendar ageing is mostly affected by its state of charge and the length of time the battery is left, as well as the temperature the

vehicle is stored in. Cycling ageing results from chemical processes when the battery is being used and is typically influenced by ambient temperature, number and type of charge cycles, and depth and rate of discharge.

The actual capacity of a battery during its life is referred to as its state of health (SoH) and this is calculated using a percentage compared with when it was new and at 100%.

Put simply, a battery with a range of 200 miles, when new, but now with a 90% SoH would have a range of 180 miles.

While for many users a slight drop in capacity may not make much difference, the more severe the reduction is, the more potential there is for the vehicle not to be able to do the duty it was acquired to do.

A battery is considered to be at its end of life in a vehicle when it falls to a 70% SoH. Most experts expect a battery to reach this after about 10 years, although there is the potential for it to last much longer.

After this point, batteries can either be used in second-life applications such as domestic or industrial energy storage, or recycled.

## 2 HOW QUICKLY DO EV BATTERIES DEGRADE?

There is no simple answer to this. The rate of degradation is affected by numerous factors, including age, ambient conditions and how a battery is charged and discharged.

Research by EV battery data, health and warranty specialists Altium has found that a standard automotive cell could be at 80% SoH in its hard usage profile case after around four years, but it takes 15 years to get to the same state with easy usage.

"The really big thing is your use case," says Alex Johns, business development manager at Altium, who also chaired this year's European Electric Vehicle Battery Summit.

"If you're driving flat out, braking heavily, always rapid charging, you're going to knacker your battery.

"If you run a battery hard, it might have a ➔

## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Nicola Austin, fleet consultant at Zenith



Van fleet operators looking to transition to electric have an ever-increasing range of options to choose from.

More than a third of all new models are electric and a recent Society of Motor

Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) survey showed that 80% of operators felt the choice of models was sufficient to meet their needs.

There are currently 22 electric vans on the market supplied by 13 manufacturers, averaging 150 miles of electric range and 1,180kg payload – with key new releases of up to 240 miles range being announced.

The market outlook is healthy.

This is positive news for operators who are looking to transition to electric, but are still concerned about how far they can travel on a single charge. Despite statistics showing that most vans travel less than 100 miles per day, this is not quite the case for all users.

It is still a concern for operators that electric range isn't adequate, especially considering that an estimated 41% of van drivers do not have the capability to charge at home or in a depot. As a result, there is going to be a heavy reliance on the public charging network.

From this summer onwards, there will be new legislation coming into effect that will (among other measures) standardise payment methods, provide clearer pricing, and improve accessibility on the public network, which should address some of the charging anxiety issues drivers face.

Plus, with a £950 million Rapid Charge Fund set to support the rollout of 6,000 high-powered charge points, the network will expand over the next few years.

With a wide variety of vans available and a growing public charging network, now is the time for van operators, who are facing potential long lead times on electric vans, to plan for the transition to electric.

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Quarter of the life compared with if you run it sensibly. I know this because I used to run a taxi fleet at Gatwick Airport where we had five Tesla Model S's. We did 100,000 miles a year on each for three years, so we ran each of them for 300,000 miles.

"At the end of that, because we deployed various rules around no more than 30% DC charging, the cars were in chill/eco mode so they couldn't be run like a drag car and things like that. They were driven fairly gently.

"We had 82% state of health left, give or take very little, car to car, after 300,000 miles. That's amazing.

"It's not just a matter of a few tenths of a percent or a few percent between a hard-worked battery and a not-hard-worked one, it's hundreds of percent. You could see 400% more life if you run it gently."

Johns says as the average car in the UK is used for only one hour a day, in many instances the primary cause of battery degradation could be calendar ageing.

"That may only be 0.4% SoH a year, or something like that, but if you're intending to keep your car for a decade, that obviously adds up to 4%," he adds.

### 3 HOW WILL BATTERY HEALTH AFFECT RESIDUAL VALUES?

Cap HPI expects vehicle RVs will be impacted by the SoH of an EV's battery, but the extent is not yet clear.

"In its simplest form you could have two identical vehicles with matching mileages, age and condition. However, one has a retained battery health of 90% and the other 70%," says Plumb.

"In today's market, they attract the same value, but the vehicle with less degradation should be worth more.

"At the moment, it's too early to comment on the monetary impact of battery health on RVs. However, this is something we are actively monitoring and Cap HPI is in discussions with a number of parties who are interested in working with us."

The British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association (BVRLA) is also looking into this issue and is collaborating with other organisations, including the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).

"It is important that universally agreed standards are adopted across the market, giving everybody a quick, clear and consistent understanding of the status of a vehicle," says Toby Poston, director of corporate affairs at BVRLA.

"A common approach to assessing battery status, provided via a battery health certificate, would help



In today's market a vehicle with less battery degradation should be worth more.

operators to manage their fleet effectively while also having more predictable vehicle values at both ends of the lifecycle."

Poston says the BVRLA is also updating its industry-recognised Fair Wear & Tear standards, with a new car version due later this year.

"Keeping pace with – and anticipating – the changing vehicle parc, the new standard will contain more guidance relating to electric vehicles," he adds.

The situation is complicated further, says Liam Mifsud, programme manager at battery analytics specialist Silver Power Systems, as although two

batteries may have the same SoH, "one is going to last you another five years; the other six months".

This is because the way the battery has been treated up to that point will also affect how it will degrade in the future.

If it has been constantly rapid charged, for example, it's SoH will decrease faster in future than if the battery has only been charged slowly. This is why it is important fleets have access to data on the battery's history, says Mifsud.


"If you have a record of how the battery has been treated, then, arguably, you have a better RV because you can show that battery is superior to one where you have no data available," he adds.

"I could see a scenario developing in the years to come where people would prefer to buy a second-hand vehicle from a fleet which has a return-to-depot charging policy so the charging has been actively managed by the owner to conform to a certain criteria, as opposed to a fleet where the vehicles disappear every day and they get charged in random ways and random times."

### 4 HOW CAN A FLEET MANAGER MINIMISE BATTERY DEGRADATION?

BEV batteries already have built-in management technologies to protect them from the worst extremes of degradation.

These include thermal management systems to ensure the battery is operating and taking on charge at optimum temperatures: this is why batteries are able to rapid charge up to 80% ↻



**IF YOU'RE DRIVING FLAT OUT, BRAKING HEAVILY, ALWAYS RAPID CHARGING, YOU'RE GOING TO KNACKER YOUR BATTERY**

— — — — —  
**ALEX JOHNS, ALTELIUM**

Capacity before slowing for the remainder, as this prevents them from getting too hot.

Another way manufacturers protect the life of batteries is for them to maintain a residual capacity so they are never completely drained, as this can also damage a battery.

This is why vehicle makers sometimes quote both the overall size of the battery as well as a slightly smaller useable capacity.

However, there are also actions fleet decision-makers and drivers can take.

“One reason batteries degrade is heat,” says Johns. “Instead of charging at 4kW at home, for example, you could be charging at 100kW which is 25 times the speed and this is going to create heat.

“One recommendation is to charge as slowly as possible. That will be appreciated by the battery.”

Dependent on the use-case of the vehicle, this may not be possible as the driver may take the vehicle home at night and not have access to slower chargers, or if the vehicle is doing a lot of miles during the day then rapid charging is unavoidable.

“Some fleets are going to have business constraints that are going to conflict potentially with best practice for battery health,” says Pete Bishop, chief technology officer at Silver Power Systems.

Monitoring the health of batteries can be useful in these circumstances.

“You can balance that out by switching the vehicles to other drivers, changing the route they run on, to preserve an average state of health across your fleet, so, when you come to defleet, all the vehicles are in a similar condition,” he adds.

“You can now start to match the vehicle’s capability with the use it is going to be put to, potentially extending the life of that.”

However, getting hold of data may not be straightforward. Johns says manufacturers are “very touchy about allowing data out” although almost all modern EVs monitor battery health.

Silver Power Systems is one of the third-party companies which can collect this data, and does this by using a small IoT (internet of things) device located in the vehicle.

This transmits the data to cloud-based software and allows analysis of the battery, including current health and how it has been used and charged throughout its life.

Fleets should also avoid completely charging a battery or running it too low, as these also have a negative effect on battery health.

“If you’ve got a car that can do 300 miles and you rarely do more than 100 miles, just charge it to 50%,” says Johns.

“That will dramatically improve its lifespan.

“We would recommend drivers use the lower part of a battery’s capacity instead of the upper part, but try to avoid using the bottom 10%,” says Johns.

If a BEV is being stored, then “somewhere around half full and in a temperature around 20°C is the place to keep it for maximum life”, says Bishop.

## 5 WHAT SORT OF WARRANTIES ARE PROVIDED FOR BEV BATTERIES?

Nearly all manufacturers offer eight-year/100,000-mile battery warranties, covering defects in materials and workmanship, as well as degradation.

As an example, under Audi’s eight-year/100,000-mile warranty, where the battery SoH is measured



Charging the vehicle as slowly as possible could prolong the battery’s life

IF YOU HAVE A RECORD OF HOW THE BATTERY HAS BEEN TREATED, THEN, ARGUABLY, YOU HAVE A BETTER RV

LIAM MIFSUD,  
SILVER POWER SYSTEMS

by a Volkswagen authorised repairer and is found to be less than 70%, then it will be repaired or replaced under warranty subject to the following criteria.

The reduction in battery energy content must not have been caused by factors outside the carmaker’s control including, but not limited to:

- The tampering, removal or re-installation of the high voltage battery by unauthorised parties.
- The high voltage battery not being used, handled, charged or maintained as recommended by the manufacturer in the owner’s manual.
- The high voltage battery coming into direct contact with an open fire.
- The high voltage battery coming into direct contact with excessive amounts of water including through cleaning with high pressure cleaners or liquids being applied directly to the high voltage battery.

The repair will bring the high voltage battery back to the following state, dependent on the mileage/age of the vehicle at the time of diagnosis:

- Up to a maximum of 40,000 miles or three years after first registration, the energy content of the battery be repaired so it measures a minimum of 78% of the starting value.
- Up to a maximum of 60,000 miles or three years after first registration, the energy content of the battery be repaired so it measures a minimum of 74% of the starting value.
- Up to a maximum of 80,000 miles or three years after first registration, the energy content of the battery be repaired so it measures a minimum of 70% of the starting value.



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# Halving the car fleet is 'most controversial thing I've had to manage'

Defra's Dale Eynon on the goal of achieving zero emissions by 2027. *Stephen Briers* reports

**T**wo years ago, Dale Eynon presented a new strategy to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) executive directors team setting out an ambitious blueprint to achieve a 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 across the fleet of vehicles, boats and plant. Set against a 2020 baseline, the plan includes transitioning to a zero-emission vehicle fleet by 2027.

The strategy has been written to dovetail with Defra's target of net carbon zero for the Environment Agency, its biggest public body, by 2030.

That was in February 2020; a month later, the country went into Covid lockdown and the strategy was shelved as emergency measures and a completely new way of working changed the profile of the business.

It has taken until this year for group fleet services director Eynon to dust off the documents and rework the timelines. The 2030 deadline remains; it's just the speed of change that has been revised. Instead of a decade of transition, Defra now has less than eight years to achieve its target.

Eynon is unfazed by the shortened schedule. He had already made substantial progress during 17 years at Environment Agency, which makes up the bulk of the Defra fleet.

Phase one will "transform how we manage

our lease cars", he says. "We recognised that our business has been changing and part of the money we get from Government in grants and aid has been reduced for certain activities, such as lower-level pollutions, inspections and monitoring. We had to reflect that in our car use to show that we continue to provide good value for money, and we are managing our business correctly."

Since March 2020, the car fleet has decreased from around 4,000 to 3,350. By 2030, the target is 2,000.

To implement the necessary transformation, the agency underwent a fleet restructure which saw all the funding for leased cars centralised with Eynon's team and the costs moved to his budget – previously it was split across the whole organisation.

"The process for allocating leased cars now sits with me as well, which gives us better control of budget and accountability," he says.

The new fleet policy was launched with Environment Agency in April, a year later than intended, and will now roll out across other Defra bodies. It marks the first all-new fleet policy since 2012.

Among the fundamental changes is a move away from a mileage-based company car policy towards a two-tier approach based on frequency of use – how often people need a car to do their role – and operational response times, typically within four working hours for incident response.

The minimum frequency requirement is two working days per week based on a cost matrix of car hire: it is cheaper to hire a car for anything less than two days.

It is intended to add clarity on eligibility and to eliminate excess mileage by staff trying to justify their entitlement. All non-qualifying staff go into the Defra travel hierarchy, although former company car drivers were given the option of buying their old lease car.

The number of pool cars at area offices and depots has also been increased, while Defra will start a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) pilot project in September (see panel on p29).

All Defra cars are job-need; nevertheless, slashing the car fleet in half has significant implications for staff who pay a contribution to have private use.

The fleet team consulted widely with employees, HR, trade unions, executive directors and network groups to ensure the move is as painless as possible, but Eynon concedes the new qualifying criteria has resulted in a lot of push back from those now not eligible.

"It has been the most controversial thing I've had to manage in fleet, not least with the timing in a pandemic," he says.

"We kept giving a consistent message from the chief executive down. We introduced a SharePoint site with FAQs, and we posted the new policy five months before it went live, to give that clarity. We also gave line managers briefings and information packs to explain why we were making the changes, the process and what happened if you were no longer eligible."

So far, 450 cars have been returned, with another 500 due over the coming year or so. Eynon expects to get to the 2,000 by 2025/26, four years ahead of target.

"We are going through an 18-month programme of reviewing all drivers and applying the new policy," he adds. "Where drivers are no longer eligible, they are given six months' notice."

He has already saved around £1.2 million in lease costs over the past 12 months; in total, the fleet reduction is estimated to save £3m-£4m a year.

The other big change introduced in the new policy was to restrict the car choice list to ultra-low emission models only, typically full electric or plug-in hybrid ↻



## SPOTLIGHT: DEFRA

☞ Eynon rejected a suggestion to jump straight to EV-only due to the current supply shortages.

"But we will go full EV by 2023 for all our cars and light commercial vehicles (LCVs) so all those vehicles will be zero emission by 2027 – that's our commitment," he says.

Currently, 22% of the Defra car fleet is ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs), with almost 400 of those full electric; the first staging post is to hit 25% by the end of the year.

"We will smash that target," Eynon says. "Our average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on cars is already down to 78.7g/km."

The EV transition, aided by the new IRFS 16 (International Financial Reporting Standard) lease accounting rules, have encouraged Defra to trial alternative funding options for vans, with leasing now a consideration. It has dabbled "on and off" in the past but has now ordered 100 small electric vans on a three-year contract purchase with Novuna.

"The idea is to see where the market is in three years' time and, if nothing better has come along, we will either use our capital to buy them off Novuna or extend the lease for a bit longer," Eynon says.

"With the changes to IRFS 16, everything is capitalised so we can now use our capital for leases which we couldn't before."

Defra doesn't just operate a robust travel hierarchy, prioritising digital meetings and public transport over car share, car hire and company cars, it also has a workplace charging hierarchy for electric vehicles (EVs).

Light commercial vehicles take precedence, then pool cars, followed by operational leased company cars and, finally, office commuters.

It already has 200 charge points across the country and is now embarking on a £3m investment project to install another 100-150 chargers, working with Mitie. The existing network is mainly 7kW; the new units will be a mix of 7kW and 50kW with solar panels and battery storage.

Many sites are in rural locations where there are gaping holes in the public charging infrastructure.

"We are trying to future-proof our network, but we also want to provide options for the public which will require back office functionality," says Eynon.

Most vans are depot-based but some return to home if the driver is on standby.

With cars, Defra offers two charging options for staff: either the leasing company provides the charger with the driver repaying the cost over the four-year lease contract or they can sort out their own charger; Defra doesn't contribute anything. Uptake is split 50-50 between the two options.

The more challenging issue is to find a solution for staff without the capability to have a home charger. Eynon is working with the Association of Fleet Professionals on its kerbside charging initiative and has also signed up to Just Park which enables staff to co-charge their car with other people who live nearby.

Eynon is also pressing manufacturers to bring an electric pick-up truck to market; it's



Many Defra charging sites are in rural locations

**ORGANISATION:** Defra  
**GROUP FLEET SERVICES DIRECTOR:** Dale Eynon  
**TIME IN ROLE:** five years  
**FLEET SIZE:** 4,780 vehicles (3,350 cars, 1,430 vans), plus 720 boats and 1,900 plant  
**FUNDING:** cars – leased; vans – outright purchase, contract purchase  
**OPERATING CYCLE:** various, three or four years





a gap in the model portfolio that fleets like his are desperate to see filled. The other void is for vans that can tow.

"Our 4x4 fleet tows a lot and we're struggling to get ICE (internal combustion engine) models with that capability let alone electric," he says.

"Weight on the tow bar is the issue because an ICE has the engine at the front which counters it, but when you've got batteries that are flat across the bed, there is a danger of lifting the truck's front end. The design is challenging.

"We're trying to work across central government, with Ministry of Defence, and talking to National Highways, to get volumes together so we can interest a manufacturer to bring forward their development plans. As a wider government, we could pre-order thousands."

It's just one of a number of challenges regularly coming across the desk of the former *Fleet News* fleet manager of the year – others include disappearing discounts and lack of supply – but they will not deflect from his main goal of becoming a net-zero fleet.



WE WILL GO  
FULL EV BY 2023  
FOR ALL OUR  
CARS AND LCVs

DALE EYNON, DEFRA

# EYNON ON...

## ...MaaS

**Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has taken on near mythical qualities: a holistic travel solution that few businesses have managed to grasp.**

Dale Eynon's vision is to replace commuting, business travel and private use of a company car with a package tailored to the individual that they pay for on demand or via monthly subscription.

He started scoping out the concept with Enterprise, FleetOnDemand and Liftshare 18 months ago, but the plans were put on hold by Covid. However, he is now in the final stages of signing off a trial which is scheduled to start in September for 12 months across three sites, including Bristol, and involving 1,500 staff.

The service will be app-based where staff put in details of their journey and are given options based on cost, carbon and time. Mobility options include car share, hire, public transport, pool cars (including for weekend and evening personal use) and taxis with the potential to include e-scooters when they become legal outside of the pilot trials.

"It feels like a slick integrated system although we are struggling to load train and hotel information at the moment because they are on different systems," Eynon says. "We want people to make sensible decisions."

Billing will be separated for business needs and personal usage and there will be restrictions on choice: for example, longer distances will prefer train over car options.

"We will manage and refine these as the trial goes on," Eynon adds.

"We want to see what the system can deliver and where the limitations are. We also want to incorporate leasing, but we are probably two-to-three years off from that. But we hope to share our findings across Government and the private sector."

The system will report on key performance indicators (KPIs) including carbon and cost as well as operational efficiency for the business.

Eynon says: "It might only work in urban areas and not rural, so we are picking one of our rural depots to compare."

Longer-term, he has aspirations to move the entire fleet across to a usership model, not ownership where the priority is shared assets across Defra.

Within Environment Agency, plant is already shared across each area which has saved around £500,000. Vans are the next challenge. "As we transform the LCV fleet, that sharing agenda will be much stronger," Eynon says.



# Simplicity and transparency are key to Volvo winning more friends in fleet

The path towards electric and an embracement of digital sales channels are among strategies helping Volvo to establish itself as a key player in the premium car market. *Matt de Prez* reports



**V**olvo has made great strides in reinventing its image over the past seven years away from the safe, but dull, persona. More recently, the Swedish brand has undergone a significant transformation as it readies itself for an electric future, embraces digital sales channels and seeks a larger share of the corporate car parc.

Leading the brand's fleet and remarketing strategy is Rob Morris who joined the manufacturer in January 2021. He replaced Steve Beattie, who had successfully delivered on a plan to get the marque featured on more choice lists.

An influx of updated products and the launch of

Volvo's first two electric cars cemented its credibility with corporate customers. Today, 95% of its true fleet order bank is for plug-in vehicles.

Morris says: "There's been some significant changes in the product, but don't let that take away from anything that our teams have done. We've changed the way in which we engage with the marketplace, and we've changed to have a premium mindset. That's been a significant part of it."

Morris comes from Mercedes-Benz, where he was national fleet operations manager, and has been joined by ex-BMW man Jack Munford, as national fleet sales manager. Together they bring valuable premium-brand experience to Volvo.

Volvo's penetration of the Fleet200 (the UK's biggest fleet operators) is now at its highest level and Morris says the brand is currently trading at 20% ahead of the premium true fleet market.

It hasn't been plain sailing, however. With Morris joining amid a Coronavirus lockdown and Volvo suffering the same component supply and production challenges as other carmakers, managing customer communications has been a core part of his role.

"We initiated regular webinars, with the leasing industry, for example, to really to open the lines of communication around production/supply challenges, model deviations, and produced lead time reports. The market has reacted really positively to what we've done," says Morris.

Overall sales stand at 19,184 units for the first half of 2022, down almost 30% on 2020. Production has been hampered by lockdowns in China, which caused a shortage of certain components primarily affecting the production of fully electric and plug-in hybrid cars.

Morris adds: "Our volumes this year are back versus initial plans, which you would expect, but we are already planning next year to return to what we originally planned to deliver in 2022."

Part of the volume uplift will come from the introduction of two new products: a large electric SUV successor to the XC90 and a smaller compact model to sit beneath the XC40. The brand is also opening a new factory in Slovakia, which will boost its capacity by around 250,000 cars per year.

## SME PORTAL

A key part of Volvo's new strategy is enhancing its digital presence. For fleets with fewer than 50 vehicles, the new Volvo Fleet and Business Online portal provides vehicles at a pre-discounted price.





Morris says the platform is “market-leading” and adds that it removes the “negotiation phase” for customers who want a simple and straightforward transaction.

The principles follow those successfully established with the Care by Volvo service offered to retail consumers, but the details have been tailored to meet the priorities and preferences of fleet and business customers.

It provides up-to-the-minute details of all available Volvo models, both those that are in stock and build-to-order cars.

Delivery lead times are given, and the portal can be used to monitor the status of any live orders.

Cars can be financed via Fixed or Flexible Care by Volvo subscription services, with all-inclusive monthly payments to cover costs such as servicing, wear and tear maintenance, roadside assistance and vehicle tax. The Flexible package allows cars to be changed or the subscription to be cancelled with just three months’ notice; the Fixed contract option is for 36 months, with a lower monthly fee.

#### TAKING ORDERS FROM LEASING COMPANIES

A new system is also being introduced that will see Volvo take orders directly from leasing companies.

The manufacturer will handle the order inbound process and the invoicing mechanism, while vehicle preparation and handover will be passed on to a Volvo retailer.

Morris says: “What we’re doing, as a manufacturer, is making it easy for the market to order and invoice. We’re streamlining that mechanism.

“Our retailer partners are still going to be responsible for delivering those cars to customers and for the delivery of the handover experience.”

The move aligns with Volvo’s wider plans to move all transactions online by 2030 and transition its retail network to an agency model agreement, where the retailer is paid for services provided. Volvo dealers already offer aftersales services for Polestar vehicles and will be responsible for delivering a similar service for electric Volvo vehicles, which come with inclusive maintenance packages.

Over the next 12-18 months, Morris also plans to introduce a solution that will update end-user fleet customers on the status of their order which he sees as a particular pain point for customers.

He explains: “From our own research, and from talking to leasing companies, the number one question from drivers is ‘where is my car?’. Our vision is that we can create a solution that is going to update the end-user directly.”

#### PRODUCT SIMPLIFICATION

Following the introduction of its first electric car, the XC40 Recharge, Volvo has embarked on a range simplification exercise, cutting the number of derivatives from more than 200 to 60. It removed

conventional petrol and diesel engines across the majority of its line-up, focusing instead on mild hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrains.

All Volvo models can now be specified with a plug-in hybrid engine, with most model lines offering a choice of two power outputs. For the 60 and 90 series models, a new battery was introduced last year, which boosts the zero-emission capability to more than 40 miles, reducing the benefit-in-kind tax to 8%.

Moving forward, electrification will become increasingly more prevalent in the line-up and all Volvos will be fully electric by 2030.

Ordering a Volvo is now more straightforward, with three fixed specification trim grades offered across the model range. Drivers can simply pick a colour and choose from different interior trim and wheel options.

Morris says: “The customer response to simplification was very positive. Our ambition is to achieve a consistent level of positioning within the marketplace. We want to be available to the same drivers and the same grade of drivers month in, month out.

“As we move towards an omnichannel approach, to facilitate those customers who want to transact online, the fewer variables we have makes it easier for the customers to choose. And, on the flip side, when we get to the used market, you then have the benefits of simplification there too.”



**HEAD OF FLEET AND  
REMARKETING:** Rob Morris  
**HEADQUARTERS:**  
Maidenhead  
**KEY FLEET MODELS:**  
C40, XC40, XC60  
**2021 TOTAL SALES:** 48,260

**New battery boosts  
plug-in range of XC90  
to more than 40 miles**



# 'Commercial mobility hubs' are the way forward for Flex-E-Rent

Expansive £1m Rugby flagship depot signals Enterprise's intention to continue growing its van, truck and specialist vehicles division. *Gareth Roberts* reports

**E**nterprise is investing in its 28-strong network of Flex-E-Rent depots, with its new £1 million flagship site in Rugby providing a blueprint for the future.

Billed by Flex-E-Rent as a 'commercial mobility hub' for businesses needing flexible access to vans, trucks and specialist vehicles, it occupies a 3.5-acre site that replaces a much smaller depot in Coventry.

It includes three heavy goods vehicle (HGV) workshop bays and seven van bays, as well as both washing and valeting facilities, and can accommodate 3,000 vehicles.

The site also has maintenance and servicing facilities, which Enterprise says will help minimise vehicle downtime.

Danny Glynn, managing director of Enterprise Flex-E-Rent, says the Rugby depot is the "prototype" for

how it intends to deliver commercial vehicle 'mobility' in terms of size and capability.

"It is a clear signal of our ambition to expand and adds another important link to our national branch network, providing businesses with commercial vehicles, technology and expertise essential to keep people and goods moving," he says.

## INCREASING DEMAND

Glynn adds: "The West Midlands is a key part of the UK economy and there is increasing demand for commercial vehicles from many business sectors.

"This new depot will ensure we continue to provide a first-class service to our customers and support the growth of the regional economy."

It's a dozen years since Enterprise launched its commercial vehicle rental division and Glynn has been

there from the start. He joined Enterprise as a trainee accountant and spent eight years as a financial controller before launching Flex-E-Rent in 2010.

"When we started, we would have done some tipper and some dropsides, but outside of that everything was LCV (light commercial vehicle)," he explains.

The acquisition of Burnt Tree, which was completed in 2014, enabled Flex-E-Rent to diversify its fleet, particularly in terms of HGVs and temperature-controlled vehicles.

It also gave the new business scale. Burnt Tree's fleet of 17,000 commercial vehicles helped increase the Flex-E-Rent fleet beyond 25,000 vehicles. It also brought into the fold a network of 20 branches and the knowledge and expertise of its employees.

The acquisition of SHB Hire in 2019, with a rental





There are seven bays dedicated to vans at the flagship Rugby depot

“I'M NOT SURE THERE IS ANYONE ELSE IN THE MARKET THAT CAN PROVIDE A CUSTOMER WITH A CAR TO RENT FOR AN HOUR OR AN HGV TRACTOR UNIT FOR SEVEN YEARS”

DANNY GLYNN, ENTERPRISE FLEX-E-RENT



**COMPANY:** Enterprise Flex-E-Rent  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR:** Danny Glynn  
**FLEET SIZE:** 70,000 commercial vehicles  
**VEHICLES ON FLEET:** light commercials up to 44-tonne tractor units, plus specialist vehicles, including traffic management, construction, temperature-controlled, all-terrain buggies and accessible minibuses  
**PARENT COMPANY:** Enterprise Holdings  
**OTHER DIVISIONS:** Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Enterprise Car Club

fleet of more than 18,500 vehicles, would further increase Flex-E-Rent's reach.

Enterprise had always favoured organic growth, not growth through acquisition, but buying both National and Alamo in 2007 changed its outlook, according to Glynn.

"It went better than anybody could have foreseen and was an unbelievable strategic decision for the business," he explains.

"From then on, we've really moved into understanding that good acquisitions can really help the business grow and then, when it became apparent that the company wanted to become a mobility provider as opposed to just a car rental company, everything was on the table.

"I'm not sure there is anyone else in the market that can provide a customer with a car to rent for

an hour or a HGV tractor unit for seven years."

Today, having grown its Flex-E-Rent fleet by 20% on pre-pandemic levels, it operates 70,000 commercial vehicles ranging from small vans to 44-tonne tractor units, including specialist vehicles such as traffic management, construction, temperature-controlled, all-terrain buggies and accessible minibuses.

"The only gap we've currently got in the UK is refuse," says Glynn. However, that could soon be filled given the recent acquisition of Dublin-headquartered Walker Vehicle Rentals.

Once integrated, the business will operate as part of Enterprise Flex-E-Rent.

Its customer base includes local authorities and companies in the logistics, waste and food industries.

"We're going to learn from that business and at some point, hopefully in the future, we'll be able to put that knowledge to use here," Glynn says.

In the meantime, work on improving Flex-E-Rent's network of UK depots has been ongoing, with five sites – Grays, Bridgend, Manchester, Newcastle and Rugby – completed in the past 18 months.

The multi-million pound improvement programme has been driven by a desire to benefit staff retention and recruitment, and cater for fleet customers looking to be more efficient, with vehicle availability key.

#### REDUCING DOWNTIME

As well as bricks and mortar, it has also invested more than £1m in new equipment to reduce commercial vehicle downtime, with the aim of keeping customers on the road for longer.

"It's building our network to be able to support not just where we want to be today, but where we want to go tomorrow," says Glynn.

The new investment diagnostic and workshop equipment includes specialist tooling and direct system links to manufacturers, as well as roller brake testers and ancillary equipment maintenance such as tail-lift weight testing.

It has boosted Enterprise Flex-E-Rent's in-house workshop capability by 30% across all UK depots.

Enterprise says it will enable it to shift vehicle off-road time (VOR) away from unplanned, reactive maintenance events towards scheduled maintenance, which involves regular servicing or compliance checks.

It has been estimated that downtime costs UK fleet operators in excess of £2 billion per year, and that fleet vehicles which are part of a maintenance programme to experience 20% fewer unplanned downtime days.

Enterprise uses a range of metrics for VOR, including tracking the percentage of fleet off the road and key-to-key time.

It also acknowledges that managing vehicle downtime is that much harder since Covid, coupled with other macro-economic and supply chain issues.

A UK-wide shortage of parts, technicians and new equipment means keeping vehicles on the road is now more challenging than ever.

"We are adapting and investing to keep pace with customer demand at a time when rental is becoming a core strategy helping commercial operators ensure flexibility and quickly add or reduce capacity," explains James Walker, group service maintenance and repair manager at Enterprise Flex-E-Rent.

"We know vehicle downtime has a significant impact on our customers and our customers' customers – so improving key-to-key time is vital.

"This new investment in technology enables us to improve preventative in-house maintenance, reducing costly unplanned and reactive off-road time."

With Enterprise, like other rental providers and fleets, facing longer lead times for some vehicles, Glynn says: "We're definitely having to keep vehicles for longer.

"I'm not sure if the age of the fleet has increased, but we're starting from a strong point so I would hope that our overall fleet, in terms of age, still compares well with the market."

He acknowledges that the biggest challenge is that this increases the risk of greater downtime, hence the company's focus on measures aimed at mitigating this for its customers.

Enterprise supplies rental vehicles into key service areas such as infrastructure, logistics and home-delivery, where effective measurement and management of VOR is an ongoing priority.

"Vehicle availability is one of the things that we're graded higher on by our customers in comparison with our competitors," notes Glynn.

While vehicle availability is crucial for customers, decarbonising operations and electrification comes a close second, he says.

In terms of electric vehicles (EVs), it built its first EV workshop bay recently and, while the pace of electrification is slower than that of cars for commercial vehicles, Glynn is keen to ensure that Enterprise if there to support customers.

"Three years ago, we would buy an EV based on an order from a customer, we're now buying our own electric fleet and utilising it as and where customers see fit," he says.



## Hot stuff! Decision-makers line up to test newest EVs as the temperatures soar

CCIA back with a bang as more than 20 brands demonstrate their vehicles

By Matt de Prez

**T**his year's Company Car in Action (CCIA) welcomed 800-plus fleet decision-makers over two days, again making it the largest event of its kind in the UK.

There were thousands of test drives conducted during the two days, as visitors explored the UTAC Millbrook site in Bedfordshire and experienced the four test routes designed specifically for the event.

Temperatures soared to 27°C (80°F) on the steering pad, where 21 of the fleet sector's most important vehicle manufacturers had assembled a selection of their latest and greatest models.

Despite the ongoing vehicle supply challenges, there were almost 150 cars available to drive at CCIA 2022. All the manufacturers had key fleet

sales people on hand too, to meet, greet and answer any questions.

Electric models dominated this year's show, with every brand showcasing at least one battery-powered car. Event sponsor Vital EV made sure all the cars remained charged using its fleet of mobile charging stations.

Key first drive opportunities at the event included the new Ford E-Transit, Nissan's new Ariya electric SUV and the Toyota bZ4x.

Some of the winners from this year's Fleet News Awards were also available to test, including BMW's highly desired i4 and the new Peugeot 308.

Genesis made its CCIA debut this year, showcasing its model line-up, including the new electric GV60, and giving decision-makers the opportunity to get to the brand and

its VIP-style "Genesis difference" approach to sales.

Paul Kirby, 'the electric van man' and owner of EV Essentials, assembled a selection of electric vans from a variety of manufacturers, for attendees to see and drive. He was also on hand to share his expertise with visitors.

Next year's event will be even bigger and better, with greater emphasis expected to be put on the plethora of electric vans coming to market, without losing the appeal of the car driving opportunities.

Make a note in your calendar for 14-15 June, 2023.

To read more about CCIA 2022, including the latest updates from all the manufacturers that took part and key takeaways from the expert speaker sessions, visit [www.fleetnews.co.uk/CCIA2022](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/CCIA2022)



Save the date: 14-15 June 2023 | Millbrook Proving Ground





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# WHICH EV IS BEST FOR **YOUR FLEET?**

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[www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data](http://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)





# WINNER: NATIONAL GRID

Possessing the right cultural ethos is driving force behind wellbeing, diversity and inclusion win. *Matt de Prez* reports



Lorna McAtear, fleet manager, National Grid (front centre), with team members after picking up the award



### JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Fleet manager Lorna McAtear has developed a culture of diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing both in her team and among her drivers, ensuring it links in with the wider business ethos. Strong on mental health, she displays kindness and compassion to ensure it is at the forefront on the company agenda and within the National Grid fleet.

**W**ellbeing and Diversity & Inclusion in Fleet is an award introduced for 2022 that recognises the companies which look after their car and van drivers in the best way possible.

The inaugural award was presented to National Grid fleet manager Lorna McAtear, who has developed a culture of diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing both in her team and among her drivers, ensuring they link in with the wider business ethos.

The fleet team's initiatives form part of National Grid's own comprehensive Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy.

McAtear, who has been in the role for two years, says one of the keys to diversity is "respect for and appreciation of differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, religion and more".

### Fleet News: Do you think there is a lack of diversity in the fleet industry?

**Lorna McAtear:** We've still got areas that are woefully inadequate. There are meetings I go into, and I will walk in a room of about 40 people and I'm still the only female. I don't think that's intentional. I just think we haven't managed to get enough

people to understand you can move into fleet.

We are seeing more females and more younger people coming into the industry and I think that's a reflection of the industry moving into areas where it needs different skill sets, such as sustainability.

Fleet managers also very often have to be a counsellor, they have to sit down and advise, they also need to have enough emotional intelligence to be able to handhold drivers that are really struggling.

### FN: Driver wellbeing has become a larger focus in recent years, do you think the problem is bigger than people have realised?

**LMcA:** I do, and I think you could look at that as behaviourally cultural as well. As a truck driver you might not tell somebody that you're suffering because it's not the macho thing to do. I think the plight of Covid and all of the challenges people have had has made them braver; they've been more forthcoming about the challenges they've had.

It is seriously hard work being away from a family overnight and, even if you're not an HGV driver doing that, you might be a company car employee that's doing a project and you're working away for a week. You've all been away for work, delivering

your product, or your projects, and you still need that support when you're doing it.

Covid has made people much more aware of drivers because we needed those deliveries. We became much more aware of utility sectors because we still needed the power and the water and the gas and the telephones, and everything else you need to keep running the country.

### FN: What support do fleet managers need to help them improve the wellbeing of their drivers and to improve diversity and inclusion?

**LMcA:** You have to have that whole cultural ethos and I think at National Grid we're all extremely lucky because that ethos is there. I haven't had to come up with a fleet policy in order to do diversity and wellbeing because the company is already on board with it.

If your company doesn't have a culture that has that at the forefront of its agenda, then I think you are going to struggle.

### FN: Does fleet have any specific wellbeing or diversity and inclusion challenges when compared with other parts of a business?

**LMcA:** You don't see your drivers all the time, often they are on their own. So, they're lone workers. How do you make sure you're in touch with that person?

We've got the constantly changing regulations and updates, too. I think people underestimate sometimes when your drivers are out and about there's more stress, such as when you're going into a clean air zone, or remembering to pay the Dart Charge. The newest challenge for us is the cost of living because that's not just the company car drivers, it's anyone expected to commute into the office now. Costs have gone up so much that driving just adds a new element to everything you're doing.

### SPONSOR'S COMMENTS:

Free2move is the leasing and mobility provider of Stellantis, one of the largest automotive manufacturers in Europe. Our people make the difference and our strength lies in our diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences. Powered by our diversity, we lead the way the world moves. Free2move has been established to provide the most relevant leasing and mobility solutions for our customers. In addition, to help clients drive

efficiencies, reduce costs and increase safety via our vehicles and services. Therefore, as a proud sponsor of the Fleet News Diversity and Inclusion in Fleet award 2022, we are delighted to congratulate this year's deserving winner: National Grid for its sterling work in this important area.

At Free2move, we recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, in everything we do. We are also encouraged by the increasing consideration of wellbeing, diversity and inclusion by many clients.

# CONTROL YOUR SMR COSTS

Supply shortages of new cars and vans are forcing fleets to run vehicles for longer. But there are ways they can minimise the impact of increased wear and tear. *Catherine Chetwynd* reports

**I**t is no secret that due to a series of seismic world events, most fleets are struggling to get their hands on new vehicles.

Factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the blocking of the Suez Canal and war in Ukraine are causing a shortage of critical parts and components, leaving organisations facing lengthy lead times between ordering a vehicle and taking delivery of it.

Compounding this is that fleets are being starved of stock in preference to the retail market, says Peter Golding, founder of FleetCheck.

"If manufacturers can sell with no discount to retail buyers and the benefit to fleet is substantial reductions, then keeping a vehicle longer starts to make more sense," he says.

"This is going to bring a long-term change because the supply of vehicles is an ongoing problem."

The scale of the issue was highlighted in the recent British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association (BVRLA) Technical and Operational Management forum which showed the average age of a vehicle on fleet grew from three years in 2019 to a little more than three-and-a-half years in 2022.

This trend was also highlighted in the 2021 Operational Fleet Insight Report, produced by the AA in partnership with Rivus Fleet Solutions.

This showed that 16% of commercial van users increased the lifespan of their older vehicles in response to the circumstances created by the pandemic.

One consequence of a vehicle being kept beyond the length of time they were originally meant to serve on a fleet is that the original total cost of ownership (TCO) calculations no longer apply: service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs will rise due to increased wear and tear.

To date, it has been quite common for company vehicles to be operated on a 36-month term and be returned or sold as they become due for an MOT. Obviously, four or five years on fleet would cross that threshold.

A vehicle may also now be on the road outside its warranty, leaving some items unprotected; and, for older fleet vehicles, low emission zones are proving newly relevant and expensive.

Increased vehicle off-road time is another consequence of more SMR.

Managing it has always been important, but now that rental vehicles are also in short supply, getting a daily hire to tide drivers over while vehicles are maintained or while waiting for a new one is often no longer an option.

## TAKING ACTION

There are a number of actions fleet managers can take to mitigate the increased costs.

The first is to collect data about the performance of both vehicles and drivers.

This can often be done through a provider's app on the driver's smartphone, which guides them through the information needed to paint an accurate picture, or telematics.

These tools allow fleet managers and their SMR provider to use data to predict what might go wrong and when.

"That means we can start to schedule in maintenance according to the mileage and plan that to minimise downtime," says David Bushnell, director of consultancy and strategy for Fleet Operations.

The information also highlights which vehicles are least reliable and which drivers are the highest risk, giving opportunities for further remedial action.

Bushnell adds fleet operators should make sure driver responsibilities are enforced.

"Drivers will get frustrated with older vehicles because they wanted a new one," he says. "And try to manage overdue or missed services."

Other measures which can reduce SMR costs

include ensuring vehicles are not overloaded, says Simon Staton, managing director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

"Overloading can have an impact on tyre wear," he adds. "Drivers should be educated on the cost of SMR incidents they may contribute to such as tyre damage."


This should encourage them to take more care of their vehicles.

Staton says fleets can also save money by balancing operational and financial objectives with satisfying driver needs.

"A fleet manager may be using a panel van for roles where an estate car could suffice," he adds.

And where vehicles are not being used, these can become part of a pool to be deployed instead of using rental when vehicles are off the road.

Escalating fuel prices are also alleviated by this approach – fuel efficiency and a good driving style are paramount.

Paul Hollick, chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals, says: "Fleet managers should also work closely with their insurer to see their premiums do not go up as vehicles get older and make sure drivers are aware that their vehicle 





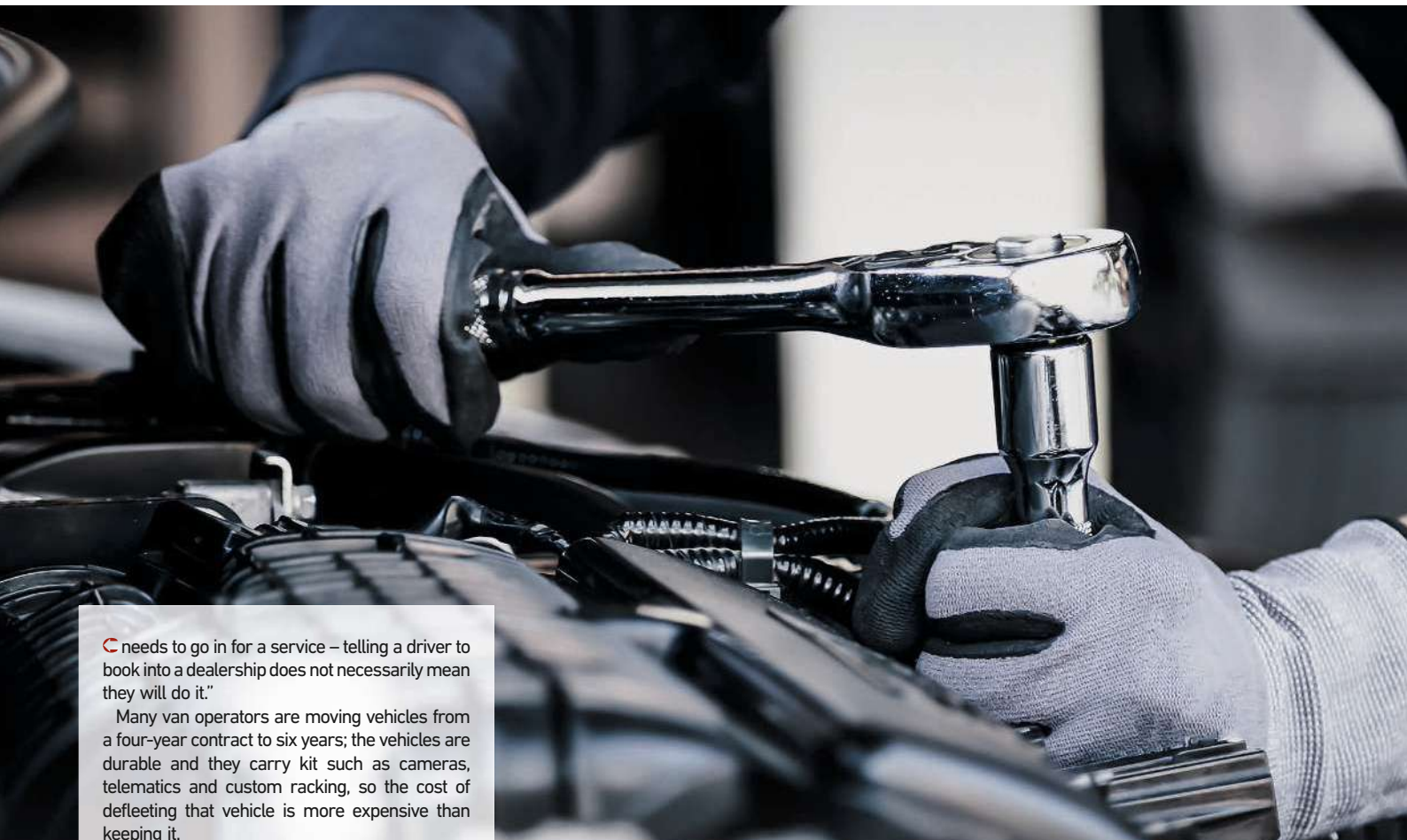
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PENNY STOOLMAN,  
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needs to go in for a service – telling a driver to book into a dealership does not necessarily mean they will do it.”

Many van operators are moving vehicles from a four-year contract to six years; the vehicles are durable and they carry kit such as cameras, telematics and custom racking, so the cost of defleeting that vehicle is more expensive than keeping it.

“Electric vehicles are also showing durability and operators will realise that running them for six years is not prohibitive,” says Golding.

### PAY-AS-YOU-GO MAINTENANCE

All these factors may lead to fleet managers opting for pay-as-you-go contracts rather than a bundled maintenance package.

FleetCheck has seen this happening. “It can be cost-effective and we work closely with Epyx on the 1Link programme for this,” says Golding.

Many leasing companies and SMR providers have a network of garages, sometimes with fixed prices. “Using a network over a main dealer brings a substantial reduction in labour costs,” says Golding.

“The exception to that is high-value marques such as BMW or Mercedes-Benz with high mileage, where going outside the main dealers could affect the residual value.”

And Fleet Assist recommends fleet managers have access to an eclectic garage network that offers options such as franchised dealers, independents, fast-fit and mobile to cover all corners, as many repairers were offering restricted services or were closed during lockdowns.

“By working with a trusted partner, businesses can benefit from savings of up to 30% on standard dealership labour rates and parts, and all prices in our UK garages are checked for fairness and consistency,” says Penny Stoolman, managing director of Prestige Fleet Servicing.

Fleets could also regulate mileage peaks in vehicles by reallocating vehicles from a high-mileage driver to a low-mileage employee and

vice versa to further reduce maintenance bills.

But Golding points out: “On commercial vehicles that’s more acceptable, but people can be very protective of their cars because they are paying BIK (benefit-in-kind tax) on them, and car buyers are driven by the perk of a company car rather than the practicality.”

Managers are also turning to grey fleet vehicles to keep down costs. “This will continue to rise; 40% of work vehicles on the UK’s roads can now be categorised as grey fleet,” says Stoolman.

But managers remain responsible for ensuring a vehicle used for business is maintained and roadworthy, even if their company doesn’t own it, she adds.

### BE PROACTIVE

A growing number of fleets, including British Gas and national police fleets, are offsetting parts delays by using salvage or recycled parts for non-structural repairs via the likes of Synteq and Copart.

Former British Gas head of fleet Steve Winter is a major advocate.

“What surprises me is the number of fleets which aren’t considering the use of green parts,” he says. “The cost savings and environmental benefits are clearly visible.”

Organisations should also be questioning how they do things and consider seemingly outside-the-box actions such as viewing their fleet operation as a potential revenue generator, says Rory Mckinnon, sales director at Holman.

“Proactive fleet management ensures vehicles are inspected more often – every 12-to-26

weeks, dependent on usage,” he adds. “This will avoid unscheduled maintenance that is more costly in terms of the actual work and vehicle downtime.”

Tyre inspections are a case in point. If a driver pre-books a change, the tyres will be on the shelf when they turn up at the garage, and compliant with company policy on brand and price.

“And, through finance lease, they benefit from higher residual values at disposal time and reduced extension rentals thanks to lower depreciation. This allows them to offset some SMR costs against the upsides of the vehicle market,” adds Mckinnon.

“The more customers use a vehicle, the more maintenance costs can be linked to the income generated by the asset; and conversely, once the wheels stop turning, so does the cost, which became clear during the pandemic.”

If fleet managers change the way they operate their fleets, collect data and use that proactively, they can mitigate the worst of long lead times and resulting costs.

It takes planning and a constructive approach. But, given the perfect storm businesses are facing, these are necessities, not options.



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# 'Perfect storm' of woes puts fleet bosses on their mettle

Fleet decision-makers face a raft of challenges, but there are solutions as well as new ways of working



By Stephen Briers

**L**engthening delivery times caused by the semiconductor and other component supply issues dominated discussions at the *Fleet News* roundtable sponsored by Holman, held at Huntingdon racecourse in May.

With a knock-on impact on parts shortages resulting in longer maintenance downtime, shrinking discounts and a lack of rental vehicles, fleets described the situation as "a perfect storm", pointing to the added woes of rising fuel and energy prices.

**Fleet News: How are vehicle delays affecting your business?**

**Lorna McAtear, National Grid:** Discounts are disappearing, prices keep increasing, supply delays mean constant requotes and vehicles are

being pulled. When we are requoting, is that down to the manufacturer or the leasing company, because it's the driver receiving the message to say their car has been cancelled. What was a five-minute automated process (quotes/orders) is now manual, taking much longer.

**Debbie Floyd, Bauer Media:** It's a painful situation at the moment, a perfect storm with vehicle supply issues and funding complexities, including salary sacrifice which we are looking into. We have so many more touchpoints with the driver, keeping them informed about all the changes.

**John Hole, PHS:** Having a single source supply strategy has helped us to negotiate price guarantees on our orders, but we are still seeing cancellations. There is also a knock-on in terms of cost of repairs as vehicles get older, which is made worse by the delays on parts supply.

**Sarah Sharples, Bauer Media:** Drivers don't understand; they think we are being awkward.

**LMcA:** I've done so many presentations on the supply chain issues we have faced over the past three years, from WLTP to factory closures to Covid to the war in Ukraine. When you point it all out, we've had drivers apologise for the way they had



behaved! But the awareness only happened because I stood in meetings or on Teams and explained it all.

**DF:** One of the issues is some drivers are now in five-year-old combustion engine cars and they want to change to tax-efficient electric vehicles (EVs). We have, in some cases, encouraged them to take cash.

**JH:** With the rising fuel bills, there are also issues on fuel reimbursement. We have increased our rates; we have to justify it, but the Government AFR (advisory fuel rate) is the minimum we have to pay, and our finance director does the justification. We have increased it by 2p per mile across the rates.

**LMcA:** We have a problem with the AER (advisory electric rate) because we can't guarantee receipts on the public charging network which causes problems on reimbursements. That makes it hard to pay actual use. We are thinking of saying that the average EV does 150 miles (per week) and everything up to that will be AER; everything above will be

at a higher rate. But it's still something we are brainstorming.

**FN: The supply issues are also causing parts delays, resulting in longer repair times, as well as a shortage of rental vehicles. How are you coping with all these additional issues?**

**LMcA:** I'm keeping vehicles when drivers leave, and they are going out as replacements – it's almost an instant reallocation. We also do not cancel orders, even if someone leaves, because we need the vehicle on fleet. However, we are getting around 12 new vehicle orders per week cancelled because of the pricing changes or models being dropped.

**JH:** We are seeing the time to repair rising and that is increasing our rental charges – if we can get one. It is impossible to get a car for a day. In March, we had an 80% turnaround rate and we use a broker. We are taking our best end-of-contract vans and refurbishing and putting them back into the fleet.

“WE'RE SEEING THE SKILL SETS AT THE DEALERSHIP GOING DOWN. THEY ARE TOO FOCUSED ON THE DIAGNOSTICS MACHINE GIVING THEM THE ANSWER”

JOHN HOLE, PHS



**ATTENDEES**

- 1 Stephen Briers, *Fleet News* group editor and roundtable chair
- 2 Sarah Sharples, Bauer Media head of health & safety and risk
- 3 Jenny Maidment, RSA motor supply chain – fleet
- 4 John Hole, PHS fleet manager
- 5 Lorna McAtear, National Grid fleet manager
- 6 Rory McKinnon, Holman sales director
- 7 Debbie Floyd, Bauer Media group fleet, travel & risk manager

**LMcA:** From a lot of finance and HR directors, salary sacrifice is the cash equivalent.

**FN: Are you extending contracts?**

**LMcA:** We are sticking with informal extensions, but we are considering putting EVs onto four years. Extensions have been offset by less mileage, so we aren't seeing an increase in maintenance costs. With EVs, we don't have the mechanical issues any more, it's mainly software. So, extending them isn't as much of a problem.

**JH:** LCVs are becoming really unreliable, though. We keep them for five years and we have some now at seven and eight years after taking an informal lease holiday during Covid. It's the stop-start mileage that causes issues with the life-expired items such as clutches and gearboxes. We will be putting EVs on a seven-year term to get the return, but we will have to refurbish the interiors after five-to-six years. We also bought 500 key fobs off Vauxhall at cost and hold them centrally as replacements.

**DF:** We did some formal extensions on rolling contracts. We pay finance up front on a three-year lease and pay monthly maintenance but it's my risk, so we take the overs/unders. This saves interest.

**RMck:** This year will be the most profitable ever for leasing companies with the extensions and residual values. There is always value in the asset or in running it on, but unbundling offers have benefits for fleets.

**LMcA:** If you own your vans, you have an advantage because at the end of the life you can decide whether to sell it or break it to solve the parts shortages.

**JH:** We have a yard full of bodies and we buy a lot of salvage back to break for parts. We're also seeing the skill sets at the dealership going down. They are too focused on the diagnostics machine giving them the answer.

**DF:** We have acquired vehicles that were due to be defleeted and holding on to them to keep people mobile.

**Jenny Maidment, RSA:** We are having to consider things that we would normally never do.

**LMcA:** We are getting phone calls from manufacturers who say 'we now have 50 vehicles, do you want them?' because some companies have pulled out of deals. But it's very much 'take it or leave it' on prices.

**Rory McKinnon, Holman:** It will take years of business correction to sort out the rental market. They have never had to manage vehicles before because they were sold ahead of 12 months.

**LMcA:** They used to get high discount deals and then sold them before the first year; now they are buying used. We tell our staff to check their rental vehicle for tyres, damage etc. and take photos. But we still tell them to keep it.

**DF:** I can't imagine the fleet industry going back to where it was a few years ago in terms of cars and

funding. Our benchmark entitlement on mileage is less than ever.

**FN: What funding models do you deploy and why?**

**JH:** We are single source and single lease supply. We have looked at other models and in a previous role we ran operating lease where we bought and sold back, but contract works for us. We tender every five years.

**JM:** Our cars are on personal leases with the driver, but we are now switching to a contract purchase company car scheme which is easier for the driver to understand. It will open up to all manufacturers which has resulted in happy drivers.

**LMcA:** We have a panel of three funders that can tender for each vehicle and they are policed by a fleet management company. Every order goes into a bid – a minimum of two have to bid – which is the most cost-effective solution for us. The cheapest price wins. Everything is on three years, and we offer an uplift if they pick an EV because we save

on the NIC (National Insurance Contributions). We put the money at the front end to get the cars into the lower grades. We also allow staff to increase their personal allowance if they pick an EV, because they are saving so much on the tax. Also, with the vehicle shortages, we can always reallocate an EV.

**JH:** We did discount by 15% in the first year for a reallocation and 10% in the second year, but we don't need to now. We do profit share and pooled mileage.

**RMck:** It's a sad situation for contract hire companies that people feel they have to multi-bid; they should be able to trust the quote.

**DF:** We are looking at salary sacrifice which was going to be with our company car provider, but we will be going separate. Volume used to speak a lot, but it doesn't any more so we don't have to stay with one.

**RMck:** In 2022, you have to have a salary sacrifice scheme; now is the moment. There is nothing as beneficial from a tax perspective.





# NISSAN ARIYA

Feature-packed Ariya hopes to make conquests among combustion-engined rivals

By Tim Rose

**N**issan has launched its most premium model yet with a clear desire to capitalise on fleets' surging interest in electric cars.

The carmaker hopes the generous levels of technology and comfort, practical range and elevated driving position of the Ariya crossover SUV will be enough to draw some company car users away from their combustion-engined Audis and BMWs.

Ariya is available in two grades – Advance and Evolve – with a choice between two batteries: a 63kWh capable of 250 miles on a full charge through its 160kW motor and a 87kWh which will deliver a maximum of 329 miles range through its 178kW motor. All are two-wheel drive, but for those with specific needs, such as for towing caravans, the larger battery can be specified with an all-wheel drive powertrain complete with snow-driving mode and a 47kW increase in power that doubles Ariya's towing capacity to 1.5 tonnes.

**FLEET PICK**  
NISSAN ARIYA EVOLVE  
87KWH 2WD

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£52,035
Monthly BIK (20%)	2% / £17
Class 1A NIC	£144
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£18,935/36%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8
AFR (ppm)	5
Running cost (4yr/80k)	53ppm
WLTP range	310 miles
EV database real range	275 miles



Nissan's engineers have worked hard on the driving experience. Careful weight distribution ensures the car remains well balanced and secure on the road, even under hard acceleration, and the quiet and relaxing cabin allows for peaceful progress and easy conversations.

The spacious cabin means Ariya is a car in which colleagues or customers can ride with utmost comfort, even in the rear. The EV platform allowed Nissan's designers to use the whole length of the cabin and create a flat, open floor.

Occupying the space between the driver and front passenger is a centre console which can be moved forward and back by electric motors, giving the driver the option to create an adaptable armrest or additional legroom.

Gimmickry aside, this console is also home to touch-sensitive 'haptic' buttons to activate 'e-pedal' mode and to change between driving modes, which, in practice, requires the driver to look down for them until they've become accustomed to the car and can put their finger on it straight away. It's likewise for similar haptic buttons in the centre of the dashboard

for the climate control. The appearance is premium but the experience will be frustrating, at least for the first few weeks of ownership.

Luckily Ariya features Nissan's 'safety shield 360' including forward collision warning and intelligent emergency braking to compensate for the driver being momentarily distracted. Plus Amazon's Alexa has been integrated into Nissan's personal voice assistant so drivers can also use that to change the car's settings or communicate with their home Echo devices without removing their hands from the steering wheel.

The instrument binnacle consists of a 'monolith' of two 12.3-inch screens, and Nissan claims displaying multiple facets of information on one horizontal plane, in a wave-like shape, helps information to be quickly digested. In Evolve trim, the Ariya is also equipped with a head-up display showing critical and practical information, such as navigation signals and speed limit changes.

With equipment aplenty, futuristic styling and zero emissions power, Ariya is bound to help attract some new drivers to the Nissan family.





# HONDA CIVIC

New hatchback means all Honda's UK models now have electric capability

By Tom Sharpe

**H**onda describes the new Civic hatchback – the car that signals the electrification of the brand's full UK range – as “the driver's hybrid”.

As it prepares to swell its offering from four to nine models in 2023, the dynamics of the Japanese manufacturer's 11th generation Civic form a statement of intent for a new era.

A healthy 31mm longer and 27mm lower than the outgoing model, with a rear track 18mm wider, it is larger than most C-segment hatchbacks, yet low and sleek. The result, Honda claims, is a platform perfectly suited to a new e:HEV hybrid drivetrain promising efficiency and performance.

Emitting 184PS and 315Nm of torque, it combines a 2.0-litre direct injection petrol engine and a powerful electric motor to deliver 7.3-second acceleration to 62mph and a 112mph top speed.

Honda claims fuel economy of 56.5–60.1mpg and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 108–114g/km across Elegance (£29,995), Sport (£30,595) and Advance (£32,995) trims.



A dashboard-spanning mesh grille adds a key styling feature

The new Civic's retail/fleet sales split is expected to be 80/20 in the UK, with BIK tax rates of 26% for the Elegance (108g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and 27% for the Sport and Advance (113g/km and 114g/km).

Order books are expected to open in July, with deliveries from October.

At the Civic's international launch, Honda Motor Europe technical advisor Korato Yamamoto explained that its e-CVT transmission is “not a transmission at all”, rather an electrical control unit that meters the drivetrain's output.

It forms part of a drivetrain which predominantly powers the front wheels with its electric motor, petrol power only directly helping to propel the car at high speeds or under heavy loads.

The Civic feels more natural to drive than any true CVT-equipped car, though, its hybrid drivetrain proving refined, the e-CVT effectively mimicking the feel and sound of a dual-clutch gearbox.

Engaging and poised, the new Civic serves up excellent refinement and feels like a car from the class above. It's a feeling furthered by impressive cabin space, though a 400-litre boot (to the window

line) is smaller than many C-segment rivals. Notable improvements in cabin design and quality build on themes seen in the new HR-V.

A mesh grille spans the dashboard, adding a key styling feature, while a centre console houses gear selector buttons and a smartphone stowage tray at its front edge (a wireless charger in certain trims).

Elegance trim features fabric seats, while Sport adds part-synthetic leather and Advance a combination of leather and synthetic leather.

Honda's HMI touchscreen infotainment system tops the dashboard and incorporates Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone connectivity.

While Elegance and Sport trims get a seven-inch instrument cluster, Advance adds a 10.2-inch customisable digital panel, a panoramic sunroof and an upgraded 12-speaker Bose sound system.

All Civics feature the Honda Sensing safety tech, including lane-keeping assistance and adaptive cruise control which operates to a standstill in traffic.

After time driving the new Civic it's easy to subscribe to the brand's view that it's a model with the qualities needed to win customers from rivals.

**FLEET PICK**  
HONDA CIVIC e:HEV ELEGANCE

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D price	£29,380
Monthly BIK (20%)	26%/£127
Class 1A NIC	£1,150
Annual VED	£160 then £155
RV (4yr/80k)	N/A
Fuel cost (ppm)	N/A
AFR (ppm)	17
Running cost (4yr/80k)	N/A
CO <sub>2</sub> (g/km)	108g/km
Mpg	50



IGNITION: FIRST DRIVE

# VAUXHALL ASTRA SPORTS TOURER



Loads to admire in this practical sleek-looking estate

By Matt de Prez

**T**he Vauxhall Astra impressed us in hatchback form, earlier this year, with its sharper looks, enhanced driving dynamics and vastly improved interior. Now, it's offered as a sleek-looking estate, mixing the same positive attributes of the hatchback with extra practicality.

At the business end, the Astra Sports Tourer offers almost 600 litres of luggage capacity and has a boot floor that measures more than a square metre. The rear seats can be folded, opening up 1,634 litres of load space. The plug-in hybrid's boot space is reduced in capacity to 516 litres, or 1,553 with the rear seats folded.

Compared with rivals, the Astra estate falls behind slightly when equipped with a petrol or diesel engine, but the plug-in hybrid is among the best-in-class for carrying capacity. Only the Peugeot 308 SW, Astra's closest relation, has it beat.

The Astra is offered with two petrol, one diesel and a plug-in hybrid engine from launch. A fully electric version will launch next year. For now, the 1.2-litre 110PS or 130PS and the 130PS diesel are more likely to appeal to retail buyers, while the plug-in hybrid makes the most sense for company car drivers.

With 180PS, Hybrid-e is the fastest model currently offered, accelerating from 0-62mpg in 7.7 seconds. It's also the most efficient, achieving a combined 256mpg, according to WLTP. More important, for fleets, is the 8% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bracket, which saves drivers almost £9,000 over four years, when compared with the petrol model.

There's nothing new about the powertrain, it's the same one that's used across numerous Peugeot and Citroën models. It uses a single electric motor and an eight-speed automatic gearbox to drive the front wheel. There's a bit of a lag when you call for full power, but otherwise the Hybrid-e is a perfectly acceptable powertrain.

We managed to average more than 80mpg while driving, having set off with a full battery. For trips up to around 35 miles, the car should be able to cover them with no petrol burn at all.

In keeping with Vauxhall's streamlined model strategy, the Astra Sports Tourer comes in three trim levels: Design, GS Line and Ultimate. Base models come well-equipped, but cannot be paired with the Hybrid-e, so it's the £33,845 GS Line that fleet customers will want. The good news here is that it still represents the best value for money when compared with rivals.

The Astra's smarter looks, improved technology and high levels of comfort and refinement boost its appeal significantly and it's now a top contender in the segment.

## FLEET PICK VAUXHALL ASTRA SPORTS TOURER HYBRID-E GS LINE

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£33,845
Monthly BIK (20%)	8%/£45
Class 1A NIC	£374
Annual VED	£0 then £155
RV (4yr/80k)	£10,188/30%
Fuel cost (ppm)	3
AFR (ppm)	17
Running cost (4yr/80k)	36.5
CO <sub>2</sub> (g/km)	25
MPG/EV range (WLTP)	256/42 miles

## WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



Fuel prices are at ridiculous – even exorbitant – levels and the public and fleets are really feeling the pinch. As part of this, the money paid to the

Government is increasing dramatically in terms of fuel duty and VAT, but I'm beginning to wonder if speeding fine income is going down.

On a couple of recent journeys, one on the M1 going to Company Car in Action (CCIA) and another on the M62 to pick friends up at Liverpool airport, it was obvious drivers were driving differently.

On my trips, I kept below 65mph, which I thought was the optimum speed for fuel economy, according to the onboard trip computer. The occasional car did pass going slightly more quickly and just a handful whizzed by at ridiculous speeds.

Motorway driving now is not about getting to your destination by the quickest route, but by the cheapest. The slower you go, the more you save. But do fleet drivers using company fuel cards behave the same; is it a case of someone else is paying, so does it matter?

I'm not even sure that is the case, looking at speeds of vehicles recently. But those who buy their own fuel and claim mileage back will certainly be keeping a careful eye on that average mpg figure and seeing just how many miles they get for their £10 per gallon.

### Catching up at Millbrook

After going at 65mph down the M1 to Millbrook it was great to see so many friendly faces at CCIA. A great event as always for a good old chat, a catch up and to see all the latest models in one place at the same time.

It always amazes me how these events seem to come together and appear so well organised. I'm sure there are a few moments of panic in the background, but we guests never seem to see that, so well done and thank you to the events team at Fleet News.

There were a lot of fleet managers eager to get their hands on most of the vehicles there, especially some of the newcomers such as Genesis, which was showing the GV60 for the first time.

Another premiere was for the Toyota bZ4x. It was much larger than I expected, full electric, with an all-wheel drive option.

But lots of cars and commercials to drive, or just look at, and the perfect opportunity to have a close look at what's on offer.

The problem is of course, you like them, want some, but might have to wait an awful long time to get them onto your fleet. But that's life these days I'm afraid.



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## ▶ BMW i4

eDRIVE 40 M SPORT

By Matt de Prez

The BMW i4 has become quite the talking point among friends, family and members of the public.

Of course, not many realise the car is fully electric until I tell them, or they see me charging it, as it blends in so seamlessly with 'normal' vehicles.

One question prevails among all the others, however, and that's "what's the range". Range is point of contention for a lot of EV sceptics, so when I say "300 miles" they're usually suitably impressed.

In reality, while the i4 can comfortably cover 300 miles on a charge (WLTP figure is 355), in most situations it's likely to use all of the battery and I'm

yet to be brave enough to run it down to single figures. A more comfortable estimate, based on experience, is around 280 miles.

I'm not a particularly efficiency-focused driver. I believe that, if you're spending £60k on a car, then you should be able to drive it as such. With more than 2,500 miles covered, my long-term consumption stands at 3.5mi/kWh. While most of these miles have been done in warmer months, it's still a mightily impressive result. For comparison, our Audi Q4 e-Tron managed 3.3mi/kWh.

However, a trip to the Goodwood Festival of Speed – a round trip of 304 miles – seemed like the ideal

opportunity to put the i4's range to the test. Setting off with 99% charge and a promised 320 miles, I headed south from Peterborough allowing the car's excellent adaptive cruise control and lane centring to do most of the hard work.

Upon arrival, with a trip average of 4.1mi/kWh achieved, a rather dubious 204 miles was promised from the remaining 55% of charge.

After setting the sat-nav for the return trip, the car automatically adjusted its range expectation to a more realistic 155 miles. Just enough then.

So, the i4 will comfortably cover lengthy trips with little range anxiety. What I find most impressive is that it requires no adjustment to driving style to return reasonable efficiency.

I've driven plenty of EVs that burn through power at a worrying rate when you cruise at motorway speeds, but the i4 has no such problem. I keep the aircon on and the car in either Comfort or Sport mode. I don't have to sit at 55mpg behind lorries and I don't have to worry that overtaking a slower vehicle will cost me precious miles. It's the most stress-free EV experience I've had.



## ▶ VOLVO XC60 FIRST TEST

T6 RECHARGE PLUS

By Andrew Ryan

Volvo's XC60 has long-been one of the best premium large SUVs, and now the most fleet-friendly version – the plug-in hybrid Recharge – has joined our long-term fleet.

In the T6 Plus specification of our test model, the car has a P11D price of £60,495, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 24g/km and an electric-only range of 48 miles.

The 2022 model year XC60 Recharge models also feature a new larger battery with 18.8kWh instead of its predecessor's 11.6kWh, and a more powerful rear electric motor developing 147PS.

This gives it a combined power of 355PS, giving it more overtaking power than you should ever need.

This doesn't come at the expense of its tax appeal though: Its efficiency figures put it in the 8% benefit-in-kind tax band, meaning a 40% taxpayer choosing the Volvo faces a monthly tax bill of £161.

Our test car is the mid-range equipment grade in the new, simplified line-up of Core, Plus and Ultimate, which replace the existing Momentum, R-Design and Inscription trim levels.

Standard equipment on our test model includes leather interior, climate control, heated front

windscreen, 12-inch TFT instrument panel, blind spot indicator, 360-degree camera, rear collision warning with mitigation support and LED headlights.

One particular highlight for me is its infotainment system. As part of a tie-up with Google, the system integrates a handful of its services into the car's media system, including Google Maps for navigation.

Google Assistant is used for voice-activated functions and Google Play allows the user to download apps to the car itself.

I'm a long-term user of Android Auto, so it will be interesting to find out how this experience compares to using Android Auto in the traditional way.

First impressions are very good. The XC60 was already one of the most handsome large premium SUVs and the optional Denim Blue paint on our test car enhances its looks further.

The cabin is plush, roomy and comfortable, while the car – as expected – rides and drives really well.

The early electric-only range has also been encouraging: So far, I've managed to do all my 38-mile commutes to and from the office on electricity alone, which will hopefully keep my visits to the petrol pumps to a minimum.







## ▶ VOLKSWAGEN POLO

STYLE 1.0-LITRE TSI 95

**By Jeremy Bennett**

Do you care about the wellbeing of your drivers when they're on the road? Of course you do. So, how safe is the Polo?

It's safety equipment includes lane-assist as standard for the first time in the range. It works in conjunction with side and front assist (including cyclist and pedestrian monitoring). Autonomous emergency braking and a driver alert system are also standard fit.

Volkswagen describes the Polo as having "excellent crash characteristics" and Euro NCAP data appears to support this. The only supermini tested this year, the Polo was given a maximum five-star rating, based on an adult occupant rating of 94%, child safety 80%, vulnerable road users 70% and a 70% score for its safety assist technology.

It noted that the passenger compartment "remained stable" in the frontal offset crash test. The impact of a frontal collision would be "benign" and in a rigid barrier test "good or adequate protection was provided to all critical body areas" for the driver and rear passenger.

When it came to side barrier and side pole impact tests, the Polo scored maximum points. Whiplash protection was judged "good".

Euro NCAP also acknowledged the presence of the automatic post-collision system that applies the brakes after an initial collision, designed to reduce the severity of a crash and prevent secondary impacts.

Comparison with the Polo's competitors is difficult. Superminis tested in 2021 include the Dacia Sandero Stepway, Fiat 500e and Renault Zoe. None match the Polo's rating. The Fiat comes closest with four stars, including a child safety score of 80%. The Zoe famously scored no stars, with only the child occupant test achieving more than a 50% score.

In 2020, the Hyundai i10 was awarded three stars. You have to go back to 2019, with tests on the Peugeot 208, Ford Puma, Vauxhall Corsa, Renault Clio and Audi A1. The latter two also scored five stars, with individual scores exceeding those of the Polo in some areas.



## ▶ MAZDA CX-5

2.2 2WD SPORT

**By Mike Roberts**

With no fully electric or plug-in hybrid variant available, a company car driver choosing the Mazda CX-5 either covers high-mileage on a regular basis or is unable to easily charge.

For 2022, this family SUV has undergone a few nips and tucks, getting new lights and front and rear bumpers and tweaks to the ride and handling. It's a good-looking car and offers much to the driver, with easy-to-reach controls and a premium-feel cabin.

For company drivers, the 2.2-litre manual diesel in Sport trim is the best choice in the range and it's the one we're testing here.

It provides comfortable motorway cruising, aided by adaptive cruise control and its high-riding position, and is also fun to drive on country lanes, sticking to the round when cornering.

There are plenty of gadgets to keep the technophiles happy and the automatic main beam function is among the best I've tried – detecting oncoming traffic in a flash (pun intended).

There's also the function of having the car lock itself as you walk away, useful when exiting holding sunglasses case, wallet and other bits and pieces.

My next task is to see if I can stop the radio coming on every time I start the car...



## ▶ CUPRA BORN

58KWH V3 150KW/204PS

**By Gareth Roberts**

The Cupra Born is living up to its electric hot hatch billing, thanks to its good looks and on-the-road performance.

Cupra's first electric car is based on the MEB platform of its Volkswagen Group parent and, while it is closely related to the Volkswagen ID 3, it offers a degree of swagger in comparison.

The chassis, steering and powertrain have been fine-tuned and the car is offered with dynamic chassis control in combination with ESC Sport.

It also has a lower ride height – 50mm at the front and 10mm at the rear, which gives a sporty feel to the handling.

It's perfectly happy trundling around town and is a comfortable cruiser while on the motorway. Take it on a winding country road, however, and it changes direction with plenty of accuracy and with a good amount of grip.

With a kerbside weight of 1.8 tonnes there is a degree of roll when cornering and when you call on the brakes you can be left wanting.





## ▶ HYUNDAI IONIQ 5

PREMIUM 73KWH RWD

By Stephen Briers

The Ioniq 5 is deceptively big. The photos suggest Golf-size; in reality it has a larger footprint than the Tucson SUV, resulting in a very large family car.

But it doesn't just deceive in the looks. It's the same when driving. Such is the ease with which the Ioniq navigates urban streets and winding roads alike, it's easy to forget you are driving such a voluminous vehicle. It's brought home when reverse parking – on several occasions I've

misjudged the line, resulting in one of those embarrassing shuffles forward to readjust.

The dimensions – 4,635 long and 1,890 wide, with a three-metre wheelbase – give a king-sized cabin for five, with lots of additional storage room thanks to the absence of the transmission tunnel between driver and front seat passenger.

The Ioniq 5 is the first Hyundai to be built on the new electric global modular platform (E-GMP) which positions the battery pack within the

wheelbase for improved weight distribution and a low centre of gravity.

This enabled Hyundai to recreate the interior as – in its words – a “whole new in-car experience”. It certainly adds some neat flourishes with a larger flat floor, fully reclining front seats (for a nap while charging, apparently), reclining rear seats, and a sliding centre console that can be moved back to be used as a table or desk by rear passengers.

The E-GMP also accommodates a decent boot capacity of 527 litres, with additional storage under the front bonnet. The boot is wide but quite shallow and you'll need to retract the parcel shelf to fit larger items.

In our previous review, we revealed some of the niggles we'd encountered in our first three months with the Ioniq 5. Hyundai has been in touch to say the issue with the advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) – which regularly disengaged each item in turn, such as lane-keeping and collision avoidance, before reactivating them a few moments later – required a simple software update. We're just waiting to book the car in.



## ▶ FORD KUGA

ST-LINE X PHEV

By Luke Neal

My uncle drives a Kuga, a 2013 2.0 diesel. At a recent family gathering the conversation turned to cars and his desire for an upgrade. He had considered rivals such as Nissan Qashqai, Toyota Rav4 and Kia Sportage, but decided to stick with a Kuga.

I showed him around our long term Kuga ST line. He was impressed with the exterior looks, the fit and finish and the levels of equipment available, so much so that it convinced him to go for the newer model over the previous 2019 design he had

been looking at, despite the obvious price increase.

However, he remains resistant to the idea of electric hybrid, despite it being well suited to work commuting due to charge times. Also he perceives a lack of charging infrastructure.

The current Kuga is a leap forward compared with the old model which looked more closely aligned to Ford's commercial vehicles than the passenger car range.

However, the small infotainment screen perched on top of the dashboard feels less up-to-date than

the large screen unit fitted to many new models.

According to an article in sister publication AM (Automotive Management), for the first time, both Ford's best-selling models are crossovers (Puma and Kuga). They now outsell the Fiesta and Focus hatchbacks by approximately 80%.

So how does Ford's new best seller stack up against modern PHEV rivals such as the Vauxhall Grandland and the Peugeot 3008 hybrids?

All three are relatively close. The Kuga has the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> at 25g/km and the highest residual value of £14,582. However, it has the most expensive service, maintenance and repair cost of the three at 5.29ppm.

Over four years, the total cost per mile (80,000 miles) sees the Kuga come out cheapest at 38.94p followed by the Grandland (41.98p) and then the 3008 (46.98p) making the Kuga a smart choice for fleets.

■ On the *Fleet News* website you can find a handy car running cost calculator where you can compare rivals [www.fleetnews.co.uk/costs/car-running-costs](http://www.fleetnews.co.uk/costs/car-running-costs)



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# Commercial Fleet



## A natural way to make the transition to electric

Renault's garbage truck is an offer councils can't refuse

PLUS: ROAD TRANSPORT EXPO REVIEW • LOGISTICS UK Q&A • REMARKETING INSIGHT



# Truck makers plot their route to zero

Growing range of electric trucks now available to fleets with long-range hydrogen options also revealed at Road Transport Expo

By Stephen Briers

**A**fter detouring around the Commercial Vehicle Show in May, trucks were on full display at last month's Road Transport Expo with zero-emission vehicles dominating the event.

Traditional truck manufacturers, such as Daf, Renault, Mercedes-Benz and Scania, packed their stands with full electric products, while newcomer Tevva used the event to showcase its forthcoming hydrogen truck.

The Expo brought together urban transport, tippers, tankers, cranes and suppliers with a range of driving opportunities at NAEC (National Agricultural and Exhibition Centre) Stoneleigh in Warwickshire.

Supply issues notwithstanding, manufacturers are pressing ahead with zero-emission models ahead of the European Commission deadline which requires truck makers to cut their average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 15% by 2025 against a 2019/20 baseline.

Five years later, they must evidence

a 30% reduction against the baseline using the Vehicle Energy Consumption Calculation Tool (Vecto) simulation tool.

Speaking at the Expo, Catherine Bowen, senior policy advisor at the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), pointed to the impact of clean air zones (CAZs) on hastening a move to electric, even though Euro VI diesel trucks comply with the air quality and emissions standards.

With zones in Bradford, Bristol, Newcastle and Sheffield due to go live over the next year, plus low emission zones in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Bowen predicted that the appetite for such standards would be replaced by greater urgency to follow the Oxford example of leaping straight to a zero-emission zone.

"As time goes on, we are getting closer to compliance anyway (without the need for CAZs)," she said.

However, she urged Government to introduce several measures to simplify the administration of a growing number



## MODEL ROUND-UP

### RENAULT TRUCKS

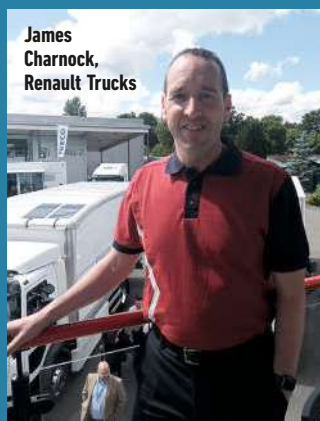
Renault Trucks showed its E-Tech Master Optimodal concept, a two-person electric van/electric bike/drone combination.

The van brings the goods into the city centre and the bike and drone deliver the final mile.

At the other end of the scale, is its 18-tonne and 26-tonne distribution trucks, offering customers their "first step in fleet decarbonisation", according to commercial trucks and services director James Charnock.

Also available are an electric D-Wide skip, with two about to hit the road with Recycling Lives, a dry box, refrigerated unit and a 26-tonne bin lorry.

"We can do variations from 16t, 18t and 26t today and next year we



James Charnock, Renault Trucks

will have a tractor and C range construction unit," Charnock said. "We are showing what's possible: electric can work in so many operations, but you need to have

more stakeholders involved in the decision, such as facilities managers."

He added: "We were aiming for 10% of sales to be electric by 2025. Then we thought it might be closer to 25% because of demand. Now we are considering 50% of the ranges where electric is possible. In the past three-to-six months, there has been a shift in mentality – companies have gone from simply being interested to wanting to make the change."

### TEVVA

Electric truck start-up Tevva, which has been operating vehicles with UPS for the past 2.5 years, took a different tack to most manufacturers by putting its emphasis on hydrogen.

Its hydrogen range-extender truck promises a range of 310 miles compared with 160 miles for the pure electric version. The hydrogen can be refuelled in around 10 minutes, while the battery recharge takes five-to-six hours from empty to full.

Asher Bennett, Tevva founder and CEO, said: "We want to put a lot of electric trucks on the road, but the energy needs are large when they are fully loaded, travelling on hills, in cold weather etc. There is also the auxiliary power requirement for refrigeration. Electric trucks can cover most of the day but that's not good enough – it has to be every day."

That's where hydrogen comes in. The fuel cell system tops up the battery to extend the range and





Scania displayed its range of full-electric trucks

of zones, including an autopay facility (rather than pay in advance or arrears), and a fleet payment tool rather than pay per vehicle.

Bowen also emphasised the need for adequate truck charging facilities saying: "A new industry group will be established by Government to look at the infrastructure requirements for HGVs."

As fleet operators transition to electric, the drop in fuel duty from fossil fuels will necessitate a new way of raising revenue from motorists, according to Steve Gooding, director at the RAC Foundation.

Pre-Covid, this was worth around £28 billion a year. By around 2030, Gooding estimates this will have shrunk by £5bn. "Then we conjecture that the Chancellor will start to sit up and take notice," he said.

"As cars will go electric first, that's where the biggest duty hit will come from and that will influence Government thinking."

However, he has some empathy with the Government's apparent slowness in adopting a replacement method of taxation.

"Fuel duty is the easiest tax to collect ever. So why switch to something more complicated like road charging?" he asked.

The topic was last raised in 2004, but was more focused on addressing congestion issues and growing the economy than environmental concerns.

The UK still suffers significant congestion pressure, but three things have changed the landscape: environmental sensitivities, improvements in technology that will aid ↻

# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's



## Toyota

Confirmation of Toyota's best-kept secret came last month with the announcement that it will add a large panel van to its range of light commercial vehicles in Europe. Due for launch in Q2 2024, the large van will be a rebadged offering from Stellantis and complete a comprehensive range that will have zero-emission vehicles in each sector.

## LEVC

I caught up with LEVC recently for an update on the VN5 hybrid van and was given the opportunity to take it out for a spin round Coventry's streets. You immediately notice the high quality cabin – with switches and screens taken from Volvo – is also comfortable and quiet. With an all-electric range of 60 miles, just more than 300 miles in range-extender mode, a combined fuel economy of 314mpg and a CO<sub>2</sub> level of just 21g/km, the VN5 can still hold two Euro pallets. And, given it is based on the TX London taxi, it has, at 10.1m, the tightest turning circle of any medium-sized van.

## Stellantis

Another trip to Coventry – this time to meet up with the Stellantis light commercial vehicle team and discuss updates on Citroën, Peugeot, Vauxhall and Fiat model line-ups, including the launch of the all-new e-Doblo and Doblo van due out later this year.

Also received an interesting update on its future hydrogen solution and how hydrogen fuel cell and battery technology have been combined in a fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) to benefit operators requiring long-range, fast refuelling and zero-emissions – all without payload capacity compromise.

## ZEV sales mandate

With the sale of new petrol and diesel vans outlawed in the UK from 2030, the Department for Transport is consulting on plans for mandatory minimum levels of zero-emission van sales each year between 2024 and 2035. Starting with 8% of a manufacturers' van sales being required to be zero-emission in 2024, up to 52% in 2030.

If these targets are to be achieved, they will need to be matched to Government incentives and mandatory targets for infrastructure delivery.

**Glass's** .....

Part of Autovista Group



pilots later this year in 7.5-tonne format, with production due to start early next year. A 12-tonne version will also go on sale next year with a 19-tonne variant due to enter the pilot phase.

"Two-thirds of the lifetime cost of a diesel truck is the fuel; electricity is a lot cheaper. If you overcome the range issues, TCO (total cost of ownership) stacks up," said Bennett.

Tevva works with leasing partners to ensure a competitive monthly lease including service, maintenance and repair and also offers a 'truck as a service' pay-per-mile funding method. It requires a

allow the truck to carry heavier loads. It also enables double shifting because of the shorter refill times.

The new truck will begin

commitment to a minimum number of daily miles.

It is also in talks with hydrogen suppliers to facilitate depot-based refuelling.

## MERCEDES-BENZ TRUCKS

Mercedes-Benz Trucks is targeting full zero emissions by 2039 with more than half its sales full-electric by 2030.

Ultimately, the fuel types will be electric for shorter, predictable routes and hydrogen fuel cell for longer, more unpredictable ones, claims e-consultancy manager James Venables.

Nevertheless, the company will launch an eActros truck in 2024 that will be available as 4x2 and 6x2 with a three- ↻

road pricing, and the imminent demise of fossil fuels.

"Too often, the debate is on the use of the private car," Gooding said. "But if we have a scheme that affects all roads, at all times of the day around the country, then you have to consider freight and the commercial fleet. It has to be joined-up policy that works for commercial traffic."

Meanwhile, fleets operators are adopting electric vehicles as well as a range of innovative solutions to assist with urban transport demands for greener deliveries.

Ocado Zoom, the on-demand one-hour grocery delivery service launched by Ocado in west London is trialling electric-assisted and pedal-powered vehicles at its micro site in

Acton. The trial involves electric refrigerated vans, electric-assisted micro vehicles and e-cargo bikes which can travel up to 40 miles.

The company estimates it is reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 7.7-9.6kg per vehicle per day.

Graham Thomas, Ocado fleet operations manager, truck, has also ordered Ford eTransit, Fiat eDucato and Maxus eDeliver 9 electric vans, plus some Mercedes-Benz eVito shuttle buses, as Ocado targets net zero by 2035.

"We do have some issues with site designs – some house more than 300 vans which are doing more than 180 miles twice a day," he said. "It's a problem with charging capacity on such a quick turnaround."

Freight forwarding company FSEW, which operates 45 trucks, has started to tackle one of the biggest challenges in the adoption of electric vehicles – national logistics. It took on its first two electric Daf CF 37-tonne 4x2 trucks in mid-2021 after a month-long detailed analysis of journey and vehicle capabilities, including charging options and ongoing support.

Since the start of the year, they are now being used in partnership with Tesco to transport food products from a rail terminal near Cardiff to Tesco's distribution centre in Magor, a round trip of 30 miles. The two trucks will cover 65,000 miles a year, saving 87 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Managing director Geoff Tomlinson, who is aiming for net zero by 2025,

said: "Drivers love them, and the public is interested in them. It's also helping us with driver recruitment. We believe that, as a business, we can work them and make money from them."

He advised fleets to engage drivers, planning officers and transport managers to work through any concerns, but urged companies to "bend your model to suit the vehicle – you will make money out of it".

Tomlinson also plans to create an e-freight hub in the Welsh capital which will include low-carbon refuelling for the use of all freight providers and commercial and municipal operators. It will feature battery storage systems to optimise the use of renewable energy.

## MODEL ROUND-UP (CONTINUED)

battery pack (300km/186-mile range) and four battery pack (400km/248-mile) with 20-80% charge within 100 minutes. Gross vehicle weight (gvw) is 19t and 27t.

At IAA in September, it will also reveal a long-haul eActros promising up to 500km (311 miles) and 20%-80% charging within 30 minutes. Megawatt charging will add 10km range (six miles) per minute.

Mercedes-Benz Trucks is also collaborating to deliver 1,700 high-powered chargers over the next five years across the European strategy road network, including the UK.

Since 2018, it has offered the 60-mile range four-tonne payload eCanter through sister brand Fuso for return-to-base operations with a favourable TCO model while testing of the eEconic 27t three-battery pack bin lorry is under way.

Testing on the hydrogen Gen H2 is progressing with a launch date of 2027. Mercedes-Benz Trucks claims range of around 1,000km (621 miles), thanks to the use of liquid hydrogen which also requires a much smaller 70kWh battery to improve payload. It will be sold with a 10-year/1.2-million km (c750,000 miles) warranty.

"We are working with BP to start opening hydrogen fuel courts with a target of 25 by 2030 in the UK," said Venables. "But we also need collaboration with Government to have the right size charging infrastructure ahead of the launch of these trucks."

### SCANIA

Scania's updated electric trucks are available as 6x2 rigid and 4x2



Karima Haji, Scania UK

tractor, both claiming 350km (217 miles) range at 40 tonnes load and 250km (155 miles) at 64 tonnes.

Featuring a new driveline, improved batteries, faster and more powerful charging capabilities (fully charged within 90 minutes at 375kW), the new triple electric machine powertrain also provides ample electromechanical PTO to ensure smooth and reliable operation of temperature-controlled transports or power-hungry applications such as hook lifts.

Carrying out thorough due diligence is the best way to prepare your business to transition to battery electric heavy-duty vehicles, according to Scania UK transformation director Karima Haji.

She urged fleets to avoid becoming fixated on just the vehicles and their TCO.

"Switching to electric needs a lot of consideration. But it's important for business owners and operators to understand this isn't

something they need to go through by themselves – Scania is here to help," said Haji.

With any transition project, time is required to plan, implement and deliver the chosen solution. By planning ahead, customers can implement any infrastructure changes and trial the solution on a small scale before upscaling in the future.

Haji said: "By starting early, it is possible to learn about electrification without taking too much risk. You can then scale up the share of electric vehicles in the fleet in steps and do the necessary investments in vehicles and charging infrastructure in a controlled and cost-effective way."

Before developing any solutions, customers need to consider their objectives and ambitions. The next step is to carry out a thorough analysis to build up a picture of the best solutions that will suit their operations.

By using vehicle and fleet data, the analysis defines the charging requirements of the vehicles as well as forecasting the energy needs for the operation's electrification roadmap.

### DAF TRUCKS

While electric is top of the agenda at Daf, with the LF and CF, it also points to the impressive gains made with its latest generation diesel engines, which are living up to the promise of at least a 10% improvement in efficiency.

"We've seen some that are much higher than that and, with rising fuel prices, this is significant for customers," said Daf managing director Laurence Drake.



Laurence Drake, Daf

Daf delivered five electric 37-tonne CFs to Amazon earlier this year and also has 20 electric LFs undergoing pilots with the NHS and local authorities as part of the £10 million Government-funded Battery Electric Truck Trial (BETT) initiative.

The CFs are part of Amazon's 'middle mile' delivery fleet and, with smart planning and fast charging, can clock up to 500km (311 miles) per day, said Daf.

"We have learned that driver acceptability is key," said Drake. "The truck drives the same, but they have to understand the range. There is an education piece to be done around planning and charging, especially on the tractor side because they require fast charging."

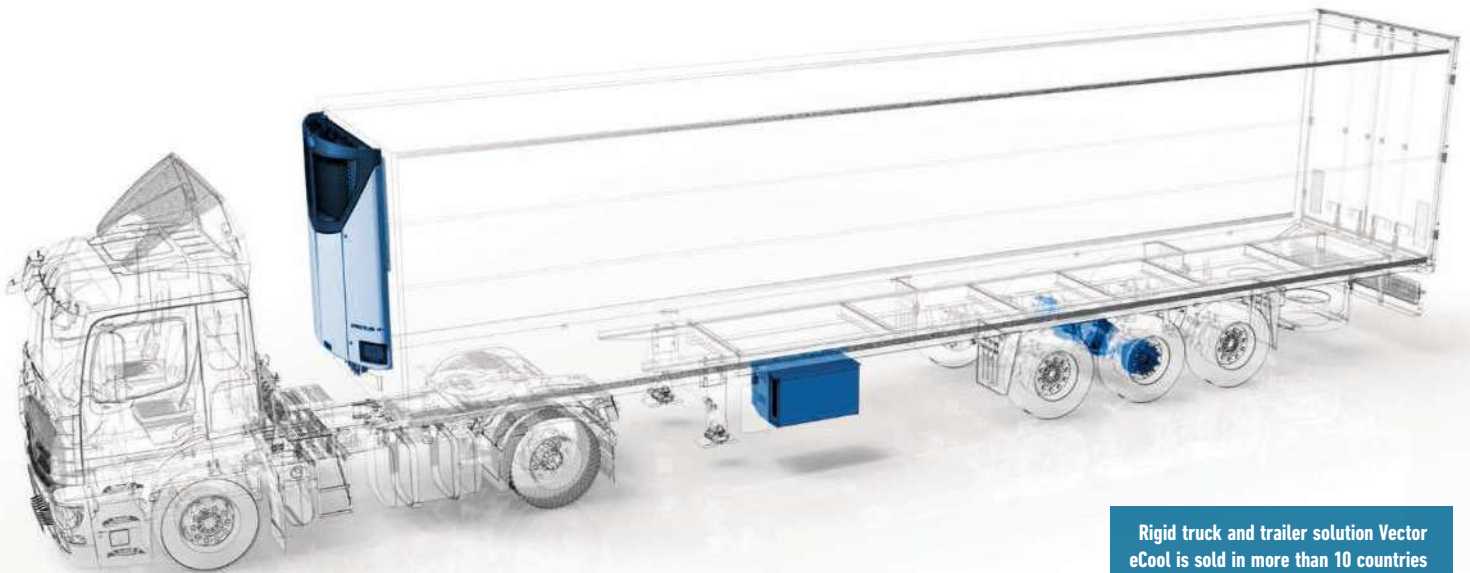
The Daf CF Electric is available as a 4x2 tractor (gvw: 37 tonnes) and 6x2 rigid truck (gvw: 28 tonnes) both with a 350kWh battery pack.

Fully charging takes about 75 minutes using a 250kW unit.



# Fridge technology specialists take the engine-less path to reduce emissions

New Pulsar eCool brings Carrier Transicold's technology to light commercials



Rigid truck and trailer solution Vector eCool is sold in more than 10 countries

By John Lewis

**P**ressure on temperature-controlled fleets to cut emissions is increasingly prompting them to switch to electric fridge units, with the demise of red diesel's use in transport refrigeration systems acting as a further driver.

Fridge technology specialists such as Carrier Transicold are responding with a suite of engine-less products.

Carrier has seen the marketplace penetration of electric systems for trucks and trailers in Western Europe reach 40% over the past six years at the expense of diesel units, says Victor Calvo, Carrier Transicold International Truck and Trailer vice-president and general manager.

He predicts that half of Carrier's sales will soon be electric across all segments.

Officially launched in the UK this year, Carrier's Vector eCool is an all-electric system for trailers. It turns the kinetic energy produced by axles and brakes into electricity, which is then stored in a battery pack and used to power the fridge unit. The package is lighter than a diesel unit with a full tank of fuel despite the weight of the axle generator and pack, says Carrier.

When the trailer is stationary at a

suitable location, eCool can be plugged into the mains. It should be fully charged in less than two hours.

"We've now sold in excess of 200 Vector eCools in more than 10 countries," Calvo reports.

This includes Gray & Adams, which was the first to begin trialling the system in the UK a year ago, and Dawsongroup, which took delivery of three eCool units last month.

Vector eCool employs technology sourced from Portugal-based AddVolt.

Carrier has cemented an alliance with – and invested in – the Oporto business which supplies lithium-ion batteries along with a power

management system.

Vector eCool forms part of a portfolio of electric packages designed with rigids as well as trailers in mind including Syberia 14, Neos HE 200, and the new Pulsar eCool.

Developed for light commercials, and capable of handling fully-frozen as well as chilled work, Pulsar eCool offers 4kW of cooling capacity. It can be powered by an electric van's traction battery, says Carrier, with the energy consumed said to cut the vehicle's range between recharges by no more than 10km (6.2 miles).

For heavier applications, Carrier has introduced the HE 17. Its compressor features variable-frequency drive, which continually alters the motor speed to match air demand for greater efficiency.

One of the most useful packages available from Carrier is an electro-hydraulic system called Eco-Drive.

Mount it on the back of a tractor unit and you can use it to drive a diesel fridge on a trailer while the vehicle is in motion. In effect, what you are doing is making on-highway use of the electric plug-in standby system that keeps the unit running while the trailer is parked at a warehouse waiting to be loaded or unloaded.

Employing a variable-displacement Bosch hydraulic pump which powers

a generator, Eco-Drive delivers 400v of continuous three-phase electrical power, and is capable of being retro-fitted.

Much of the development work on engine-less units is carried out at Carrier's engineering centre at Noordwijk in the Netherlands. It has its own research laboratory, builds prototypes, and tests them in conjunction with fleet operators.

The switch to electrification is occurring alongside a march towards cold chain connectivity, says Calvo, and Carrier is continuing to refine its Lynx Fleet connectivity platform.

Connectivity helps optimise equipment utilisation, he contends, allows cold chain data to be shared with clients, sounds the alarm if there is a problem with a refrigeration unit, and allows operators to control temperatures remotely. The aim is to achieve end-to-end visibility throughout the delivery process.

But what happens if a cyber attack is mounted by a hostile player and the connected chain is suddenly switched off?

Supermarkets would run out of goods rapidly given they carry no more than three days' stock.

Replies Calvo: "We are as confident that it will not be hacked as any safety-conscious company can be."

WE ARE AS  
CONFIDENT  
THAT IT WILL  
NOT BE HACKED  
AS ANY SAFETY-  
CONSCIOUS  
COMPANY  
CAN BE

VICTOR CALVO,  
CARRIER TRANSICOLD



Ricky Clark encountered financial obstacles when he considered a return to truck driving

## Out of truck – and happy to stay that way

As the industry scratches its head over why so few people are attracted to become truckers, we talk to one experienced driver who nearly went back – and then thought better of it

By Trevor Gehlcken

**T**here's a lot of talk among truck fleet bosses and industry associations about how they can attract new blood to the industry. It is reckoned that the UK is short of a massive 100,000 drivers, so the lack of new staff is proving a huge headache.

Bosses seeking an answer as to why this problem arose in the first place could do well to take note of the comments of Essex's Ricky Clark and learn from his experience.

Clark is a professional trucker with 20 years' experience. He quit trucking to become a taxi driver but, forced out of a job through the Covid epidemic and short of cash, he planned, at the age of 55, to go back to his old trucking job.

But he didn't – and here he tells us why.

**Commercial Fleet: What attracted you to truck driving in the first place?**

**Ricky Clark:** When I left school, I did a number of labouring jobs, but always felt I wanted to do something more productive and truck driving seemed a glamorous job to do. I also wanted to travel abroad and thought it was a good way to do that and get paid for it at the same time.

I paid to get my Class 1 HGV licence – it cost around £800 at the time.

I got a job straight away, but just in the UK, and 10 years later I finally managed to get a European driving job. I also did two years of coach driving across Europe taking bands on tour. That was an eye-opener, but an exciting experience too.

**CF: Why did you quit?**

**RC:** By this time, I had a family and I was just away from home too much. I realised I was missing important time with my children and you can never replace the time you miss, can you? I went back to truck driving after the coaches, but just local work for about six years. Then I decided on taxi work as I fancied a change after 20 years on the road.

**CF: How did taxi driving compare?**

**RC:** It was good to be home with the family each night and I also enjoyed being my own boss. At the time, my cab work paid better than truck driving too, which was a bonus.

**CF: Why did you consider going back to truck driving?**

**RC:** Covid killed the taxi trade stone dead and I heard that the Government was begging for truck drivers. The kids were all grown up and, quite frankly, I needed the money. It was the first time in 30 years I'd been unemployed.

**CF: What problems did you encounter?**

**RC:** First, reapplying for my licence with the DVLA took more than three months as they were all on strike. I also didn't have a Driver CPC certificate and it was going to cost me £260 which I didn't have at the time.

I also had to pay for a medical and a tacho card. I just did not have the cash to lay out for all this.

I applied for a few truck driving jobs, but none of the firms was prepared to pay my costs upfront,

which surprised me as I had the impression that transport firms were so short-staffed that they were prepared to go to any lengths to attract experienced drivers like me.

Luckily, the taxi work started picking up again.

I would like to have gone back on the trucks. Some of the new models are amazing to drive. But, in reality, it was all just too much hassle.

**CF: What would be your advice to truck fleet bosses to try to attract new drivers?**

**RC:** First, truck firms should be prepared to pay upfront for the costs I was expected to bear, especially if they want to attract experienced drivers. Firms should take on youngsters with no truck experience and train them up on the job. It happens in all other industries, so why not in transport?

Also, drivers need more safe overnight parking and security and more decent facilities. And bearing in mind that drivers are responsible for the vehicles and loads, the wages are pitifully low. It's a really responsible job after all and, in my view, there should be a minimum £20 an hour wage.

**CF: What would be your advice to any young person thinking of taking up truck driving?**

**RC:** I would advise anyone to look carefully into what's actually involved in this job – it's much more than just driving a vehicle.

Time schedules can be stressful, wages are low, hours are long and the overnight facilities are patchy to say the least. It's a career move that should not be taken lightly in my view.



# ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK



**Q** I have been looking through the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency Enforcement Sanctions Policy and in the regulation column there is a reference to the legislation, which is followed by SO and a number, what does this mean?

**A** SO is a statutory offence, and the number after refers to the maximum fine which could be levied for that offence. There are five such levels; £200, £500, £1,000, £2,500 and, for a level 5 fine, offences committed after 13 March 2015, the fine is unlimited.



ISTOCK/GUSTAVO FRAZAO

**Q** Can you tell me what a car-derived van is please, for speed limit purposes?

**A** A car-derived van means a goods vehicle which is constructed or adapted as a derivative of a passenger vehicle, and which has a maximum weight not exceeding two tonnes. As a rule, from the outside, these vehicles will look like the size of a car, but, on the

inside, the vehicle will look like and function as a van because:

- There will be no rear seats, rear seat belts or mountings.
- There will be a payload area with floor panel in the rear of the vehicle.
- There will be no side windows in the rear of the vehicle – or if present, side windows will be opaque and fixed (with no means of opening or closing).

## Vehicle Operator Licensing: moving away from paper will improve the application process for all

There are almost 82,000 operator licence holders in the UK and 89% of all these now have a Vehicle Operator Licensing (VOL) digital account. Using the online service helps the Traffic Commissioners (TCs) deal with applications more quickly than those on paper – resulting in increased efficiency – and those that use the service can get online help while they apply.

While more than 94% of major applications are now being made online, applications that are made via paper are often on outdated forms that cannot be accepted, resulting in delays.

From the start of next month, the TCs will no longer accept paper applications for new licences and for major changes to existing ones.

The Office for the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) is constantly looking to improve the VOL system and has developed it so compliant businesses can apply for a licence, make major changes to it, continue (renew) the licence and, if needed, surrender the licence online.

The OTC has recently introduced an application checker so those making an online application for a new licence can see the important things needed to get their



**From August 1 only online applications will be accepted**

ISTOCK/LUMINOLA

application right first time. They then receive online guidance as they complete the application; it is important to submit the fully completed application with all supporting evidence as this reduces the chance of delays and

additional work for operators and for the OTC.

The OTC will be changing its pages on the gov.uk website and writing to all existing operators and trade associations to make them aware of changes, giving at least

four weeks' notice of the change.

Those making a new application, and those already operating who do not currently have an online VOL account, should register via: [www.vehicle-operator-licensing.service.gov.uk](http://www.vehicle-operator-licensing.service.gov.uk)



# VALUES SET TO STAY HIGH AFTER SUPPLY ISSUES SUBSIDE

Industry experts expect commercial vehicle RVs to remain robust even as supply shortages ease. *Ben Rooth* reports

**W**hile many of the effects of and measures introduced during the worst of the pandemic are disappearing fast in the rear-view mirror, some continue to have a lasting impact.

In light commercial vehicles (LCVs), these include vehicle supply shortages – and the knock-on effect on residual values (RVs).

Factory shutdowns led to a lack of key components such as semiconductors, which, in turn, lead to a massive reduction in vehicle production. And the sector is still playing catch-up.

Recent Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) figures show LCV registrations in the UK recorded their fifth consecutive month

of decline in May 2022 and were 21.5% below the pre-pandemic average.

As many fleets are not able to take on new commercial vehicles, many are keeping their vehicles for longer than intended until their replacements arrive, starving the used market of its traditional regular supply.

This has coincided with demand for home delivery services exploding during the national lockdowns as people were unable to visit shops, and this saw businesses require more vehicles to meet this need, driving up values.

Geoff Flood, national LCV sales manager at Aston Barclay, says average prices in May 2022 were £1,909 higher than in Q2 2020.

However, faced with the current worsening economic conditions with rising interest rates, increased energy and fuel costs and the widespread cost-of-living squeeze, there are signs the values are plateauing.

According to the latest figures released by BCA, average LCV values remained above £10,000 for the fifth consecutive month in April as trading remained stable despite the ongoing external economic pressures and disruption resulting from the Easter Bank Holidays.

LCV values averaged £10,005 at BCA in April, down £128 (1.3%) compared with March. However, performance against guide prices improved slightly from 96.5% to 97.3% over the month.



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## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Gary Sullivan,  
Managing Director, Van Monster



With the pandemic closing vehicle auctions to physical buyers for many months, the entire remarketing industry turned to using online platforms like that of

Van Monster to buy and sell used vehicles during 2020 and 2021.

Two years on more vendors are using online platforms to sell their used fleet vehicles than ever before, and we now have more than 1,000 trade buyers signed up to bid on and buy used vans online.

The pandemic coincided with Van Monster's further investment in its online platform to improve the quality of the images that vendors can upload for buyers to review prior to a sale. We know that better quality images help encourage more bids and better prices from buyers.

Our Upload App gives vendors the power to upload their own vehicle details onto our online platform to sell alongside other vendors in our weekly sales or to set up a dedicated auction just for their vehicles.

The App is intuitive and will estimate the effect of damage on your vehicle to help you provide a realistic valuation on every used van. Our Assist40 checklist provides vendors with further peace of mind that they are promoting their used LCVs for sale with the most comprehensive material.

The visual 40-point check covers engine operations, windscreen and tyre conditions and documentation checks such as HPI check and certificates. When buyers are confident of the vehicle's condition report online, then they are willing to pay more.

**Take charge of remarketing your vans online by getting in touch at [vendor.vm@vanmonsterremarketing.com](mailto:vendor.vm@vanmonsterremarketing.com)**



Values for April 2022 were ahead by £976 (10.8%) on the same month last year, when the third UK lockdown restrictions were easing.

"Following a period of unseasonably high-value performance across the sector, from cars to HGVs, values are easing given the economic headwinds we now face," says Philip Nothard, chairman of the Vehicle Remarketing Association.

"However, as supply remains constrained and will remain so for some time, values are expected to ease at a steady rate and won't return to pre-pandemic levels for months, even years, if at all."

Flood adds the average age and mileage of auction stock is also increasing. "Not surprisingly, fleets are extending replacement cycles and the ➔

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**IT CAN TAKE SIX-TO-EIGHT WEEKS BETWEEN BUYING A VEHICLE AND GETTING IT ON THE FORECOURT**

**GARY SULLIVAN, VAN MONSTER**

average age of auction stock has increased with average mileages now consistently beyond 100,000 miles," he says. "And this means vehicle condition sometimes suffers."

Van Monster has found the market in its wholesale remarketing division has slowed since Easter. "No doubt this has been exacerbated by the spike in the cost of living," says managing director Gary Sullivan.

"However, buyers are still happy to pay a premium for low mileage late-plate vehicles due to the restricted supply of this type of stock in the market.

"With the cost of new vehicles continuing to rise, exacerbated by supply chain challenges and the conflict in Ukraine, strategic key decisions are required on every used vehicle on whether to keep servicing and repairing it or to de-fleet it and risk not being able to replace it."

**BUYERS CAUTIOUS AND RETICENT**

Trade buyers are also currently "cautious and reticent" about buying vehicles which need high levels of paint or mechanical repairs.

"This is due to the delay in getting a booking in a dealership or workshop and getting them back on the road," says Sullivan.

"Parts delays are also commonplace, and it can take six-to-eight weeks between buying a vehicle and getting it on the forecourt ready for sale which, for buyers, is far too long."

BCA has also seen a similar trend.

"Demand remains robust for vehicles in the best condition, although professional buyers are much less enthusiastic about vehicles with cosmetic or mechanical issues, and these vehicles are becoming very price-sensitive," says Stuart Pearson, chief operating officer UK at BCA.

Buyer habits are also changing. "Dealers are buying vehicles to meet customer orders rather than constantly buying masses of vans for stock," says Wright.

"They are balancing their cashflow and so are being more cautious about what vehicles they buy. "It's changed from 2021 when all stock was being snapped up for record prices."

The return of buyers to physical auction halls after the lockdowns has also influenced behaviour.

"Buyers prefer to view older vehicles before they decide what to buy and the price to pay," says Wright. "Around one-third of vehicles are being bought online, the rest physically."

Aston Barclay also maintains the opportunity to welcome physical buyers back into the auction halls has helped it "keep conversion rates and prices strong".

Flood adds: "LCV buyers would much rather

inspect these older vehicles to ascertain damage levels before deciding what price to pay.

"Buyers are getting more particular about what they buy and what price they pay as they protect their cashflow during these tougher economic conditions.

"It is important vendors work with their remarketing partner to revisit reserve prices on a weekly basis as they can no longer just rely on Cap HPI guide prices which in many areas of the market have not fallen quickly enough to reflect the changing market conditions."

Sullivan says businesses must adopt an "ultra-cautious" approach when buying used vans and trucks – but asserts that it is now possible for buyers to make an informed judgement when purchasing online.

"We only sell used trade LCVs online and a number of updates made to our platform over the past two years has seen us improve the quality of images and data we provide at the point of sale," he adds.

"This has been a valuable upgrade for buyers particularly those who are bidding live on vehicles with damage."

**PRICES TO STAY STEADY**

While the price of used LCVs has gently fallen in the first half of 2022, the continued shortage of new vans and trucks being registered is anticipated to keep prices steady for the next few years.

"The outlook is dependent on new fleet supply, but prices will continue to remain high for forecourt-ready vehicles while a gradual decline in prices is likely," says Sullivan.

"However, even if demand remains subdued, we do not envisage a price crash as supply levels are set to remain very restricted for the next couple

of years. Even when manufacturer supply levels start to improve, we believe the LCV sector will remain at its current new level.”

Pearson maintains the used LCV marketplace will continue being “fully utilised” by business of all sizes for “the foreseeable future”.

“Looking ahead, the new van market remains under considerable pressure with the SMMT reporting that May registrations were down, and little improvement is expected in the near term for many well documented issues affecting vehicle manufacturers,” he adds.

“Therefore, the used sector is likely to remain the primary source of stock for many businesses looking to put LCVs to work during 2022, ensuring that used prices should remain fairly robust for the foreseeable future.”

Wright agrees with this sentiment – while asserting that the market will never return to where it was pre-pandemic.

“The world has changed forever – and it has impacted the LCV sector,” he says.

**NO NEED TO DISCOUNT**

“Manufacturers are being affected by a shortage of raw materials, are building fewer vehicles, therefore don’t need to discount their stock and so are very profitable. As global businesses, why would you change that?”

“Long lead times are likely to be here to stay and fleet operators will need to get used to working six to 12 months ahead to decide what vehicles they need.”

“This all plays into the used market’s hands with

a constant shortage of vehicles keeping prices consistently high.”

Flood concludes: “Vendors must not forget that average prices are still £1,909 higher in May 2022 than they were in Q2 2020, so keeping a close eye on setting the right reserves to take into account the changing market will help improve conversion rates.”

“Some van makers have shut their new vehicle order books for a few weeks as they continue to struggle with production based on a continued shortage of semiconductors and other components such as wiring looms.”

“It’s my prediction that in the next two-to-three years, prices will remain buoyant as supplies remain restricted due to new LCV production levels being compromised.”

Medium-sized vans with a second row of seats are extremely popular



**MAXIMISING RESIDUAL VALUES**

While market trends will ultimately determine the general residual value (RV) of a commercial vehicle, there are actions a fleet decision-maker can take to maximise it.

Stuart Pearson, chief operating officer UK at BCA, says “remarketing basics” must now be rigorously adhered to.

“Where appropriate, mechanical and cosmetic repairs will add value and improve first-time conversion,” he adds.

“What’s more, the right level of preparation, an accurate appraisal, accurate descriptions and transparency around vehicle provenance will all contribute towards achieving optimum value and speed of sale.”

Alex Wright, managing director of Shoreham Vehicle Auctions, says this approach has become even more resonant due to the increasing age of the vans and trucks hitting the market.

“Used LCVs are getting gradually older because of contract extensions, so keeping vehicles in A1 mechanical condition is vital,”

he says. “A full service history is still one of the most important things buyers look for when buying at auction.”

Damage and excessive wear and tear due to driver misuse can be minimised by using telematics to monitor driver behaviour while the vehicle is on a fleet.

Action can also be taken when a commercial vehicle is procured. The fleet manager can consider different trim levels that offer additional safety and comfort features that may maintain the look of the vehicle.

Not only can they increase the well-being of a driver, they can also strengthen RVs. If the vehicle is leased, the stronger RVs could reduce the size of the monthly rental payments.

Glass’s says features which can add to a vehicle’s desirability include air-conditioning, heated seats, automatic gearbox, rear parking sensors, ply-lining and metallic paint.

“Metallic paint is growing in popularity and

often sells at a premium if the vehicle is in good condition,” says Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor at Glass’s.

“However, metallic paint has a downside; depreciation is faster if the bodywork is damaged.”

“Panels can be expensive to repair, often with the need of a paint oven to match the colour properly over multiple panels.”

He adds: “Small vans with a third seat or medium-sized vans with a second row of seats are extremely popular for customers who want to use vehicles for personal and business travel.”

“These can make premiums over the standard vans if offered combined with features such as air-conditioning and metallic paint.”

Specifying medium-sized vans with tailgates instead of standard twin rear doors can gain desirability and stronger RVs from buyers considering converting an LV into a camper van.



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<sup>1</sup>With an appropriate DC charging infrastructure providing 50kW the eCantar can be charged from 0-80% in about 60 min and from 0-100% in about 1hr 45min.

<sup>2</sup>Average load, mild outside temperature (10-25 degrees), constant driving style of the driver. The range depends on other parameters, e.g. air resistance, rolling resistance, use of recuperation as well as the topography itself.



# RENAULT TRAFIC

At 21 years old, the Trafic has definitely come of age

By Trevor Gehlcken

**W**hen the Trafic was launched in 2001, it was generally acknowledged as being best in its class in terms of the driving experience. I remember attending the press launch and marvelling at how car-like it was. I was also charmed by its space-age looks.

A lot has happened in the intervening 21 years. Rivals have caught up in this, the most hotly contested, commercial vehicle sector. But, while the Trafic no longer stands head and shoulders above its rivals, there is still plenty in this new upgraded version to interest cost-conscious fleet buyers.

The van we tested is the 'Business' model and it gets that moniker because this is the variant that most bigger fleets are expected to opt for. Thus, it eschews fancy frills like alloy wheels and suchlike and concentrates, instead, on the things that busy drivers really need.

As such, it was pleasant to get behind the wheel of a van without thinking that I might have to take a degree in electronics in order to work out how to alter the heating!



The Trafic has five cu m of cargo space

**FLEET PICK**  
RENAULT TRAFIC SL28  
DCI 110 BUSINESS

SPECIFICATIONS	
CV OTR Price	£28,033
Power/torque	110PS/300Nm
Payload (kg)	1,036
GVW (kg)	2,800
Load volume (cu m)	5.8
Fuel cost (ppm)	22
SMR (ppm)	5
Running cost (5yr/100k)	50.8ppm
MPG (combined cycle)	40.9
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	182

So, we have a pretty basic van which equates to a fleet-friendly price of £26,450 ex-VAT, although our test vehicle was loaded with a raft of extras that bump the price up by £3,120. Included are automatic high beam, plylined side panels and reinforced plywood floor, LED loadspace lighting and safety features such as lane-departure warning, active emergency braking and rear parking sensors.

Climbing aboard, I was pleased to find an array of old-fashioned knobs and switches. Some vans nowadays come with all the controls on a computer screen and, while younger drivers will scoff at an old fogey like me fumbling about trying to understand how everything works, I prefer to keep things simple. I was surprised at first to find what looked like an old-fashioned car radio with a knob on either side. But, in fact, it turned out to be a small screen that controls a number of functions.

Meanwhile, the driver's seat is firm with lots of lumbar support.

My only complaint is that, while this van has cruise control as standard, it doesn't get air-conditioning. As most modern vans have this as standard now,

you'd be amazed how you miss it when it's not there. Current H&S thinking is that air-con is a vital safety measure, as a cool driver is a safer one.

The Trafic swallows more than five cubic metres of cargo and has a maximum payload of just less than a tonne. Full plylining is an absolute must in our book. The upfront cost will no doubt be regained at selling time when it can all be peeled away to reveal a pristine interior.

On the road, the Trafic feels chunky and well-engineered and the 110PS on offer is plenty to row the van along nicely. The cab is quiet at motorway speeds and handling is sharp and precise.

Official fuel economy figure on the combined cycle is 40.9mpg. But on a long trip from Southend to Devon holiday home, a quick calculation showed that figure being bettered to 42.3mpg. I put this down to the fact that the Trafic has an ECO button which, when depressed, slightly knocks back the power, but adds up to 7% extra fuel economy.

After a week with our Trafic, I decided that if I were a fleet driver given this vehicle, I would be more than happy with what's on offer.



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Kenwood Hall Hotel,  
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To attend, please email:  
[Hayley.Bradshaw@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:Hayley.Bradshaw@bauermedia.co.uk)

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# RENAULT REFUSE P6X2

Regular set routes and lots of stop/starts make rubbish trucks a natural for battery power

By Tim Campbell

**T**here are several heavy commercial fleet operational profiles that could make an immediate transition to electric.

The bus industry is leading the way with daily predefined routes, which mean the range is consistent and there are a lot of stop/start opportunities to top up the battery with regenerative braking.

For trucks, there is one type of operation that meets many of the same operational profiles of a bus – a refuse vehicle. It has a predefined route, usually based on a two- or three-week cycle, the range and power requirements are well defined and there is a lot of stop/start driving.

In addition, the vehicle may leave the depot at 6am and return eight-to-10 hours later, allowing it to be connected to a depot charger for double-digit

hours. This is a major advantage of refuse collection and allows for the use of AC charging rather than the more potentially 'aggressive' DC charging.

One electric refuse vehicle attracting interest with local authority fleets is the Renault Truck D Wide 6x2 rigid complete with compactor.

## BATTERY/MOTOR

Renault Trucks uses a nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) battery pack of slightly more than 66kWh and, in the D Wide 6x2, four of these are grouped to offer a combined energy source of 265kWh. These batteries run at 600v and are liquid-cooled to ensure they remain at the most thermally efficient temperature.

Connected to the batteries is the motor which is continuously rated at 260kW (350PS) but has a peak power of 370kW (500PS) and delivers 850Nm (627lbft) of torque.

The D wide has a reduction gearbox with two forward speeds and one reverse and for brake regeneration the electric motor can be used as a retarder.

## CHARGING

The charge port is compatible with type 2 and CCS combo 2 which allows for mode 2, 3 and 4 charging from three phase 22kW to 150kW. The vehicle comes with a 7.5-metre intelligent charging cable mode 2 (20kW) rated at 380v/32A.

## POWER TAKE OFF (PTO)

Many rigid trucks need the ability to power on-board equipment whether it be a fridge engine, crane or, in the case of a refuse vehicle, a compactor. Renault Trucks uses a 600v electric motor rated 286Nm (196PS) continuously with a peak torque of 530Nm (390PS). This is delivered at a nominal speed of 2,450rpm and peaks at 3,790rpm.

## CHASSIS

We had the 3,900mm wheelbase variant – for a 6x2 this is measured from the centreline of the front axle to the centreline of the second axle. The rear bogie has a spread of 1,350mm. Along with a front overhang of 1,420mm and rear of 717mm, it results in a vehicle overall length of 9,013mm. As far as body lengths are concerned the 3,900mm wheelbase is recommended for a minimum body length of 5,808mm and maximum of 6,765mm.

## WEIGHTS

The truck has a gross vehicle weight of 26,000kg with the plated front axle weight at 8,000kgs, second drive at 11,500kg and the third fixed 7,500kg. Complete with batteries this means a kerb weight of 9,579kg made up of a front axle kerb weight of 5,393kg, driven axle at 2,534kg and the rear axle of 1,652kg. This results in a body and payload potential of 16,421kg.

## ON THE ROAD

The interior is almost the same as the diesel version. Only the central instrument panel with a large central dial is the hint to an electric vehicle. The centre console has the familiar 'D', 'N' and 'R' functions. Once drive is pressed and the handbrake released, silence takes over. Driving an electric truck is very simple and quiet, but this presents a problem for engineers as the quietness of the propulsion system accentuates the other noises, such as the mirrors and any fit 'n' finish issues.

## SUMMARY

The Renault D wide is a great start on the journey to heavy truck electrification and no matter your views on the subject, electric refuse trucks are here to stay. The main challenge is the infrastructure and the price – but that's not just an issue for Renault Trucks.

### MODEL TESTED Refuse P6x2

SPECIFICATIONS	
Cab	D Wide Night&Day
Battery (kWh)	265
Power	260k/350PS
Torque (Nm)	850(627lbft)
Gearbox	Two-speed
Front axle (kgs)	8,000
Mid axle (kgs)	11,500
Rear axle (kgs)	7,500
GVW (kgs)	26,000
Chassis weight (kgs)	9,579
Wheelbase (m)	3,900
Brakes	Discs all round



# THE LAST WORD

## KEVIN BOOKER

IT SYSTEMS AND FLEET MANAGER,  
BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Booker's exploits in an EV have seen him listed three times in the Guinness World Records book. He is passionate about vehicles in all shapes and sizes and even his favourite film is all about a car

**Advice to my 18-year-old self?** Keep following your passion! It took me a while, but I turned my hobby into a career (and I have three Guinness World Records for driving an electric vehicle [EV] to prove it!).

**My first memory associated with a car?** Not really my first memory of a car, but my favourite one. My Broom Yellow Fiat Punto Sporting, the first new car I ever bought, complete with a six-disc changer, an electric sunroof and a six-speed gear box, all the mod cons for 2001.

**If money was no object and I pushed my green credentials to one side for a moment, then it would have to be a bright orange Lamborghini Urus. Clearly not suitable for my more rural journey to work, but certainly a car that would turn some heads.**

**My favourite movie quote is:** "Roads? Where we're going, we don't need roads". What's not to love – a DeLorean that can travel in time in *Back to the Future*, a totally classic 1980s' film.

My hobbies and interests are cars, of course! But it's not as simple as saying just 'cars'. I'm an avid collector of model cars, which includes some great Lego ones. I enjoy speaking about cars, particularly EVs and I've given interviews to local and national newspapers, radio stations, as well as TV programmes. I've also been lucky enough to be part of several EV events across the country and my highlights have been working with Mission Motor Sport and obtaining my Guinness World Records.

**The song I would have on my driving playlist?** Having an Ionic 5 I should probably say something K-pop to be on-brand. But my driving playlist is rather eclectic, so maybe a cheesy 1980s' power ballad or maybe something from Kygo, Bastille or Clean Bandit.

**A book that I would recommend others read is *Ready Player Two* by Ernest Cline. A good sequel to *Ready Player One* with plenty of nostalgic references to 80s' pop culture and plenty of opportunities to 'nerd out', a fun sci-fi read.**

**My pet hate is when people jump on a bandwagon without doing research first. There are so many false stories out there about EVs that are sensationalised in the media which cloud people's views, preventing a balanced understanding of EVs and their suitability in today's world.**

**If I were made transport minister for the day I would ensure that the EV charging infrastructure was a priority and that it was accessible to (and equitable for) all. EVs are the future, but currently there is a huge cost differential between those that can charge at home and those that can't. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.**

### Why fleet

I have always had an interest in motor vehicles, and how the technology has advanced over recent years moving more into the tech area.

### How I got here

Back in 2009 when the depot manager left, I took on the role of fleet to help streamline costs and get us onto a regular fleet cycle so all the vehicles could be of the same specifications and safety features. I loved it so much, I have continued doing it for the past 13 years.

### Latest products, developments and achievements

My latest achievements have been to switch our pool fleet to purely electric or plug-in and to get the ball rolling on our first public rapid charger install which, hopefully, will go live by late autumn.

### My company in three words

Britain's breathing space

### Career influence

I started in IT, with a passion for cars. As the fields of technology and cars started to converge, I found myself getting more involved in fleet. My fleet involvement grew, particularly in the field of EVs as I began working on decarbonisation and looking at integrated solutions for the national park.

### What makes a good manager/leader?

I always want to get the best out of my team. The best qualities in a manager are being approachable, supportive, honest, engaging and encouraging.

### Advice to fleet newcomers

Don't look at fleet in isolation, consider the infrastructure and technology that is available to optimise energy use and efficiency. Ask questions, speak to industry experts. Don't just do something because that is the way it has always been done.

### If I wasn't in fleet

I would be following my other workplace passions which are IT and decarbonisation.

**Next issue:** Adrian Brabazon, fleet sales manager at BP UK



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Rachel Barrett  
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