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INSIDE



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Why Alison Owen says
fleet is 'not something
you can do part-time'

News: corporate manslaughter

Fleets warned of higher
fines for safety failings
after crane conviction



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Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures are obtained from laboratory testing and are intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. Optional equipment, maintenance, driving behaviour, road and weather conditions may affect the official results.

*Model shown is an Infiniti Q30 Premium 1.5d (80 kW) 6MT FWD at £28,300 On The Road including optional glass roof at £500, metallic paint at £670 and 19" alloy wheels at £700.

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Connected car technology distractions 'can be fatal'

Companies urged to protect staff through training and driving for work policies

By Gareth Roberts

Manufacturers are under fire for putting road safety at risk, with the latest in-car technology likely to distract drivers, according to experts. Increased connectivity through smartphones, watches and tablets has helped drive the public appetite for new developments, with almost two-thirds (61%) of motorists interested in greater connectivity, according to a survey by Ipsos Mori for the RAC Foundation.

But the growing array of in-vehicle technology means the risk of driver-distraction is also increasing. Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "There was a time when transport connectivity referred solely to how easy it was to get from A to B. But, with the telecoms revolution, there is increasing debate around connected cars and drivers.

"Technology brings us huge benefits. We just need to make sure it does so safely."

Attention could be diverted due to some event, activity, object or person, within or outside the vehicle. However, as connected services increase, it is in-vehicle distractions which are causing concern among road safety experts.

Dave Nichols, professional engagement officer at Brake, told *Fleet News*: "Any technology that enables drivers to perform tasks that have nothing to do with driving, including in-built infotainment systems which allow the checking of social media, is potentially as distracting and dangerous as using a mobile phone."

Call for regulation

In Britain, the Department for Transport (DfT) reported in 2013 – the latest data available – that there were 2,995 collisions where distraction in the vehicle was listed as a contributory factor, making up 3% of all accidents. Of these, 84 were fatal, equating to 6% of all fatal accidents.

"Vehicle manufacturers have made great strides in producing safer vehicles that protect both occupants and vulnerable road users, which is why it's so disappointing that they continue to develop in-vehicle technologies that can distract the driver," said Nichols.

"Anything that takes the driver's full attention away from driving is incredibly dangerous and manufacturers have a responsibility to make sure people know of the dangers."

The road safety charity is calling on the Government to regulate the use of in-vehicle technologies, and to implement tougher penalties for distracted drivers.

However, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) has defended the growth in connected-car features. An SMMT spokesman told *Fleet News*: "Manufacturers go to great lengths to ensure infotainment systems prioritise the most important functionality so that interaction is as straightforward and intuitive as possible, and to encourage drivers to use technologies in the safest ways.

"The increasing uptake of safety systems such as autonomous emergency braking, adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning, as we move towards full autonomy, is also helping to mitigate the effects of driver distraction, and will eventually eliminate this risk."

Driver distraction can be classified into four sub-categories

2,995
Collisions on UK roads in 2013 where distraction in vehicle was a factor

84
Deaths on UK roads in 2013 where distraction in vehicle was a factor

depending on what the source of distraction is. Cognitive or mental distraction occurs when the driver's mind is engaged with other tasks; visual distraction occurs when a driver takes their eyes off the road; auditory distraction occurs when a driver is subjected to noise that diverts their attention; and manual distraction occurs when the driver takes their hands (either one or both) off the wheel.

These four sub-categories are not mutually exclusive and often drivers experience more than one type of distraction at the same time.

How safe or unsafe the distraction becomes also depends on its intensity, the driving situation and its timing.

Texting on a mobile phone, for example, would involve high levels of cognitive, visual and manual distraction, but a low level audible distraction.

Speech-to-text or voice control, however, would involve a low level of manual distraction, a medium level of visual and audible distraction, and a high level of cognitive distraction.

Researchers at the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), argue that the impact of distraction on safety depends on the duration of the distraction and how frequently it happens – the length of time for which the driver is exposed to the additional risk.

For example, tuning the radio may cause visual, auditory and manual distraction, but for only a very short period of time; engaging in a hands-free telephone conversation does not require so much visual attention but the cognitive and auditory distraction is likely to extend for a significantly longer period of time – the length of the call.

"What is clear from research is that drivers knowingly engage in activities that they consider distracting," the TRL said in a report for the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

"For example, surveys suggest that the majority of drivers are concerned about driver distraction, rate certain activities such as reading and writing a text message and having a phone conversation as being highly distracting when driving, yet also report undertaking these activities when driving on a regular basis.

"Drivers are clearly aware that certain distracting activities affect their driving, but how accurately they are judging the relationship with crash risk is unknown.

"It is possible that drivers overestimate their ability to multi-task and their behaviour is being driven by other social and emotional motivations, such as the innate desire for communication and social interaction."

Research has confirmed that tasks almost always interfere with other tasks carried out at the same time. The brain



Rise of the connected car:
fleetnews.co.uk/connected-car



"Technology brings us huge benefits. We just need to make sure it does so safely"

Steve Gooding, RAC Foundation

Increased connectivity has pushed drivers' appetite for new developments



"Driving is the only activity that should occupy your mind while at the wheel"

Sarah Sillars, IAM

never actually focuses on two tasks at the same time, it switches back and forth between them.

True multi-tasking is a myth, claimed the IAM report, *The Battle for Attention*. "If you do more than one thing at the same time, your performance suffers as you struggle to divide your attention," it explained.

"Split attention can be detrimental to the quality and accuracy of your performance on either task."

Taking on another task when driving can mean that a driver is unable to pay sufficient attention to all the activities required for safe driving. This, says the report, can lead to a processing failure resulting in loss of control, putting the driver and other road users in physical danger.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: "Multi-tasking and driving simply don't mix."

"While there are plenty of distractions to tempt the driver, the individual needs to know that the phone or internet or the iPod simply don't matter – driving is the only activity that should occupy your mind while at the wheel."

"It's important that we work with the Government, carmakers and educators to deliver a renewed focus on driver training and road safety – and that people know that distractions can be fatal."

Fleet managers and employers can have a substantial influence on the safety of their employees through policies, practices, instructions, training and feedback.

The risks associated with distracted driving and the use of mobile phones and electronic devices should clearly be reflected in driving for work policies.

"Employers should ensure that the policy is clearly articulated and broadly communicated so that employees are aware of the existence of the policies," the report said.

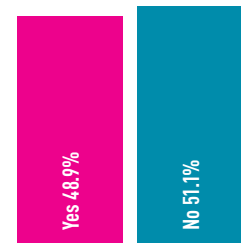
"Government and employers should also set minimum safety standards for procurement of vehicles and service providers."

■ **Carmakers showcase their vision for increased connectivity and autonomy at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas (see pages 14-15).**

FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

OPINION POLL

Do you think the plug-in car grant should only apply to pure EVs and not hybrids?



FleetNews view:

The Government will cut the plug-in grant from March 1, with plug-in hybrids receiving a less generous grant than pure electric vehicles. However, our poll suggests that the fleet industry is divided as to whether the grant should be pulled altogether for plug-in hybrids. *Fleet News* believes that grants should continue to be made available to plug-in hybrid customers, even at the lower rate, while the technology gets a foothold in the market.

This week's poll: Would you consider replacing your diesel car with one of the latest small-capacity petrol engined cars?

fleetnews.co.uk/polls

MOST COMMENTED ONLINE

Motorist with more than 50 points escapes driving ban

fleetnews.co.uk/news



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Q

■ Who has won the Best Car Maker of the Year 2015?

MOTORTRADER
INDUSTRY AWARDS

BEST CAR MAKER
OF THE YEAR
2015

Hyundai. It turned our world upside down too.

A

Record registrations to put pressure on used prices

Decline in RVs seen as inevitable following substantial growth in all sectors

By Gareth Roberts

A decline in used car prices is inevitable after record new car registrations last year and the sales surge expected to continue this year, according to experts.

New car registrations topped 2.6 million units for the first time in 2015, putting the seal on four years of consecutive growth.

Growth was enjoyed across all sectors, with the fleet sector boosting demand by 11.8% to reach an all-time high of 1.3m units. True fleet (leasing and corporates) was up 12.4% (94,143 units), while rental was up 8.8% (19,824).

Appetite in the private sector was also robust, up 2.5%.

Ford retained the top spot for total fleet registrations, with the top three manufacturers – Ford, Vauxhall and Volkswagen – accounting for a third of all fleet sales.

However, their fleet market share declined by two percentage points on the previous year.

BMW was one of the biggest beneficiaries, reporting an increase in fleet registrations of almost 24% (18,189 units), with the lion's share of those – some 12,300 units – coming from additional 2-Series and 4-Series sales.

Steve Jackson, chief car editor at Glass's, told *Fleet News* that manufacturers are again looking to achieve ambitious targets for 2016, over and above the significant achievements of last year, putting further pressure on used car prices and residual values (RVs).

He said: "Many major leasing company risk teams are already asking us the question: what is going to happen if registration growth continues?"

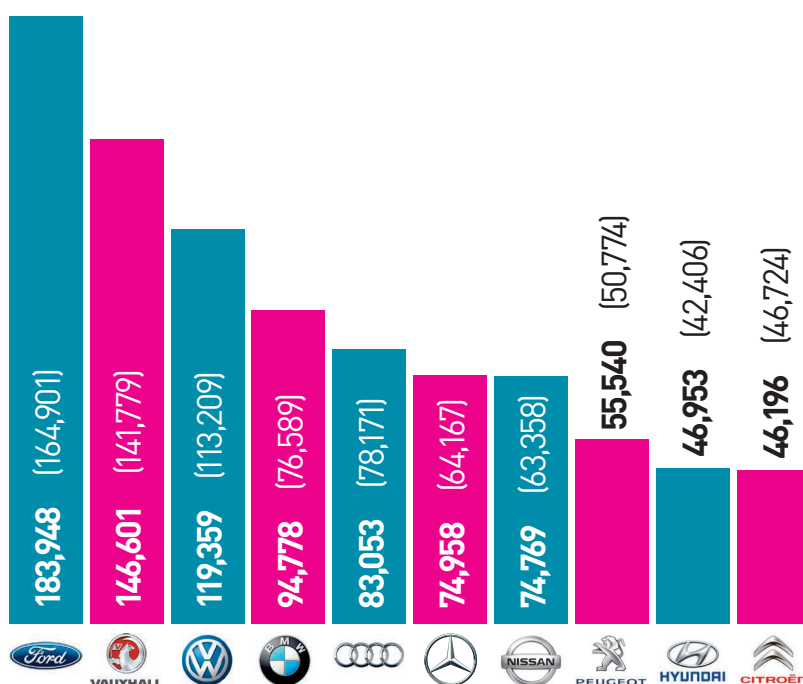
"In addition, franchised dealer networks have concerns of what is expected of them in 2016 as pre-registration activity continues.

"Added to this, many manufacturers are looking at how they can early terminate their current consumer PCP contracts to offer the customer a new vehicle earlier at a similar monthly rental. This in turn will add to the numbers and the inevitable pressure on values."

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) predicts new car registrations will hit 2.6m units again this year. However, it's worth noting that its prediction of 2.49m registrations for 2015, at the same stage last year, was wide of the mark. It is expected to review this prediction next month when it again looks at the available data.

John Lyndsay, director at leasing and automotive analyst JLSR, said: "The key to the future health of used car prices will in part depend on how effective dealers and OEMs are

TOP 10 FLEET MANUFACTURERS IN 2015



2014 fleet registrations in brackets

1.3m

Fleet registrations in 2015

18,189

Increase in BMW fleet registrations (up 24%)

at managing the timing of the change cycle for PCP deal returns in addition to the normal cycle of defleets from the fleet industry.

"It's inevitable that there will be some further decline in used prices as the supply and demand situation changes with increased volumes, but I believe the decline will be a gradual one rather than a sharp drop."

Derren Martin, senior editor at Cap HPI Black Book, believes the challenge for retailers, and the industry as a whole, is how many of the registrations in 2015 were actually as a result of natural demand.

"Fleet registrations are likely to have been heavily incentivised and pre-registrations appear to have been at unprecedented levels throughout 2015," he said.

"With volumes increasing, the challenge for the industry is to match used car supply with demand without distressing prices."

Fleets shouldn't expect a hike in rental prices, however. Lyndsay said: "Fleet businesses in general have been fairly careful in how they have priced RVs since the sharp decline at the start of the recession.

"Overall, customers will already have seen an increase in rentals post-recession so, unless the market takes an unexpected sharp turn for the worse, there shouldn't be any hidden surprises and any good fleet businesses should be working with its customers to manage this anyway."



"Registrations are likely to have been heavily incentivised"

Derren Martin, Cap HPI



More on remarketing at:
fleetnews.co.uk/
remarketing

Fleets warned of higher fines for safety failings

Previous penalties seen as too lenient to affect boardroom safety decisions

By Gareth Roberts

Employers convicted under corporate manslaughter and health and safety legislation will face tougher fines from next month.

New sentencing guidelines will come into force from February 1, and will apply to any case heard on or after that date, irrespective of when the offence occurred.

Vikki Woodfine, partner and head of road haulage and logistics at legal firm DWF, told *Fleet News* that the changes were being introduced because of an inconsistency in the level of fines being imposed in health and safety cases.

She said: "The new guidelines will undoubtedly see unprecedented levels of fines being imposed, with seven-figure fines becoming increasingly common."

Previous penalties faced by big companies for health and safety breaches had been criticised for not being sufficient enough to send a message to the board and shareholders about the importance of good health and safety management (fleetnews.co.uk, December 1, 2014).

However, changes to the sentencing guidelines will now see a large company (where the annual turnover is more than £50 million) face a fine of up to £10m for the most serious health and safety offences.

Major companies convicted of the separate offence of corporate manslaughter will face fines of up to £20m.

Woodfine explained: "By basing penalties on a number of matters, including turnover, courts will be able to impose huge fines on those large companies, even in cases where there is no fatality or even an injury."

The tougher penalties come in the wake of Baldwins Crane Hire being fined £700,000 in what was the first corporate manslaughter conviction involving a commercial driver (fleetnews.co.uk, December 22, 2015).

Lindsay Easton, 49, from West Yorkshire, was driving a 130-tonne mobile crane on a road from Scout Moor quarry in Edenfield, near Ramsbottom, when the brake system failed.

The vehicle, travelling on a steep access road, lost control and crashed into an earth bank.



Baldwins Crane Hire was fined £700,000 and ordered to pay £200,000 costs after a driver died when a vehicle's brakes failed

"Courts will be able to impose huge fines, even where there is no fatality or even an injury"

Vikki Woodfine, DWF

£10m

Fine for the most serious health and safety offences



More on accident management at: fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-management/accident-management/

The front of the vehicle was crushed, with Easton dying from multiple injuries.

Following the incident on August 15, 2011, an investigation was launched by Lancashire Police, working alongside the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

It found that several of the wheel brakes were inoperable, worn or contaminated. The engine braking systems were also found to be non-functional, disabled or damaged, providing only limited braking force.

The court also ordered the business to pay £200,000 in costs.

Woodfine said: "The fine imposed on Baldwins Crane Hire is larger than fines imposed for corporate manslaughter convictions in the past and that may be in-part due to the [new] guidelines. However, the impact on fines when they do officially come into force will be a huge shock to many."

Based on the figures in the company's most recent filed accounts, if the company had been sentenced under the new guidelines, the judge would have been using a starting point of a fine between £2m and £3m.

However, not everybody is convinced that tougher penalties will help. Edward Handley, a former TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) consultant and owner of Work Related Road Safety Solutions (WRRS), told *Fleet News*: "If a huge corporation making massive profits flouts health and safety law, and people die as a result, everyone would agree that that a massive fine was appropriate, but all too often cases are brought against small or struggling companies and there is no point imposing massive fines, because the company would just go into administration and the fine would never be paid."

■ Read what else Handley thinks is wrong with corporate manslaughter legislation, by visiting fleetnews.co.uk/blog

PAIR CHARGED OVER FATAL TIPPER TRUCK CRASH

Two men have been charged over a tipper truck crash in Bath which killed four people in February, 2015.

Phillip Potter, 19, of Dauntsey, Wiltshire, has been charged with causing death by dangerous driving and causing serious injury by dangerous driving.

Matthew Gordon, 29, from Dauntsey, has been charged with aiding and abetting and one count of dangerous driving.

Mitzi Steady, four, Phil Allen, 52, Stephen Vaughan, 34, and Robert Parker, 59, all died in the crash.

Potter and Gordon have been released on bail to appear before Bath Magistrates' Court in January.



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Smart Light Assist



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Exterior model shown is Superb Hatch SE L Executive 1.4 TSI 150PS ACT at £24,220 with optional Sirius alloy wheels at £650, metallic paint at £535, Smart Light Assist at £950, sunroof at £850, front and rear parking sensors at £350. Interior model shown is not UK specification. *Standard on SE L Executive and Laurin & Klement, optional on SE at £1,295. †Optional on SE and SE L at £950 and Laurin & Klement at £100. Only available in combination with Bi-Xenon headlights and electrically adjustable front seats. Information correct at time of print [01/16]. Official fuel consumption for the new ŠKODA Superb range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.4 (9.0) – 65.7 (4.3); ExtraUrban 45.6 (6.2) – 85.6 (3.3); Combined 39.2 (7.2) – 76.4 (3.7). CO₂ emissions for the new Superb range are 164 – 95g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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Tax warning for pool fleets over private use

Allowing an employee to take a vehicle home could be breaking HMRC rules

By Gareth Roberts

Growth in pool fleets and car-sharing services could leave employers at risk of falling foul of tax rules if they allow private use of these vehicles.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) says benefit-in-kind (BIK) should be paid on any company car or van if it fails to satisfy five conditions.

No private use is key, but equally the vehicle must be used by more than one employee, not to the exclusion of others, and must be made available to employees through the course of their work. The vehicle cannot also be kept near the employee's home at night.

An HMRC internal manual states: "You will sometimes see it argued that a car or van that would otherwise qualify as a pooled car or van is only taken home at night by an employee because there are inadequate car parking facilities at the employer's premises, or if the car or van were left overnight at the employer's premises it might well be damaged by vandals.

"Apart from the exception for chauffeurs, do not admit such a claim or offer any concession."

HMRC told *Fleet News* regular checks and accurate records of both driver and journey were essential to help fleets avoid falling foul of the rules.

"Employers should keep records such as mileage records, including origin and destination [and driver], in order to show that the journey was a business journey," said an HMRC spokesman.

If employers are not clear about the records they should keep, they should contact their HMRC customer relationship manager (if they have one), HMRC directly or a tax advisor.

The spokesman added: "No private use of the vehicle is allowed by employees. Any private use has to be incidental, in the context of the business journey as a whole."

An example might be where an employee is required to make a long business journey.

"In order for the employee to be able to make an early morning start, he or she is allowed to take a pooled car home the previous evening," the spokesman explained.

"If this is considered in isolation, the office to home journey is private use, but in these circumstances it is plainly incidental to the business journey undertaken the next day."

Get it wrong and HMRC can levy a fine of up to £3,000 per



£3,000

Maximum fine per annum,
per employee, for an
incorrect tax return



More on company car tax
at: [fleetnews.co.uk/
fleet-management/
company-car-tax/](http://fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-management/company-car-tax/)

"No private use of the vehicle is allowed by employees. Any private use of the vehicle has to be incidental, in the context of the business journey as a whole"

HMRC spokesman

annum, per employee,
for an incorrect tax return.

Inspectors can also determine whether the inaccuracy was careless, deliberate but not concealed, or deliberate and concealed, and will link a penalty for each offence as a percentage of 'potential lost revenue' – up to 30%; from 20% to 70%; and from 30% to 100% respectively.

That could involve unpaid tax going back four years, unpaid national insurance going back six years and lost interest on those sums, as well as a late payment penalty.

Alastair Kendrick, tax director at MacIntyre Hudson, said: "In some of these [car sharing] schemes employees are permitted to use the vehicles privately by making a hire charge.

"This does not remove the BIK but, if the arrangements are properly structured, that hire charge can be considered a private use contribution which is set against it on the car."

With research suggesting car-sharing could quadruple in the next four years, Kendrick believes consideration should also be given by the Government to whether existing tax rules are flexible enough to allow these schemes to work.

"The rules could be made more relevant to enable those wanting to move into this type of scheme to do so without the risk," he said.

Alphabet, which launched its car sharing service Alpha City in 2012, told *Fleet News* it hadn't seen any examples of fleets abusing pool car rules.

"It's not an issue as far as our customers are concerned, but our advice to fleets is keep a tight rein on pool cars and make sure you know the rules," said a spokesman.

Alphabet also believes the existing tax regime is able to cater for the predicted growth in pool car fleets and car sharing schemes.

■ New BMW DriveNow car-share scheme, page 28.

Calls for uniformity on drink-driving laws in UK

Northern Ireland vote leaves England and Wales with much higher limit

By Gareth Roberts

Pressure is mounting on the UK Government to follow Scotland and Northern Ireland's lead by cutting the drink-drive limit in England and Wales.

The Scottish Government reduced the legal alcohol limit for driving from 80mg to 50mg in 100ml of blood from December 2014, while the Northern Ireland Assembly voted to toughen its stance last week.

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill will introduce two lower levels of drink drive limits in Northern Ireland – 50mg for all drivers and 20mg for novice and professional drivers – replacing the current level of 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood (fleetnews.co.uk, January 19).

The bill also introduces a graduated penalty scheme that reflects the amount of alcohol involved, while the police will gain power to establish roadside checkpoints to provide for more routine breath checks.

The new measures will be introduced in 2018, yet the limit in England and Wales remains at 80mg, having been introduced almost 50 years ago in 1967.

David Davies, executive director of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS), said: "A driver with 80mg blood alcohol concentration is 12 times more likely to be killed in a collision than a driver with a blood alcohol concentration of zero – but may still be within the law in England and Wales."

The last independent inquiry into the drink-drive limit, which was conducted by Sir Peter North in 2010, recommended a reduction to 50mg.

"Since that time, road casualties, including drink-related casualties, have decreased very little if at all," continued Davies. "There is a good case for allowing parliament to examine the issue again to see if further progress can be made."

The UK Government remains opposed to bringing the drink-drive limit in England and Wales in-line with lower limit in Scotland.

Transport minister Andrew Jones told MPs at a recent transport select committee meeting: "Making progress on drink driving is not a question of limits alone; as well as enforcement it's [about] education."

However, he added: "I will look at the evidence. I am cautious about making a change, but I certainly want to see continued progress."

Drink-driving offences north of the border have fallen at almost twice the rate of the rest of the UK since the lower limit was intro-



"I will look at the evidence. I am cautious about making a change, but I want to see continued progress"

Andrew Jones, transport minister

duced. Between December 2014 and August 2015, drink-driving offences fell in Scotland by 12.5% year-on-year, while offences fell by 6.6% in the rest of the UK.

Research recently commissioned by PACTS and the RAC Foundation, suggests around 25 lives could have been saved across Great Britain last year if England and Wales had followed Scotland's example, while a further 95 would have escaped being seriously injured.

Stricter laws would also have the majority support of the public, according to a poll by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

Almost 70% of respondents – more than 2,400 people – said they would like to see the drink drive limit reduced (fleetnews.co.uk, December 17, 2015).

A *Fleet News* poll was more evenly split, however, with just 58% in favour of adopting the same lower limit as Scotland.

One fleet manager, who wished to remain anonymous, told *Fleet News*: "If you have a lower limit, it's inevitable that employers will see more company car and van drivers falling foul of the law in the morning if they've had a drink the night before."

Around 5,500 people currently fail breath tests between 6am and midday every year, according to research from the Government campaign Think.

On average it takes around one hour for the body to break down one unit of alcohol, meaning it could take as long as 12 hours for the alcohol from four pints of higher strength beer – or four large glasses of wine – to leave your system.

Worryingly, the Think study also revealed that the most common reason for getting behind the wheel after a heavy night out drinking was to get to work.



For more on accident management, visit: fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-management/accident-management/

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CO₂ from: CO₂ to: Fuel type: Petrol Diesel Electric Hybrid E from: E to:

Make	Derivative	P11D Value	Cost per mile
Citroen	C4 Cactus SUV 1.2 PureTech 75 68 Touch 15.75MY	£12,595	22.60p
Citroen	C4 Cactus SUV 1.2 PureTech 82 SE 68 Feel 15.75MY	£15,495	24.50p

Cost per mile 24.93ppm

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Depreciation 14.87ppm
Service maintenance and repair 3.1ppm

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Fuel consumption figures for the Civic range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 37.2 – 70.6 (7.6 – 4.0), Extra Urban 54.3 – 85.6 (5.2 – 3.3), Combined 46.3 – 78.5 (6.1 – 3.6). CO₂ emissions: 145 – 94 g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Model Shown: Civic 1.6 i-DTEC SR Manual in Brilliant Sporty Blue Metallic.

Carmakers showcase new tech at electronics show

Long distance EVs and autonomous technology on display at Las Vegas event

By Gareth Roberts

In-car connectivity, autonomous vehicles and plug-in concept cars took centre stage at this year's Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in Las Vegas.

Automotive used to be a bit-part player at the annual technology tradeshow, but since the advent of autonomous driving and connected cars, manufacturers are using it to give fleets a glimpse of the future.

Volkswagen used the event to reveal two concept cars: a pure electric mini-van, called the Budd-e, and a fully electric Golf – the e-Golf Touch.

The Budd-e, which is the first vehicle to be designed around a new purpose-built electric drive platform, has a flat, space-saving battery that fills almost the entire vehicle floor (similar to the Tesla Model S). It powers two electric motors, which drive both of the axles.

Volkswagen says it delivers a range of up to 333 miles in Europe's official NEDC test when fully charged, while real world driving suggests a range closer to 230 miles.

No details were given on the range of the e-Golf Touch which was used to showcase the carmaker's next genera-

2030

Year by which Kia aims to have fully autonomous car

tion of media systems that are due to start arriving on its production cars later this year.

"We are doing more than just putting electric power trains in our conventional models," said Volkswagen brand CEO Herbert Deiss.



Volkswagen unveiled the Budd-e concept, with voice command doors and high mileage range

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"We are developing entirely new and unique vehicle concepts, especially for long-distance electric mobility."

The Budd-e's doors open with a voice command, while a refrigerated tray in the rear bumper can be opened by a digital key to accept shopping deliveries and parcels without the driver being required.

Deiss said the Budd-e could become a reality by the end of the decade.

Kia used the technology show to announce its plans to have a fully autonomous car on the road by 2030.

In the meantime, it will slowly introduce self-driving aspects via its new Drive Wise sub-brand.

Drive Wise technologies on display at CES 2016 included autonomous driving functions for both motorway and in town. Kia also showcased an emergency stop system which detects if the driver takes their eyes off the road for too long and automatically brings the car to a stop on the side of road.

Tae-Won Lim, senior vice president at the central advanced research and engineering institute of Hyundai Motor Group, said: "Although the first marketable fully-autonomous car from Kia will not be available in the immediate future, the work our R&D teams are currently doing to develop our range of Drive Wise technologies is already improving on-road safety and driver assistance."

By 2020, Kia aims to introduce its first partially-autonomous car with Drive Wise technologies, building upon the current generation of driver-assistance systems.

Another manufacturer showcasing greater connectivity and EV ambitions was Audi.

The E-tron quattro concept it revealed is a pure electric sport SUV with a 95 kWh battery located between the axles which enables a range of more than 310 miles.

It features several self-driving technologies, including 'piloted' driving in traffic jams and piloted parking. Audi says



"We are developing entirely new and unique vehicle concepts, especially for long-distance electric mobility"

Herbert Deiss, Volkswagen

333

Claimed mileage range
of VW Budd-e



More autonomous car
news at: [fleetnews.co.uk/
articles/tag/
autonomous-cars](http://fleetnews.co.uk/articles/tag/autonomous-cars)

it will be launching its self-driving technologies in the near future and a production model E-tron is expected in 2018.

Meanwhile, Volvo revealed it is developing intelligent, high-bandwidth streaming capabilities with its technology partner Ericsson to cater for the autonomous car.

Anders Tylman, general manager of Volvo's monitoring and concept center, said: "Imagine a highway full of autonomous cars with their occupants sitting back watching their favourite TV shows in high definition."

"This new way of commuting will demand new technology and a much broader bandwidth to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience."

Volvo research shows that almost 70% of all mobile data traffic will be from video in the coming years.

Claes Herlitz, head of automotive services at Ericsson, explained: "This requires an innovative connectivity, cloud and analytics solution that is not only capable of serving multiple moving vehicles across a highway, but also has the capacity to provide the high-quality, uninterrupted video service today's consumer is accustomed to."

Tylman concluded: "With our autonomous drive technology we will provide people with freedom to choose the way they commute and the content they experience."



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MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing, and intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown is a NP300 Navara Tekna. Refer to Dealer for exact specification. Models subject to availability. 5 Year/100,000 miles (whichever comes first) manufacturer warranty for the NP300 Navara range. Information correct at time of going to print. Nissan Motor (GB) Ltd, The Rivers Office Park, Denham Way, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9YS.

THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*



As widely forecast, registrations hit a record high last year, fuelled by PCP deals in the retail market and strong fleet registrations.

The question, as ever, is: how much of it was real? Retail sales have been artificially elevated by low interest rates and robust residual values: dealers have found it relatively easy to persuade people out of a contract a few months, or even a year, early and into a new car. That will slow down when interest rates start to rise and/or residuals dip.

"Most of the growth in fleet registrations came from the true fleet sector, up 12%"

The issue for fleets is the volume of two- and three-year old cars that this creates. Supply could swamp demand, impacting on residual values – not good for leasing companies, many of which are sticking to robust pricing forecasts as they compete for fleet business. Dealers have also been pre-registering in larger quantities to hit sales targets: as those models return to market after 90 days with discounts, they will have a knock-on effect down the chain, further unsettling residual values.

When it comes to fleet registrations, most of the growth came from the true fleet sector, up 12%, or 94,143 units. Rental rose almost 9%, adding just over 19,800 to the mix, while Motability was unchanged.

The crunch years are likely to be 2017 to 2018; that's when we'll know the true consequences of all this bloated activity.

FLEET NEWS AWARDS

You will shortly receive an email inviting you to vote for the *Fleet News* Awards manufacturer of the year and new company car of the year. You decide the winners, so please take time to vote; it's a prestigious award, prized by the manufacturers. If you do not receive the email, please contact sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk

YOUR LETTERS

SPEEDING

Astonishing that driver with 51 points not banned

EDITOR'S PICK



Rory Morgan wrote:

Having read 'Motorist with more than 50 points escapes driving ban' (fleetnews.co.uk, January 7), looking at the other comments the resounding message is one of astonishment. The majority of details highlighted are for speeding events, one of which has received points for

breaking the speed limit 10 times.

This clearly demonstrates a total lack of regard and respect for the law and other road users as previous endorsements have evidently not altered behaviour or mindset one iota.

If this person can't or won't learn then he or she should be facing jail not just a driving disqualification.

■ The editor's pick in each issue wins a £20 John Lewis voucher.

Robberg added:

Without knowing the full details it's difficult to comment, but it would be interesting to know why the provisional licence holder with 51 points was not disqualified. How do these people get insurance?

MOBILE USE AT THE WHEEL

Higher fines not enough for phone use – more police action needed

Busterrabbit wrote:

Having read 'Increased penalties for handheld mobile phone use is "victory for common sense", says AA Insurance' (fleetnews.co.uk, January 5), I would ask how many people are actually caught and prosecuted? I can go for days without even seeing a police car. By contrast, it seems that almost 2% of

drivers are scrolling through facebook, twitter and emails. Mobile phone use, particularly by the under 30s, is almost ubiquitous. There needs to be a major campaign to change behaviour. It wouldn't take long, just get police in an unmarked van with a video camera and they wouldn't be able to keep up with the number of phone users they see.

DRIVERLESS CARS

Mixed reaction to autonomous vehicle news

Edward Handley wrote:

Having read 'Volvo and Ericsson streaming technology can extend journeys so drivers can watch TV episodes' (fleetnews.co.uk, January 6), I'm astonished. In future, journey times for everyone else are going to increase because someone with an autonomous car is going to take 30 minutes to do a 20 minute journey just so they can catch up on *Eastenders* or *Coronation Street* on their way home. I hate to think what will happen if someone decides to catch up on *War and Peace*. This strikes me as lunacy – journey times should be determined by the state of the roads and volume of traffic, not by one individual's viewing habits. Never forget the old maxim that a convoy moves at the speed of the slowest ship or vehicle.

Gordy added:

Driving more slowly to catch up on life means slower cars, so lower emissions, less fuel burn. Also, the car will be over in the inside lane, leaving the overtaking lanes clear for people who are in need of making progress. So, as autonomous cars will drive better than humans, this all makes sense and should make the roads a whole lot safer. Fantastic!



LEASEPLAN DEAL

Competition good for tyre supply

Ste wrote:

Having read 'LeasePlan tyre deal to redefine fleet service' (*Fleet News*, December 18, 2015), I agree with Fleet Tyre Network MD Nick Bennett's comments: the more competition in the supply market the better. However, I disagree with his colleague Martin Towers – leasing companies don't have to lose their ability to buy tyres or know their true cost (although I'm sure only the CEOs of the tyre OEMs truly know that). So long as the leasing company is tendering the various supply models correctly and thoroughly, it just comes down to good procurement practice. Watching this space for the driver's customer service experience.

FUTURE OF FUELS

Drivers key to EV success

Sage and Onion wrote:

Having read 'Ask Nigel: future of fuels' (fleetnews.co.uk, January 7), I think the problem with electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids is that, as these become more popular, the number of available public charging points will diminish and we will then see a reversal of the popularity of plug-in vehicles as it reaches saturation point, unless there is huge investment in the public charging infrastructure.

The charging infrastructure needs to be everywhere. At all supermarkets, at all fuel stations, at all car parks. Why not even install charging points in lamp posts where there is parking available in the road or street?

And don't just focus on London.

Plug-in hybrids are expensive to buy and some manufacturers steer clear of plug-in hybrids because they recognise that some company car drivers only select them because of the low BIK tax and don't actually plug them in that often. Nigel is correct in identifying the driver as the main influence in achieving maximum efficiency.

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ISSN 0953-8526.
Printing: Headley Brothers Ltd, Kent



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Question:

What are your New Year resolutions?

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FLEET OPINION

CHOICE LISTS

The importance of company car image

By Carlos Montero

“When it comes to choice lists, it's not just running costs that are considered important; to user-choosers and a company itself, image is still a factor.

The way cars are marketed and placed in the media creates impressions and opinions with the public, aligning the vehicle with specific messages. These messages are not just about the vehicle itself but also about those driving it.

For a company, image and messaging is largely based on the industry in which the company operates. Some are naturally more susceptible to image than others. For example, wholelife running costs of premium and volume brand models may be comparable, but for a charity organisation, a premium brand would send the wrong message.

But company cars, although a work tool, are still used for employee retention, incentive, reward or benefit, therefore the grade and brand of car can be more connected with the driver in question than the industry.

Typically, we see SMEs offer a far greater choice on vehicle lists, as these are less restricted. However, they must still be financially viable.

Bigger organisations and corporations typically have a stronger grading structure, which can restrict choice for staff. Manufacturer volume deals or solus deals can also create a restriction or limit choice.

Wholelife cost is still the bedrock of all decisions, but the rest largely depends on the size of company, grade of driver and industry and all have an impact on the vehicles used.

There will always be one brand that is more desirable than another. In some circumstances, having a premium brand can do more harm than good and send the wrong messages to customers.

In the same way, cheaper is not always best and it can almost promote an image that your business is not as successful as it really is.

It's a difficult balance to strike, especially with more products battling for attention in the marketplace, which is itself under increasing pressure to be cleaner and greener while still making the right impression. ”

“Cheaper is not always best and can promote an image that your business is not successful”



Carlos Montero,
commercial director,
FleetEurope



Chris Joyce,
chief operating officer,
Fleet Hire



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opinion

DIESEL ADDITIVE

AdBlue should be part of wholelife cost

By Chris Joyce

“Most people in the fleet industry are now familiar with the use of AdBlue in modern diesel engine cars and why it is necessary to help control emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx).

The latest Euro 6 emissions regulations for diesel cars and vans came into force in September and cut the permissible limits for NOx from 180mg/km to just 80mg/km.

The most common remedy that manufacturers have come up with to tackle this issue is the use of after-treatment systems, such as selective catalytic reduction (SCR), which work with the injection of synthetic urea, widely known as AdBlue.

Our evidence suggests that usage can be quite high, especially for long distance drivers, and it is estimated that a typical passenger car will consume approximately 1.5 litres of AdBlue every 620 miles.

We have seen top-up costs vary from as little as £9 to as much as £63. The lower end of the scale tends to be the province of the independent suppliers, while the highest costs seem to come directly from manufacturers' own dealers.

Like any other consumable, the cost of AdBlue is rarely borne by the supplying leasing company, which usually expects the fleet customer to cover the cost, as with any other consumable such as petrol, diesel or oil.

Some vehicles have large AdBlue reservoirs while others have a smaller capacity suitable for the size of vehicle; most do not have an accurate gauge to show the level of the tank and the only sign of falling levels typically come with the first warning light.

Most drivers are now aware that failure to comply with the warning lights that appear on the dashboard will eventually result in the car failing to start at all.

With such a wide divergence of prices and capacities, our advice to fleet customers is to factor in the cost of AdBlue into their wholelife cost calculations for each vehicle, as they would with any consumable, to gain a true and accurate picture of the cost of running that particular model on their fleet. ”

“Our advice is to factor in the cost of AdBlue into your wholelife cost calculations for each vehicle”

ASK NIGEL

In our regular feature, Nigel Trotman, *Fleet News* Hall of Fame member and two-time *Fleet News* Award winner, gives advice on your fleet challenges and queries.

SALARY SACRIFICE

Q We have been looking at salary sacrifice for quite a while but I am undecided whether it is a good thing to do. We have just over 1,000 employees, of which 300 are grey fleet drivers and more than 100 are company car drivers. We are mainly looking at salary sacrifice to help grey fleet drivers and to become more environmentally-friendly as a few have really old cars with high CO₂ emissions. What's your advice?

A Yours is an interesting question and one that a large number of fleet managers have found themselves asking in the past couple of years. The success of salary sacrifice in other areas of employee benefits has inevitably seen more organisations explore the potential for cars for all employees as part of an enhanced employee offer.

Like any such change, however, adopting salary sacrifice for cars is not a simple decision, and you need to be certain that it will work for your organisation, since, as with any approach to funding, it does not work for everyone. Your reasons focus on emissions but you also need to consider other aspects such as improving the employee offer and potentially saving money. A change to salary sacrifice must also, of course, ensure that the fleet remains fit for purpose.

Salary sacrifice has been a regular topic at industry conferences in recent years, with presentations covering the details of what to consider, the potential risks, and so on. I do not propose to try to explain all of these here – I would need more space! Suffice to say I believe that the best approach is to talk to experts, especially ones already using salary sacrifice.

You should therefore start with a conversation with your fleet provider, understanding what they offer, how and where it works, and ideally get introduced to another customer who is using it successfully. Not every fleet provider offers salary sacrifice products and levels of success vary.

I would therefore also advise you to talk to one or more of the fleet managers profiled in *Fleet News* who uses salary sacrifice – there have been several in the past year or so. They can give you a real hands-on appraisal of why it works for them as well as advising on potential pitfalls.

For example, I know one organisation that was keen on salary sacrifice for cars until they realised that a large proportion of the workforce would not qualify as

“One firm was keen on salary sacrifice until they realised that a large proportion of staff would not qualify as the deductions would take them below minimum wage level”

the deductions involved would take them below the level of the minimum wage. Factors such as levels of staff turnover have also been cited as a potential limiting factor and I have heard of a number of cases where take-up has been considerably below expectations.

At the end of the day, salary sacrifice will not work for everyone, and in some cases is used in parallel with another funding option – the ‘blended’ approach. However, as a first step you need to establish if it will work for your organisation.

■ The next Ask Nigel will be in the March 17 issue

Nigel Trotman has more than 25 years' experience in the fleet industry.

As fleet manager at Whitbread he scooped two *Fleet News* awards – fleet manager of the year (large fleets) and UK fleet of the year – before making the switch to consultancy at major leasing companies Lex Autolease and Alphabet. He entered the *Fleet News* Hall of Fame in 2013.

He is secretary of ACFO Midlands and is an ICFM board member.

Do you have a fleet challenge you would like Nigel to answer?
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'FLEET IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN DO PART-TIME'

Alison Owen is using her leasing and rental knowledge to help NRS reduce costs and improve its fleet effectiveness. *Sarah Tooze* reports

NRS Healthcare has more than halved its fleet insurance claims since appointing a dedicated fleet manager in mid-2013.

Alison Owen, who has been in the automotive industry most of her working life (with spells at rental providers Thrifty and Euro-Dollar, leasing company ALD Automotive, and insurer Hastings Direct), was brought in to manage the fleet of 120-130 vehicles, after the company recognised it needed a dedicated role.

"Historically, NRS was part of Findel and the fleet management element was run for the group," explains Owen. "When NRS branched out it had the majority of the fleet and all the commercial vehicles, so it was agreed it needed its own fleet manager. One of the regional managers was covering quite a substantial part of it [fleet management] but it's not something you can do part-time."

Since Owen took on the role, the fleet has grown significantly to 401 vehicles (345 vans and 56 cars) – the majority added over the past 12 months as a result of business growth.

The company provides daily living aids and mobility equipment to help elderly and disabled people to be self-sufficient at home and has contracts throughout the UK.

Its driver technicians, who deliver and fit the equipment as well as performing collections, can clock up high mileages depending on the county they are working in. Their job title recognises the fact that they spend 50% of their time driving.

"When I came in a lot of the health and safety elements were geared towards what they do at the service user's house – and rightly so. But there is also just as much of a risk to the driver technician out on the road, so it's about getting them to understand that balance, which I think we're doing well," Owen says.

One of the first things Owen did was introduce daily vehicle checks before driver technicians go out on the road, with managers performing a monthly check of the vans.

Educating driver technicians about their responsibilities has been key.

"A lot of them hadn't come from a professional driver background, so they were lacking the knowledge of the importance of why we ask them to do a check every day," Owen says. "It's about ensuring they understand the repercussions if they've got a vehicle with defective tyres or missing brake lights."

Owen also updated the company's fleet policy, switched from manual driving licence checks to electronic licence checking with DriverCheck, tightened up the incident reporting and handling process and brought

in Incident Support Group to run a 24-hour driver helpline for drivers to report incidents and to handle service, maintenance and repair bookings.

Arguably, the biggest change has been introducing driver assessors at each of NRS Healthcare's 21 depots through a partnership with Drive Smarter 18 months ago.

All van drivers and sales staff in company cars have now been through a driving assessment, which looks at their abilities out on the road and determines whether they need further training.

"We primarily deal with delivering equipment to residential care homes and individuals' residences and drivers have to manoeuvre a four-metre long vehicle in quite tight cul-de-sacs, so it's giving them the ability and the confidence to manoeuvre the vehicles in narrower spaces than perhaps they would be if they delivered to industrial estates," Owen says.

Drivers that are rated 'gold' are assessed once a year, while those considered 'silver' are assessed twice a year and 'bronze' drivers are assessed every three months.

Anyone who has an incident – own fault or not – is also assessed before going back out on the road.

"We investigate formally all incidents and any help or support and additional training is provided," Owen says.





Alison Owen:
'We investigate
all incidents and
provide support and
additional training'



FACTFILE

Organisation NRS Healthcare
Fleet manager Alison Owen
Fleet size 345 vans, 56 cars
Funding method Contract hire
Replacement cycles Cars – three years; vans – four years
Brands Mercedes-Benz (cars/vans), Volkswagen (cars)



A driving assessment is also now carried out at the recruitment stage to make sure that NRS Healthcare is “happy and confident with their abilities and they’re happy and confident in driving a large vehicle”, according to Owen.

“The assessments have been met with a lot of positivity,” she says. “You do get some drivers saying, ‘I don’t need to be taught how to drive’, but it’s getting across to them that it’s not teaching them to drive – they’re offering advice and guidance and assessing their abilities and helping them in that area.”

The results speak for themselves with the amount that NRS’s insurers pay out falling by approximately £200,000 since 2013 – despite the growth in the fleet size. NRS is anticipating a 5% reduction in its insurance premium at renewal.

“The nature of the business means we’re never going to get our incident rate down to zero, but I’m pleased with the progress we’ve made so far,” Owen says.

NRS has focused on the van driver technicians because they had the largest volume of incidents, due to the size of their vehicles. But one of Owen’s aims is to ensure that all drivers have assessments.

NRS also now plans to introduce a classroom-based training course, run by Mercedes-Benz, to complement its on-road assessments and coaching.

“You do get drivers saying, ‘I don’t need to be taught how to drive’, but the training is not doing that, it’s offering advice and guidance and assessing ability”

Alison Owen, NRS Healthcare

Initially, managers from within the depots will take the training course.

“I firmly believe that to be able to manage people you should be able to do the job that they’re doing and be able to understand what they’re doing, so we’ll start with an individual representative from each depot,” says Owen.

Having managers that have completed the training will also mean that they will be able to support the driver technicians following their training.

NRS opted for the Mercedes-Benz course as it has a long-term relationship with the

Alison Owen feels drivers are the face of the company

HOW CONVERTER HELPED TO REDUCE WEIGHT

Making sure the vans are not overloaded is one of the challenges Owen faces.

As the drivers do both deliveries and collections “the heaviest time of day isn’t necessarily when they pull out of the yard first thing in the morning”, she says.

A number of the vans have a weight system which provides a running total throughout the day and tells the driver whether or not they have distributed the load evenly.

Owen also works with NRS’s vehicle converter Cro Vec to reduce weight. For example, the newest vans on the fleet have aluminium rather than steel moveable bulkheads (used to separate the clean and dirty items in the vehicle).

NRS has to ensure the vehicles are fully washable inside to meet strict guidelines for infection control so the vans are fitted with waterproof lining. On the recommendation of Cro Vec, Owen has changed the lining to make it more durable and less likely to get damaged.

“If you look at a van that joined the fleet at Christmas time and one that joined six months ago it will be different,” Owen says. “I really appreciate our van converter’s help with that.”

Despite the level of conversion the vans undergo, converter Cro Vec and Mercedes-Benz has ensured that all new vehicles are ready for the first day of a new contract.

manufacturer. By the end of this month it will be a 100% Mercedes-Benz van fleet and all of the vehicles are contract hired from Mercedes-Benz Financial Services (MBFS).

Vans are predominantly on four-year leases, while cars (Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen) are replaced after three years.

Maintenance is on a pay-as-you-go basis because the vehicles are on variable servicing and “it’s more practical to lease excluding maintenance”, according to Owen.

“We find it’s beneficial for us,” she says. “It enables us to control costs a little bit more.”

Cost was one of the reasons NRS moved to a solus Mercedes-Benz van fleet.

“Mercedes-Benz vehicles stand up to the type of work we do – we do a lot of stop-start and there is a lot of equipment loaded and unloaded,” Owen says. “You can run a Mercedes-Benz van up to 200,000 miles and the van is hardly bedded in.”

NRS was also impressed with the level



of standard fit safety technology on Mercedes-Benz vans.

Having a premium brand also fits with NRS Healthcare's company image. Owen points out that the driver technicians are the "face of the company" and it is important they arrive in a clean, smart van.

"We like to make sure they take pride in the vehicle they've got," she says. "They're the image of the company that the service user sees so it's important to maintain standards."

All the vans are fitted with speed limiters (set at 70mph), reversing cameras and telematics.

NRS switched from a basic tracking device to driver behaviour telematics with Masternaut last year.

Drivers are given in-vehicle feedback via a lightbar which goes from green to amber to red and beeps at them if they do any harsh manoeuvres.

Owen says it is too early to tell whether telematics has improved fuel economy, especially as drivers have been using it over the winter, but she believes it is improving driving standards.

"Generally the drivers are of a good standard and have adapted with the lightbar: when it's gone off they want to make sure it doesn't go off again," Owen says.

The system also enables NRS to use live data to respond to ad hoc jobs.

"It's handy to be able to search to see who is the closest driver technician to a certain address or whether they have been to a certain user's house already," Owen says.

Masternaut telematics has also been fitted to sales team company cars, but there have been no complaints about privacy from drivers. This is because they have a privacy button for private mileage and can use the data for their mileage records and expense claims.

POACHER TURNED GAMEKEEPER

Alison Owen has no regrets about switching from the supplier side to being a fleet manager.

"I draw on all my experiences from the other side and I've brought a lot of contacts with me," she says. "I brought Thrifty on board as our supplier for daily rental. I know who to speak to if I need things out of the ordinary. I also understand the insurance element – when things are deemed fault and non-fault and I am able to say to depots 'why is our driver being classed as at-fault in that particular incident?'"

"It's also about getting them to understand the bigger picture if there is an incident, that it's not just repairs, it's replacement vehicles and all the other associated costs that you don't necessarily see. I can draw on my knowledge and experience there."

Driver assessors will use the telematics data ahead of assessment to see if there are any particular areas drivers need to work on.

Next on Owen's agenda is improving the environmental performance of the fleet. She is considering lowering the CO₂ emissions cap on company cars (currently set at 130g/km) as well as looking at Allstar's carbon offsetting scheme.

Fully electric vehicles are not yet appropriate for NRS, due to the high mileages the vehicles need to be able to do, according to Owen, but she is considering introducing hybrids. She is also preparing for further business growth should the company win more contracts this year.

"It's always a good boost when we win new contracts," Owen says. "Everyone likes to see the business growing and doing well. Hopefully 2016 will see as much growth as there was in 2015, if not more."



For other fleet profiles, visit fleetnews.co.uk/case-studies



BMW BRINGS FLEXIBILITY TO CAR-SHARE MARKET

A deal between BMW and Sixt has led to a new proposition for Londoners, which focuses on an innovative approach to parking, reports *Christopher Smith*

Mobility is one of the biggest buzzwords in fleet right now. As cost and environmental impact top the fleet agenda, businesses are looking more closely at how they can get staff from A to B more efficiently. Flexibility and convenience are also crucial considerations.

It is within this context that the fleet sector has seen a rise in car-sharing companies. Initially devised as an easy way for city dwellers without a car to borrow a vehicle when required on a pay-as-you-go basis, businesses are beginning to see the benefits of a ready-made city based pool car network, without the hassle or worries of maintenance.

The major rental firms have been quick to spot the opportunities (or risks to their traditional business models), with Avis Budget snapping up global firm Zipcar, and Enterprise buying British company City Car Club. Hertz developed its own 24/7 service for cars and vans.

One of the latest entrants to the sector is DriveNow, a joint venture between rental firm Sixt and manufacturer BMW.

Launched in London in December 2014, the venture had already been running in a number of cities in Germany for the previous three years, and in America for two, picking up more than 360,000 customers in that time.

Coming to the UK was considerably harder than on the continent, according to UK managing director Joseph Seal-Driver, due to the scheme's flexi-share proposition.

"Other schemes are back-to-base, where you pick up a

12,000
Number of
DriveNow customers

290
Number of vehicles
on fleet

car, and return it to the same place," he explains. "DriveNow is an evolution of that – what we call flexible car-sharing. You can pick up a car from a parking bay across our service area, and use it one way or for a return trip, and you can end your reservation anywhere within the zone."

This flexibility is due to agreements made with local authorities that allow DriveNow vehicles to be parked in any council-owned pay-and-display or residents' parking bay within the 'business area'. Crucially, it means users aren't paying for the car when parked within this area. Outside the zone, there's a discounted 'parked' rate.

This is where the complications arose in London. Elsewhere in Europe, street parking is dealt with centrally, so a single city-wide agreement is all that is needed. However, in London, individual agreements are required with all 32 boroughs. As a result, the programme launched with four – Islington, Hackney, Haringey and Waltham Forest, all located in a cluster in the north-east of the city.

Across this 32-square-mile area, DriveNow operates 290 vehicles, from the BMW and Mini brands. All are automatic, with 50 electric i3s available for hire at the same rate. Roll-out to other boroughs is on the agenda this year.

"DriveNow is all about on-demand use, it's not always pre-planned," says Seal-Driver. "For short, urban journeys, the car has been used for minutes, then dropped somewhere. It means the availability of that car is pretty high. We can maximise efficiency in that way."



FACTFILE

Company DriveNow
UK managing director Joseph Seal-Driver
Business start date December 2014
Number of customers 12,000
Market share 10% (London)
Fleet size 290
Brands BMW, Mini

50

Number of electric vehicles available to hire

"Research says that, for every one vehicle we put on the road, it takes six-to-13 private vehicles out of the city"

Joseph Seal-Driver, DriveNow

In one sense, the cars on the DriveNow scheme are 'self distributing' – they have to be collected from where the previous user left them. The company employs a small team to go out to clean the cars, check tyre pressures and charge-up or refuel cars where necessary, a key element for duty of care compliance.

Since launching in London a year ago, DriveNow has accumulated 12,000 customers – around 10% of the city's car-sharing market.

"London is the mega-city of Europe," says Seal-Driver. "It's quite different to other markets we work in. If we were across the rest of London we think it would become a huge step-change in the way we use cars in the city."

Transport for London recently estimated there would be one million car-sharing customers in the capital by 2025, so Seal-Driver is positive about the market's potential.

"If we want to manage the demands on our roads, manage our road space, and keep the city moving, we need to introduce things like this," he says.

DriveNow is primarily a replacement for a driver's private vehicle. Seal-Driver claims that, for every vehicle it puts on the road, six-to-13 private vehicles are removed.

"When you're driving on a pay-as-you-go basis, drivers tend to be smarter and plan their vehicle use much better," he adds.

Seal-Driver cites the low emission vehicles on the fleet, which he says are much more environmentally friendly than the private vehicles they replace.

Drivers are encouraged to leave electric vehicles charging with a 20-minute bonus on their account, which Seal-Driver says helps reduce the workload of his team. The same bonus applies to drivers filling up a petrol tank using a fuel card.

The company also uses rapid charging stations in Hackney borough that take 20 minutes to fill up, feeding back into local council revenues.

While much of the focus is on getting private drivers using the scheme, DriveNow is developing a business provision.

"We have a business development manager, who is talking to SMEs, business centres, and large corporates," Seal-Driver explains.

When a driver registered on a business account logs in to a vehicle, the start procedure will ask if the journey is for business or personal use, and bill the cost accordingly.

The standard fee is 39p per minute, while pre-pay bundles can reduce the charge to 32p per minute. Hourly block bookings are also available.

Seal-Driver believes DriveNow offers a compelling case to limit grey fleet use and reduce commuting congestion.

He says: "The area we're operating in, north-east London, has around 1.5 million people living and working there. It means employers can encourage staff not to drive to work – if they need to go to a business meeting, they know there will be a car available."

"We're finding many of our customers so far tend to be SMEs, media companies, architects, lawyers – typical of the area we're in. Hackney is known for its start-up businesses, and it's no accident we chose to launch in this part of London."

DriveNow is looking to connect its vehicle sharing programme with other forms of transport.

In November, the company launched a partnership with London City Airport, allowing drivers to use the Docklands terminus as a start or end point for the journey, with vehicles and parking available.

"We'll increasingly cater for business travel," says Seal-Driver. "As an end-to-end journey, you can pick up a car here, drive to the airport, jump on a plane to Dusseldorf, pick up a DriveNow car, and reach your destination."

"We're really keen on delivering that 'last mile', and helping to offer a seamless transport product."

Seal-Driver sees the service as 'filling the gap' between public and private transport.

Residential opposition to the service has been low, with a small number of complaints from residents regarding the arrival of new vehicles in parking bays offset by the large number of users.

"Comparing DriveNow to traditional car-sharing, for which you have to paint a lined space which can't be used by any other vehicle, and you have to consult with residents," says Seal-Driver. "You want that space to be empty – that means the car is being used. The ability to start and end a car anywhere within the business area is fantastic."

With plans to launch in more London boroughs in coming months and years, Seal-Driver says other UK cities may also be in the pipeline.

"We launched two cities in a month earlier in the year in northern Europe, so there's definitely potential for future growth."



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fleetnews.co.uk/fleetprofiles

FLEETS INFORMED

Brought to you by **FleetNews**

What is Fleets Informed?

The *Fleet News* Fleets Informed programme is designed to deliver comprehensive advice and knowledge to fleet decision-makers on a range of key topics to assist them with the efficient and effective running of their cars and vans.

The programme, which will run throughout 2016, extends across print, website and events with eight commercial partners providing insight.

It will play a key role in achieving the *Fleet News* brand objective of providing companies operating cars and vans with insight, analysis and best practice to enable them to maximise their fleet efficiencies and effectiveness.

Each partner will provide insight into the major areas of fleet operations to give decision-makers new ideas, possible to solutions to long-standing problems and spark some alternative thinking.

As the business of running a fleet in the 21st century continues to evolve, these partners will help companies to stay in the vanguard of new developments as they come to market during the course of 2016.

Important dates to watch out for include:

- **February 18:** Introduction to the eight Fleets Informed partners and the topics they are covering in *Fleet News* and on the website.
- **May 12:** Discussion debate via a partner roundtable on the big issues facing fleets will be published in *Fleet News* and on the website.
- **June 9:** Interview with each partner on how fleets can improve their operational efficiencies in *Fleet News* and on the website.
- **August 18:** Fleet case studies focusing on the eight Fleets Informed topics will share best practice in *Fleet News* and on the website.
- **October 19-20:** Each topic becomes a feature stream at Fleet Management Live, held at the NEC in Birmingham (see fleet-management-live.fleetnews.co.uk) for more information.

In addition, all the content will be hosted in a dedicated Fleets Informed section on the *Fleet News* website – www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleets-informed – which will go live from February 18.

The eight partners will also upload their own additional content to the online area.

Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers said: "Fleets Informed taps into the knowledge of respected industry suppliers to provide our readers with insight and best practice. The eight areas selected will be relevant to everyone with responsibility for managing cars or vans and will give nuggets of information usually only available as part of a supplier consultation."

**Fleet Informed topics
will feature at Fleet
Management Live**



The partners



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* Of 43 respondents

2016

VEHICLE LAUNCH GUIDE

Get the low-down on all the new cars and vans
worth considering for your fleet this year



ALFA ROMEO AUDI BMW CITROËN DACIA DS FIAT FORD HONDA
HYUNDAI INFINITI JAGUAR JEEP KIA LAND ROVER LEXUS
MASERATI MAZDA MERCEDES-BENZ MG MITSUBISHI
NISSAN PEUGEOT RENAULT SEAT ŠKODA SUBARU SUZUKI
TOYOTA VAUXHALL VOLKSWAGEN VOLVO

ALFA ROMEO GIULIA

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE FROM £26,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 100G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Alfa Romeo's long-awaited D-sector challenger was unveiled in June 2015. It's an important car for the brand – its first new mainstream car since 2010, and the one with which Alfa will be re-introduced into North America.

So far, we've only seen a high-performance version of the Giulia – a V6 turbo producing 510hp – but at the Geneva motor show in March, Alfa should be confirming the four-cylinder petrol and diesel powertrains that will help determine whether or not the car will be a success.

It will be competing with the BMW 3 Series, Audi A4, Mercedes-Benz C-Class and the Jaguar XE, as well as trying to lure user-choosers away from the likes of Ford, Vauxhall and Volkswagen.



FIAT 124 SPIDER

AVAILABLE SUMMER

PRICE £20,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ 140G/KM (ESTIMATED)

The new Fiat 124 Spider is the result of a partnership with Mazda, taking advantage of the Japanese manufacturer's fourth-generation MX-5, with an Italian accent to the styling and a turbocharged Fiat engine.

The two-seat roadster will be due in the second half of the year, and there are also rumours of a more powerful Abarth version in 2017.

For now, the 124 Spider will use a 140hp 1.4-litre engine found in other Fiat models.



JEEP

AVAILABLE LATE 2016

PRICE FROM £25,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 120G/KM (ESTIMATED)

We know little about Jeep's new rival to the Nissan Qashqai, but if the success of the latest Cherokee and the Renegade, launched in 2015, are any indication, the new model should be warmly received.

The name of the new model hasn't been revealed yet, but it will effectively be a replacement for the Jeep Compass of a few years ago. This name might well be retained.

We can expect engines from the current Jeep line-up to be deployed in the new model, so expect diesel engines ranging from 120hp to 170hp, as well as 140hp and 170hp petrol variants, with four-wheel drive optional.

FIAT FULLBACK

AVAILABLE SUMMER

PRICE FROM £20,000 EXCLUDING VAT (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ 169G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Fiat will be entering the pick-up truck sector in 2016 thanks to a partnership with Mitsubishi.

The Fiat Fullback is based on the successful Mitsubishi L200, and will share its engine and sophisticated four-wheel drive technology.

Measuring up to 1,780mm in height, 1,815 mm in width and 5,285mm in length, with a wheelbase of 3,000mm, the Fullback will offer a payload of 1,045kg and will be powered by a 2.4-litre diesel engine with a power output of either 150hp or 180hp. Two transmissions will be available, a six-speed manual gearbox or a five-speed automatic transmission with sports mode, and both will be combined with full four-wheel drive systems.

We expect Fiat will focus on the more lucrative double-cab part of the sector rather than the smaller workhorse single and club-cabs, which make



up a fraction of the pick-up market.

From what we know of the L200, the Fullback should combine comfort and capability in a way that was unimaginable in a truck a generation ago, as well as a range of safety features that we're more used to seeing in SUVs.

FIAT SCUDO

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE FROM £18,500 EXCLUDING VAT (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ 170G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Images and specification of the new Scudo have not yet been published, but the new van will have a lot in common with the Renault Trafic and Vauxhall Vivaro.

The Scudo used to be produced in partnership with Peugeot and Citroën, and in fact was built at PSA's factory in France.

While the two companies continue in partnership for large panel vans and compact cube vans, Toyota has now joined with PSA on the medium panel van, while Fiat has teamed up with Renault.

So we can expect the Scudo range to offer similar engine choices to the Trafic as well as equipment grades that reflect the options with Renault.



FIAT TIPO

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE FROM £14,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 110G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Fiat will return to the mainstream lower-medium sector later this year with the new Tipo.

Already available as a saloon in some European markets, the UK is only likely to have a hatchback at launch and an estate shortly after.

The Tipo's predecessor, the Bravo, struggled for recognition in a crowded sector with plenty of excellent cars to choose from.

Sharing a platform with the 500L, Fiat will be hoping the Tipo's roominess, high level of standard equipment and value for money will help it stand out.

We're told there will be a choice of four engines, and we can expect the 1.6-litre diesel (likely to be available in 105 and 120hp outputs) to be of most interest to fleets.

FIAT FIORINO

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE FROM £11,000 EXCLUDING VAT (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 110G/KM (ESTIMATED)

The Fiorino is the oldest vehicle in the Fiat Professional line-up, so we're speculating that there will be a major refresh during 2016, bringing the van up-to-date.

Therefore, we can expect some improvements in fuel efficiency and reduced CO₂ emissions, as well as revised styling and new technology.



CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Francis Bleasdale, Fleet & Remarketing Director, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles UK Ltd



2015 proved to be another year of growth for both the fleet industry and for Fiat Chrysler Automobiles UK, where we had a record year of fleet growth of 23%.

With the Fiat 500X and the Jeep Renegade we have greatly expanded our current product offering to fleet customers. 2016 will see five brand new models being launched across all of our Brands. This will include the Alfa Romeo Giulia, recipient of the *What Car* most eagerly-anticipated new car of 2016 award. Already widely praised for its outstanding style and performance, the new Alfa Giulia will provide an exciting alternative for fleets and user-choosers in the premium saloon sector.

"We will further strengthen our team to cater for the individual needs of all our customers"

This year Fiat returns to the C Segment with the all new Tipo, available as either hatchback or estate. With the new 124 Spider, it means that Fiat continues to expand its range with even more exciting and stylish cars.

Our Fiat Professional commercial vehicle range will also be extended, as we enter the pick-up market for the first time with the new Fullback and strengthen our medium van offering with the all new Scudo. There are also planned changes to both the Alfa Romeo Giulietta and Mito, providing UK fleet customers with one of the widest and most diverse ranges of vehicles available.

The next steps will include further expansion of our dealer fleet specialist network, extended aftersales fleet support and the launch of an all new approved used car programme across all our brands. We will also continue to further strengthen our team of fleet specialists in order to cater for the individual needs of all our customers, from a small local business to the largest corporate, contract hire and public sector fleets.

These initiatives will help us continue to grow our UK fleet market share, but our main focus will remain the same: delivering outstanding customer service.

For more
information contact
our Business Centre
on 01753 519442

FCA

FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILES

ALL-WHEEL DRIVE MONDEO, S-MAX AND GALAXY

AVAILABLE JANUARY

PRICE MONDEO TITANIUM FROM £25,995; S-MAX FROM £29,195; GALAXY FROM £31,545

CO₂ MONDEO FROM 124G/KM; S-MAX/GALAXY FROM 139G/KM

Ford's new model activity in 2016 continues at the strong pace of last year.

The timing couldn't be better for the introduction of all-wheel drive versions of its large car range.

It is available on diesel hatchback and estate variants in the Mondeo range, as well as the S-Max and Galaxy people carriers.

Offered with 150hp and 180hp versions of the 2.0-litre TDCi engine, although introduced in Zetec variants of the Mondeo in 2015, it is expected to be more popular now that it will be available in the Titanium grade.



EDGE

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE £32,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 149G/KM

The Edge has been on sale in North America for some time, but we won't see European versions in the UK until the autumn.

The flagship SUV will have all-wheel drive and a choice of 180hp or bi-turbo 210hp 2.0-litre diesel engines. The 180hp derivative will have Zetec, Titanium and Sport grades, with the auto-only 210hp offered with Titanium and Sport.

With Ford making the most of its upmarket Vignale model line in the Mondeo and S-Max in 2016, perhaps the Edge would lend itself to a Vignale version in 2017.



MUSTANG

AVAILABLE JANUARY PRICE FROM £29,995

CO₂ FROM 179G/KM

You might have spotted one or two on the road late in 2015, but the reality is that Ford's iconic coupé and convertible won't be arriving with customers until January 2016.

Not really a fleet choice, although we believe Ford has missed a trick by not offering the car with a 3.0-litre V6 diesel, but we suspect that a few employees on company car schemes will find a way to get their businesses to pay.

Ford offers a 320hp four-cylinder 2.3-litre Ecoboost engine as the entry-level – which has much higher CO₂ as an automatic than the standard manual. Conversely, with the 425hp 5.0-litre V8, the automatic has lower CO₂ emissions than the manual.

MONDEO VIGNALE, S-MAX VIGNALE

AVAILABLE MONDEO JANUARY; S-MAX SUMMER

PRICE MONDEO FROM £29,345; S-MAX FROM £32,500 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ MONDEO FROM 99G/KM (HYBRID); S-MAX FROM 129G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Ford's upmarket model line begins with the Mondeo in January, and gets a boost from adding an S-Max variant in the summer.

Vignale is intended to blend traditional coach-building with contemporary design and cutting-edge technology, and bringing a hand-finished

feel to modern products.

A surprisingly high proportion of Ford Mondeo and S-Max models are chosen in high-specification Titanium with the X-pack of options, so the premium for a Vignale over what they might have chosen, might not be significant.

Vignale customers also buy personalised services tailored to their needs for the lifetime of their vehicle ownership, supported by a Vignale relationship manager and 24-hour phone assistance from the Vignale One Call service.





RANGER

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY
PRICE FROM £17,795 (EXCLUDING VAT)
CO₂ FROM 171G/KM

There has been a great deal of activity in the pick-up truck market recently, with new models from Mitsubishi and Nissan and, with a new Toyota Hilux expected in 2016, the Ford Ranger has been freshened up for the challenge.

The truck's 2.2-litre diesel engine has been given a power boost to 160hp from 150hp, and there is a reported improvement of up to 17% in fuel efficiency.

The range now has fuel-saving stop-start technology on manual variants, while an automatic transmission option is now extended to the 200hp 3.2-litre engine in Limited grade as well as the range-topping Wildtrack.

The Ranger has also been given a new look, which resembles the forthcoming Edge large SUV due to be launched later in 2016.

FOCUS RS

AVAILABLE APRIL
PRICE £29,995
CO₂ 175G/KM

There is a long tradition of 'fast Fords' going back many decades and the latest hot hatch to pick up the baton will be the Focus RS in April.

Using the same 2.3-litre engine as found in the entry-level Mustang, but with torque vectoring and all-wheel drive to improve agility, traction and stability, the Focus RS is expected to set a performance benchmark.

Like the Mustang, it is very unlikely to appear on company car choice lists, but its desirability should rub off on lesser models in the Focus range.



KA

AVAILABLE AUTUMN
PRICE FROM £9,000 (ESTIMATED)
CO₂ LESS THAN 100G/KM (ESTIMATED)

The current Ford Ka is derived from Fiat's successful 500 city car. For the next-generation model, expected to arrive in the second half of 2016, Ford will be taking the model back to its roots.

The original Ka of 1996 was based on an earlier Fiesta, shortened and restyled, but with many of the same components. The next Ka will also use an earlier Fiesta as its base, which is no bad thing.

We can expect power from efficient three-cylinder 1.0-litre engines and CO₂ emissions comfortably below 100g/km.



CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Nick Themistocleous, director of fleet operations, Ford of Britain



This time last year I said we were going to continue to innovate and work with fleets to drive down operating costs – and we have certainly done that.

In 2016 we will complete the launch of our all-new commercial vehicle range with Ranger, which now runs from Fiesta Van through Transit Courier, Transit Connect, and Transit Custom to Transit and Ranger – and were delighted that the market recognised the outstanding fuel efficiency, low operating costs, and reliability of our new range of CVs with at least one major fleet industry award for each of them. In fact, we were awarded a total of 13 awards across our CV range, and 20 awards

"2016 will be another exciting year for new vehicles S-MAX and Galaxy, Edge and the thrilling new Mustang and Focus RS will all join our range"

across our car range in 2015. Reducing real world fuel consumption and overall operating costs has been a key objective, and even more savings can be made with our new Stage VI engines in Transit and Transit Custom, which offer increased power and torque, lower CO₂, together with service intervals increased to two years/36,000 miles.

2016 will be another exciting year for new vehicles S-MAX and Galaxy, Edge – our all-new SUV sitting at the pinnacle of our SUV range – and the thrilling new Mustang and Focus RS will all join our range together with additional versions of the All-New Mondeo with a high power 210PS twin turbo diesel, and intelligent all-wheel drive versions of Mondeo, S-MAX and Galaxy.

In 2016 we will continue to use our outstanding product range to work with fleets to deliver best in class solutions to their business needs.

■ To discover how our cars and service can more than meet the demands of your fleet, please call the Ford Business Centre on 0345 7232323, email flinform@ford.com or visit ford.co.uk/fleet for more information



Go Further



RENAULT MÉGANE HATCHBACK

AVAILABLE SPRING **PRICE** FROM £17,000 (ESTIMATED) **CO₂** FROM 86G/KM

Renault is undergoing a process of rebuilding its presence in the UK, and the new Mégane will be key in maintaining its progress.

Bold styling makes the car stand out in a crowded sector, and the new Mégane is also packed with technology.

The Mégane has a longer wheelbase and a wider stance than its predecessor, giving it greater on-road presence, as well as improved ride and handling characteristics.

Most engines are carried over from the previous model, but this is no bad thing. It means CO₂ as low as 86g/km is available from the 1.5-litre diesel, while the 130hp 1.6-litre diesel weighs in at 104g/km. There will

also be a 2.0-litre diesel with 165hp. The petrol range will feature 100hp and 130hp 1.2-litre turbocharged variants, as well as a higher performance 205hp 1.6-litre turbo GT.

The GT will feature a four-wheel steer system for improved agility at lower speeds (up to 50mph) when the rear wheels will turn in the opposite direction to the front wheels, and better stability at higher speeds when the rear wheels turn in the same direction as the front wheels.

High-specification versions of the Mégane will be available with a tablet-style interface as an upgrade from the conventional navigation screen, which is claimed to be the largest screen in the lower-medium sector.

RENAULT MÉGANE SPORT TOURER

AVAILABLE SUMMER
PRICE FROM £18,000 (ESTIMATED)
CO₂ FROM 86G/KM (ESTIMATED)

We've seen no images of the Mégane Sport Tourer to date, and we expect it to be shown for the first time in public at the Geneva motor show in March.

We think the new look Mégane styling will suite the estate silhouette very well, and previous wagon versions of Renault's lower-medium car (pictured below) have been exceptional load-luggers, with greater cargo volume than some estate cars in the sector above.

The Sport Tourer will share engines with the hatchback, so 100hp and 130hp 1.2-litre petrol engines are likely, alongside 1.5-litre, 1.6-litre and 2.0-litre diesels.

CO₂ emissions should be similar to that of the hatchback, if not identical, so there should be a choice of 1.5-litre dCi variants below 100g/km, with 1.6-litre dCi versions below 110g/km.

Like the hatchback, the Sport Tourer will look and feel more upmarket than its predecessor, and running costs should be significantly lower, thanks to much improved residual values.



DACIA RANGE REVISIONS

AVAILABLE SUMMER

Revisions to the Dacia range will be minor, and will have little impact on the specification and price of the models.

However, we can expect cosmetic changes across the board to help freshen up the Sandero, Duster, and Logan ranges in Renault's budget brand, boosting the appeal of its no-frills philosophy.

RENAULT SCENIC, GRAND SCENIC

AVAILABLE AUTUMN
PRICE FROM £18,500 (ESTIMATED)
CO₂ FROM 99G/KM (ESTIMATED)

The Scenic range will enter its fourth incarnation this autumn, almost 20 years after the Mégane Scenic first appeared.

There will be the five-seat Scenic and seven-seat Grand Scenic as before, and engines and technology will be shared with the new Mégane range.

We can expect better fuel efficiency with CO₂ emissions perhaps dipping below 100g/km for the first time and official fuel economy on the combined cycle exceeding 70mpg.

It's likely that we'll see a version of the Mégane's tablet-style touch-screen interface offered on the Scenic and Grand Scenic.

Renault could also offer the Scenic with a four-wheel steering option, as the 4Control system, fitted as standard to the Mégane GT, is offered as an option on the Espace (not sold in the UK), which would improve agility at low speeds along with stability at high speeds.





RENAULT TWINGO GT

AVAILABLE SUMMER

PRICE £14,500 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ 110G/KM (ESTIMATED)

The rear-engined Twingo is a joint project between Renault and Smart, with the German manufacturer's Fortwo and Forfour models developed in the same programme.

The Twingo has been around for a little more than a year, and during 2016 we should see the introduction of a racier version, wearing a GT badge.

With 110bhp, it'll fall short of some of the more powerful hot-hatch city cars such as the Vauxhall Adam S and Abarth 500.

But for many in this market, it'll be quick enough, and with a more modest power output it'll mean running costs will be lower. We expect the price to be significantly lower than the more powerful cars of this size too.

Currently the Twingo is available with a choice of a normally aspirated 1.0-litre producing 71hp, or a turbocharged 0.9-litre engine with 90hp. The extra performance from the new 110hp variant should be noticeable and inject even more fun into this quirky small car.

Although the current engines offer CO₂ emissions below 100g/km, we doubt whether the more powerful GT would be able to achieve that.



CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Darren Payne, director, sales UK, Renault Group UK



At Renault we've continued to work hard in 2015 – sales were up by 20% on 2014 – making our fleet proposition an even more innovative, business-friendly operation.

Kadjar, our all-new C-segment crossover, joined the Renault range in the latter part of 2015, to critical acclaim. Thanks to its class-leading residual values, total cost of ownership, and joint best-in-class CO₂ figures, Kadjar broke into the segment successfully, providing customers with a great looking, great value option in a competitive market segment.

We doubled our dedicated car and van local fleet specialists in our dealer network and nearly half of all Renault dealerships now have dedicated business sales people, offering fleet customers a more personalised and tailored experience.

"We doubled our dedicated car and van local fleet specialists in our dealer network"

To accompany this growth, we've also invested in both our corporate field sales team and Business Hub, boosting our presence by a third in both teams. Renault's dedicated Business Hub manages all inbound and outbound enquiries from fleets and is responsible for enquiry management, account manager appointments and demonstrator bookings, making it easier for our fleet customers to do business with us. Renault's Business Quality Commitment provides our fleet customers with market-leading levels of customer service for both cars and vans, giving them further confidence in the quality of our range with four years of guaranteed mobility and hassle-free business motoring.

These innovations and investments have all impacted on sales, with Renault fleet sales significantly outpacing the UK fleet market throughout 2015.

We'll continue to renew our compact car offering in 2016. Joining Kadjar in the summer will be All-New Mégane whilst the latest generation of Scenic – the car that invented the C-MPV segment – arrives at the end of the year, giving Renault the most up-to-date C-segment offering in the market.



RENAULT
Passion for life

Seat Leon Cross Sport



Seat Leon X-Perience

SEAT SUV

AVAILABLE AUTUMN PRICE FROM £23,000 (ESTIMATED) CO₂ LESS THAN 120G/KM (ESTIMATED)

We know very little about Seat's new Nissan Qashqai rival, other than that it shares technology with the forthcoming Volkswagen Tiguan, and it marks the start of a family of crossovers for the Spanish brand.

Seat has whetted our appetites a little with the Leon Xperience, launched in 2015, an all-wheel drive Leon ST with extra ground clearance and a rugged looking styling kit.

We also saw the Leon Sport Cross concept revealed at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September 2015 – a less rugged looking crossover than the Leon X-Perience, based on the three-door Leon Cupra SC, and producing 300hp.

This followed Seat's unveiling of the 20V20 crossover at the 2015 Geneva motor show. This was intended to point to what Seat could be building by 2020, and showed a larger, more practical SUV, similar in size to the Audi Q5.

It became clear that, as the SUV and crossover market in Europe is growing, Seat feels it is important to offer new products in those sectors to help boost sales.

We think Seat's first true SUV will offer more off-road ability than most owners will ever need, while retaining the dynamic character of the brand.

The new Seat will be related to the Volkswagen Tiguan, so we can expect a choice of power outputs from a 2.0-litre diesel engine, as well as a sprightly and fuel-efficient 1.4-litre or 1.8-litre TSI.

On-demand four-wheel drive traction will be courtesy of a Haldex system that will send drive to the rear wheels when sensors detect the front tyres begin to slip. However, because of the way the crossover market stacks up in the UK, with the majority of models registered in this bracket

lacking four-wheel drive, we also expect Seat to offer front-wheel drive variants of the new car.

As a new model, we can expect the latest connectivity features, and touchscreen interface. The car will most likely be compatible with Apple Carplay, Android Auto and Mirror Link systems, and the Seat Connect app will bring a range of convenience features to the car, allowing a few simple, self-selected gestures to carry out functions such as calling a friend, activating route guidance or finding a filling station.

Seat Connect will read out incoming messages, while answers can be dictated via voice recognition, enabling the driver's focus to remain on the road ahead.

It's likely that safety features on the new Seat will include adaptive cruise control, autonomous emergency braking and various parking assistance components.

SEAT IBIZA CUPRA

**AVAILABLE THIS MONTH
PRICE £18,100
CO₂ 145G/KM**

A few months after the revised Ibiza arrived in the UK, the hot Cupra model undergoes some significant changes that should boost its appeal.

The old twin-charged (supercharger plus turbocharger) 1.4-litre TSI is replaced by a turbo-only 1.8-litre TSI, which brings with it a 12hp increase to 192hp as well as a hefty 52lb-ft more torque at 236lb-ft.

Its predecessor was offered only with the DSG auto, while the revised Cupra will be manual.

The car comes with standard Driver Profile, with comfort and sport modes. Selecting sport creates stiffer dampers and sharper steering.

Seat has also increased the size of the front brake discs to help improve stopping performance.

Standard equipment includes bi-xenon headlamps, cruise control, automatic climate control, rain-sensing wipers and automatic headlights. Like other models in the recently revised Ibiza range, the Cupra is also compatible with Apple Carplay, Android Auto and MirrorLink.

The Cupra is only offered in the three-door Sport Coupé (SC) body style.



SEAT LEON FACELIFT

AVAILABLE AUTUMN

PRICE FROM £18,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 85G/KM (ESTIMATED)

It's hard to believe that the latest Leon has already been on sale for three years. It still looks pretty sharp, but the speed at which connectivity technology moves means there will be updates to the car in 2016 to ensure it keeps up.

We don't expect much to change with how the car looks, although a light cosmetic change is likely, and perhaps greater availability of LED headlights, which have been part of an occasionally free technology pack promotion with the current model.

The interior is likely to undergo a bigger change with a new interface and compatibility with Apple Carplay, Android Auto and MirrorLink systems, which allow some of your smartphone apps to be displayed and interacted with on the car's touchscreen.

We expect to see the addition of the Seat Connect app, which will read out incoming text messages through the car's audio system and send replies dictated via the car's voice recognition system, helping to ensure the driver isn't distracted from the road.

Engines will remain largely the same as in the current car, but it wouldn't surprise us to see some very small reductions in the new model's CO₂ emissions.



Seat Leon current model



CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Peter McDonald, head of fleet, SEAT UK



SEAT is looking ahead to a very promising year as we focus on growth across all fleet channels with new products and technology while delivering exceptional levels of customer service. Responses to the latest SEAT products have been very

favourable, opening doors with new customers and enabling existing relationships to flourish.

Our successes stem from a tangible focus on the core customer experience. A website redesign, including a class-leading benefit-in-kind tax calculator has made essential SEAT knowledge more accessible than ever, while the SEAT fleet field team has worked magnificently on the ground. This has paid dividends in customer feedback: we were awarded the Experteye 2015 best fleet dealer sales network and comments following the hugely successful Inside SEAT events for fleet customers and dealers reiterated the positive sentiment towards the brand.

"The launch of an exciting new SUV will bring traditional SEAT attributes of outstanding design, quality and driving dynamics"

The critical acclaim of the Leon continues, with 2015 highlights not limited to winning best coupé up to £25,000 in the *What Car?* 2015 Awards as well as taking the *Auto Express* compact family car award for the third year running.

We don't like to rest on our laurels, however, and 2016 will bring some exciting new additions to the SEAT family. New connectivity options across the range, including the addition of the acclaimed full link system have kept SEAT at the forefront of innovation tailored to the business user.

The launch of an exciting new SUV will bring traditional SEAT attributes of outstanding design, quality and driving dynamics to the class for the first time, ensuring that we continue to broaden our offering of highly competitive vehicles for businesses.

Visit SEAT.co.uk



PRIUS

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY
PRICE FROM £23,295
CO₂ FROM 70G/KM

The Prius might not have quite defined all that Toyota represents over the past 15 years, but it has possibly come to define what we understand by the word hybrid.

The fourth-generation model will arrive in the UK early in 2016, and although the base version (as well as most of the rest of the range) has CO₂ emissions of 76g/km – itself an improvement over the best performance from its predecessor – one derivative will offer 70g/km. This isn't a new plug-in variant, either. We have no news yet on when a plug-in will join the new Prius range, but the Business Edition Plus with 15-inch alloys rather than the 16-inch wheels on the standard car achieves the lower emissions figure. It will be priced £25,595 (£400 lower than the equivalent grade with larger wheels).

The BIK tax for this model is four percentage points lower than others in the range and, under current rules, qualifies for a full discount on the London congestion charge.



RAV4

AVAILABLE THIS MONTH
PRICE FROM £23,695
CO₂ FROM 115G/KM (HYBRID)

Although the Rav4 is undergoing a mid-life facelift, there is a significant change to the model line-up with the addition of a new hybrid, as well as new safety equipment.

The Business Edition Plus is offered only as a front-wheel drive hybrid, using Toyota's 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine combined with an electric motor, as in the Lexus IS, GS and NX.

CO₂ emissions for this variant are 115g/km, although choosing a four-wheel drive version results in a modest rise to 118g/km.

Diesel versions are perhaps more attractively priced, but there are none with CO₂ below 120g/km.



PROACE

AVAILABLE SUMMER
PRICE FROM £18,000 EXCLUDING VAT
(ESTIMATED)
CO₂ N/A

We know very little about the new Proace so far, other than it signifying a strengthening in the partnership between the Japanese manufacturer and French PSA.

While Toyota was a latecomer to the PSA-built predecessor, it has had some engineering input to the new Proace and the replacements for the Citroën Dispatch and Peugeot Expert, which will also appear in 2016.

Toyota is already a partner with PSA with the Citroën C1 and Peugeot 108 built on the same line as the Aygo in the Czech Republic.

We expect diesel engines to be supplied by the French manufacturer and a UK public debut at the Commercial Vehicle Show in April.

HILUX

AVAILABLE SUMMER
PRICE FROM £18,000 EXCLUDING VAT
(ESTIMATED)
CO₂ FROM 170G/KM (ESTIMATED)

Toyota hasn't revealed anything about UK versions of the new Hilux yet, although it has already gone on sale in some other markets.

We're promised better fuel efficiency, more space, greater ability as a workhorse and a plusher cabin.

It wouldn't surprise us to see the new model make its debut alongside the new Proace van in April, revitalizing Toyota's commercial vehicle range in 2016.



RC 200T AND 300H

AVAILABLE SPRING
PRICE FROM £34,995
CO₂ FROM 113G/KM

Lexus will enter new territory in 2016 with the sleek new RC coupé.

It's basically the same silhouette as the high-performance RC F launched in 2015, but this model will have a bit more low-tax appeal for company car user-choosers.

Offered with a turbocharged 2.0-litre engine producing 245hp and with CO₂ of 168g/km, there is also a 224hp 300h hybrid variant on offer, with CO₂ from 113g/km.

Mechanically identical to the IS saloon, the RC is more performance focused in its styling and in the equipment grades offered, with no S or SE variants.



RX

AVAILABLE THIS MONTH
PRICE FROM £39,995 CO₂ FROM 120G/KM

The new RX began arriving with customers in January, with some big changes for the fourth generation of this model that has been the backbone of Lexus sales in Europe.

Unlike its predecessor, there will be two engine variants offered: a 235hp 200t and a 313hp 450h hybrid. The former, with front-wheel drive on entry-level variants, acts as a lower price point to the range and might be of interest to retail customers.

Most fleets will be interested in the hybrid which, in SE guise, offers CO₂ emissions of 120g/km. Even choosing higher variants still keeps CO₂ below 130g/km.

GS

AVAILABLE THIS MONTH
PRICE FROM £33,495
CO₂ FROM 104G/KM

The Lexus GS range gains some important updates for 2016, including a sharper front end, upgraded multimedia and new safety features. New driver assistance features are included in the Lexus Safety System+ pack with a pre-crash safety programme and pedestrian detection, lane keeping assistance, adaptive high beam and active cruise control. The 12.3-inch display screen (available with the 17-speaker Mark Levinson audio system) gains a full-screen map function, plus better voice recognition operation and graphics. The screen may still be split into two sections to display different functions concurrently. Ease of operation has been improved with new side-mounted 'enter' buttons on the interface controller and a new shortcut menu on the side of the screen.



CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Neil Broad, general manager, Toyota & Lexus Fleet



Last year dramatically highlighted the environmental importance of model choices. Demand for cleaner, more efficient fleets with lower whole-life costs is undeniable – and reflected in the pioneering petrol full hybrid and hydrogen-powered offers from Toyota and Lexus in 2016.

Aside from enhanced fuel economy and reduced emissions, lower maintenance costs continue to make petrol full hybrid attractive. There's no starter motor, drive belt, alternator or clutch to service and regenerative braking reduces brake wear.

Toyota Prius hybrid has always offered outstanding efficiency, but our latest model sees another quantum leap – improving driving dynamics while reducing CO₂

“Toyota Prius hybrid has always offered outstanding efficiency, but our latest model sees another quantum leap – improving driving dynamics while reducing CO₂ to 70g/km”

emissions to 70g/km, improving fuel efficiency and attracting just 9% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax.

For SUV performance, our new Toyota RAV4 hybrid offers two- or all-wheel drive. With a class-leading 57.7mpg it saves on fuel while CO₂ emissions from 115g/km ensure BIK is only 18%. Our new C-HR mini SUV crossover arrives later in the year.

2016 also sees the all-new RX 450h re-engineered for more refined and powerful performance, it achieves 120g/km CO₂ and 19% BIK. Sports enthusiasts, meanwhile, need look no further than the new two-door Lexus RC 300h coupé.

As Toyota enters its sixth decade in the UK, the Mirai joins UK fleets. The world's first dedicated hydrogen fuel cell vehicle, the Mirai's only emission is water. There's never been a better time to explore our Business Plus services and compare the financial and environmental savings of switching to petrol hybrids.

■ For more information call us on 0344 701 6186 or visit toyotalexusfleet.co.uk.



Toyota & Lexus Fleet

VAUXHALL ASTRA SPORTS TOURER

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

PRICE FROM £17,285

CO₂ FROM 89G/KM

Vauxhall began delivering the first hatchback models of the new Astra range late in 2015, but estate car fans have to wait a few months longer for the Sports Tourer.

Lower-medium estates occupy a unique position in fleet, offering a comfortable and versatile job need vehicle for people who need to carry tools, equipment or samples. It's perhaps as much of a workhorse as a small van, but is a good family car in private use.

Like the hatchback, the Sports Tourer is based on a new, lightweight vehicle architecture with a new design, powertrains and technology. It is built solely at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant in Cheshire.

The Sports Tourer has the same basic dimensions as its predecessor, with a length of 4,702mm, a width of 1,871mm (with door mirrors folded in) and a height of 1,499mm – but it offers much more space for passengers and luggage.

The driver has 26mm of additional headroom, while rear-seat passengers have 28mm more. The Sports Tourer's maximum cargo capacity (up to roof height and with rear seats folded) is now 1,630 litres, thanks to more efficient packaging, giving it 100 litres more than the maximum offered by the Insignia Sports Tourer.

For the first time on a Vauxhall, the tailgate can be opened without a touch or a remote control. Working on variants with keyless entry, a small kicking motion under the rear bumper is enough to open the boot. A further kicking motion under the bumper will close the tailgate.

The system can detect any obstruction and stops the mechanism in case of an emergency. The tailgate can still be opened by a switch on the driver's side of the car or via the key's remote control.

The Sports Tourer comes with 40:20:40 folding rear seats, enabling more flexible loading space configurations. The FlexOrganiser product range, with side rails, dividing nets and various fastening options, is available as an option so that all loaded materials can be stored safely and tidily.

It will come with the same range of engines as the hatchback, with power units ranging from 100hp to 200hp, and CO₂ emissions for Ecoflex diesel variants starting at 89g/km.



VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6T 200

AVAILABLE THIS MONTH PRICE FROM £20,435 CO₂ FROM 141G/KM

The new Astra hatchback has been received positively by the media since its introduction in the autumn.

It has already picked up a sizeable number of awards, and is in the running for the 2016 European car of the year trophy alongside some very impressive competition.

While we saw most of the engines in the hatchback range appear in 2015, there will be a new addition early in 2016.

A 'warm-hatch' variant will be added to the range from January in a new 200hp version of the car, using a turbocharged 1.6-litre petrol engine.

It does seem a little strange that we're now refer-

ring to 200hp hatchbacks as 'warm', as 10 years ago lower-medium cars with this amount of power would have counted as 'hot'.

This sub-VXR model is available in SRi and Elite equipment grades and packs a punch that belies its 1.6-litre capacity.

It will probably be a while before Vauxhall will introduce a VXR variant in the Astra range, and we believe that will have to wait until the three-door Astra GTC comes up for replacement in a year or two.

So the 200hp 1.6T – with a top speed of 146mph (where permitted) – will be the quickest five-door hatchback in the Astra range for now, and possibly for the foreseeable future.





The most powerful diesel in the range will be the new bi-turbo 1.6-litre CDTi, offering 160hp. In addition to these, there will also be 110hp and 136hp single-turbo variants.

The Sports Tourer is up to 200kg lighter than its predecessor, helped by the new platform. Vauxhall says every component was checked for compact design and lightweight materials. The body shell weight alone was reduced by 20% from 357kg to 280kg.

Additional chassis-related measures have resulted in a further 50kg weight loss. These include high-strength and ultra-high-strength low-weight steels, compact sub-frames and weight reductions to the front and rear axle.

The Astra Sports Tourer also features OnStar, the connectivity technology now available across Europe.

OnStar includes a high-speed 4G LTE mobile network, emergency response notification and stolen vehicle recovery alert.

The Sports Tourer is also compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, which are available through a new version of the IntelliLink infotainment system.

CARMAKER'S COMMENT

James Taylor, fleet sales director, Vauxhall



In 2015 we said wholelife cost leadership would be our key focus for the year and we did just that, releasing significantly more efficient diesel and petrol engines across our diverse range of passenger cars and commercial vehicles. The most

striking progress being our ultra-efficient Whisper Diesel 1.6-litre CDTi engines, delivering lower emissions and impressive fuel economy with a smoother, more refined driving experience. For 2016 wholelife cost leadership will continue to be at the centre of everything we do.

The launch of New Astra towards the end of 2015 clearly demonstrated our focus on wholelife cost leadership and was brilliantly received by the automotive and fleet press, heaping praise for its drive, practicality and low running costs. *What Car?* said: "Diesel hatchbacks don't get any better." Plus, we're very proud that the British-built New Astra helped create over 300 new jobs at our Ellesmere Port plant.

New Astra also features our award-winning connectivity technology, OnStar. Promising extra value for fleets, OnStar provides 4G wi-fi and automatic crash response as well as stolen vehicle recovery technology, navigation assistance and vehicle diagnostics. This groundbreaking technology is standard on SRi and Elite models.

Never one to rest on our laurels, we're building on this success with the launch of the New Astra Sport Tourer this spring. Featuring the same engine line up and in-car technology as the new hatchback, this hugely important fleet car will boast a substantially increased luggage capacity despite being lighter than its predecessor – a double win for fleet customers.

Meanwhile, 2015 saw strong performances from both Brit-built Vivaro (up 41% year-on-year) and Movano (up 28%) which contributed to another fantastic year for Vauxhall Commercial Vehicles. In December we also reached a landmark of one million Vivaro vans built at our plant in Luton, cementing our position as the UK's number one van manufacturer.

We have exciting product updates in the not-so-distant future, so I'm confident of another tremendous year. We look forward to offering more compelling solutions to help drive your business forward in 2016.

■ To contact Vauxhall Fleet Sales, email [@fleetsales.co.uk](mailto:vauxhallfleet) or telephone 0870 010 0651. Or check out the award winning vauxhallfleet.co.uk



S90

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER

PRICE FROM £32,500 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 44G/KM (HYBRID); 109G/KM (DIESEL)

It'll be nine months before we see the recently unveiled S90 saloon on sale in the UK, but early indications are that it will be worth the wait.

A more elegant car than the S80 it will replace, and with more personality, the S90 has the job of luring company directors away from the Audi A6, BMW 5 Series, Jaguar XF and Mercedes-Benz E-Class.

It will be offered with 190hp D4 and 225hp D5 2.0-litre diesel engines, the latter using a bi-turbo to extract more performance from the four-cylinder engine and only being available as an automatic and all-wheel drive variant. CO₂ emissions for these models are expected to be 109g/km and 133g/km respectively.

There will also be a T8 plug-in hybrid, using a turbocharged 2.0-litre petrol engine with an electric motor, providing all-wheel drive ability when both power units are running together. CO₂ emissions for the plug-in

hybrid will be 44g/km. Other petrol-only versions will be offered outside the UK and Volvo is currently evaluating whether to add them to our price lists.

All new Volvos bring a major safety innovation to market, and the S90 has autonomous emergency braking, which is able to detect large animals in the road ahead and react.

Equipment grades will reflect those of the XC90, with Momentum as the entry-level, Inscription as a higher grade and R-Design (which is expected to take 45% of orders) offering more sporty styling. LED headlamps, leather, navigation, CleanZone air quality system and a nine-inch centre touchscreen will be standard.

Volvo expects to deliver 600 S90s in the UK in 2016, following its September launch, with 2,000 being the typical full year target thereafter.



V40

AVAILABLE OCTOBER

PRICE FROM £20,000

CO₂ FROM 89G/KM (ESTIMATED)

There has been nothing official from Volvo regarding the V40, but we feel that, with the new 90 model range completed and possible replacements for the 60 range in 2017, the V40 has a little longer to soldier on and will undergo some revisions for the 2017 model year in the autumn.

Changes will most likely focus on new connectivity features, as well as a restyling to bring the V40 in line with the new Volvo look. The 'Thor's hammer' LED light signature could make an appearance.

Volvo still relies on old partnerships for some of the engines in the V40, and we know that in some European markets there are versions with CO₂ emissions lower than the 94g/km offered by the 1.6-litre D2. These versions with lower equipment levels and smaller wheels have deliberately not been brought into the UK, but we wonder whether they could help make the V40 more appealing at the lower end of the range, or if Volvo could extract better efficiency from variants currently available.



XC90 T8 TWIN ENGINE

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

PRICE FROM £60,455

CO₂ 49G/KM

The UK finally gets the plug-in hybrid version of the Volvo XC90 early in 2016 and, as previous features in *Fleet News* show, there is little compromise for having the hi-tech powertrain.

The XC90 T8 produces more than 400hp from its bi-turbo 2.0-litre engine combined with the powerful electric motor. It has CO₂ emissions of 49g/km, seven seats and a space-saver spare wheel.

Recent announcements on the future of the plug-in car grant now show that although it would qualify as a hybrid, its price sits above the new cap for the grant.

But there are still significant advantages, thanks to its low CO₂, over some rival plug-in SUVs which will make the XC90 eligible for savings in benefit-in-kind tax and employers' national insurance contributions.

Although Volvo planned to offer a front-wheel drive D4 diesel variant in the UK, that would be ready some time after the car's launch, there is no confirmation that we will see this in 2016.



The V90 will replace the V70 (pictured)



V90

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER

PRICE FROM £34,000 (ESTIMATED)

CO₂ FROM 44G/KM (ESTIMATED)

We haven't seen anything of the new V90 yet – it's earmarked for a public debut at the Geneva motor show in March.

It will be an important car for Volvo, as it will replace the V70, which has, with its predecessors, defined what Volvo represented.

It will of course be related to the S90, which we know a little about, and it will arrive in the UK around the same time in the autumn.

So we can expect it to share powertrains (the D4 and D5 diesels as well as a T8 petrol-electric plug-in hybrid) and equipment grades (Momentum as the standard car, Inscription for luxurious mode features and R-Design for a more sporty feel).

It's likely to have standard leather seats, LED headlamps and the 'Thor's hammer' daytime running light signature, which has become a characteristic of the XC90 and S90.

CARMAKER'S COMMENT

Selwyn Cooper, head of business sales, Volvo Car UK



2016 will be a big year for Volvo. Not only will we introduce a groundbreaking plug-in hybrid version of our award-winning XC90, we're also going to launch a brand new model.

First to arrive, in February, will be UK versions of the XC90 T8. This petrol-electric hybrid SUV combines a powerful yet efficient petrol engine with an electric motor to provide startling performance with seriously low tax and fuel costs. Not only that, there's room for seven adults inside, and the interior is as classy as it is beautiful.

Then there will be the new S90 executive saloon, which will arrive in the UK in the summer. It mixes

"New S90 will be the first Volvo to benefit from our latest generation Pilot Assist semi-autonomous drive technology"

striking Scandinavian design with a host of new technologies, including cloud-based apps and services. It is also the second model (after the XC90) to use Volvo's own purpose-built Scalable Product Architecture platform, which allows us to offer a variety of power sources and high-tech communication and safety equipment.

Like the XC90, the New S90 will be available with a range of tax-efficient diesel and petrol Drive-E engines, along with the T8 Twin Engine powertrain. Not only that, it will be the first Volvo to benefit from the latest generation of our Pilot Assist semi-autonomous drive technology, along with the world-first application of large animal detection as part of our automatic emergency braking aids. Of course, the New S90 will also offer all the space, quality and sophistication that Volvo is famous for. The New S90 is just the second all-new model in Volvo's complete product relaunch – expect more news in the coming months and years.

With these exciting products on the horizon, Volvo's transformation is continuing at an unprecedented pace!

■ To find out more, call the Volvo Car Business Centre on: 0345 600 4027



AUDI

Any year is a busy year for Audi with the enormous proliferation of models in its range over the past 15 years.

It hasn't finished exploring new niches for the brand, as demonstrated by the launch of the Q1 compact crossover in 2016. This extends Audi's Q family into Nissan Juke and Vauxhall Mokka territory, so it will be interesting to see whether the draw of a premium badge will pose a threat to other more established models.

The new A4 range made its debut late in 2015, and we can expect to see related models arriving on the market during 2016. A new A4 Allroad would most likely be first, and we expect to see CO₂ emissions for this mode drop to less than 130g/km.

A new Q5 should arrive later in the year, while we will also get our first sight of new A5 models due to go on sale in 2017.



BMW

The first new BMW of 2016 won't get the attention of many fleets, but a new M car is always a big deal for BMW fans.

The new M2 Coupé will arrive with customers in the spring, and the 365hp rear-wheel drive car is sure to create debate in internet forums over its merits alongside the Audi RS3 and Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG.

Of more interest to fleet operators will be the expected introduction of a number of plug-in hybrids, expected to join the 2 Series MPV, 3 Series and 7 Series ranges.

While these versions will have some zero-emissions ability beyond that of the BMW hybrids on sale to date, there will be an extra benefit to company car tax from ultra-low CO₂ emissions, and potentially some level of grant to reduce transaction prices for the 2 Series and 3 Series variants.

By the autumn we should see a revised version of the 3 Series Gran Turismo, bringing it in line with changes to the 3 Series saloon and Touring in 2015, and it's possible there will be a new member of the X range.

The X2 will be a four-door coupé medium crossover based on the X1.



CITROËN

The first new Citroën of 2016 is expected to be a replacement for the Dispatch medium panel van.

Peugeot-Citroën and Toyota have already announced their production partnership in making the 108, C1 and Aygo city cars and this has been enhanced by further co-operation on commercial vehicles, with the first fruits due this year.

Peugeot and Citroën parent company PSA had been the lead partner in a medium panel van joint project with Fiat, while Fiat took the lead role for compact cube vans and large panel vans.

But Fiat has now opted out of the medium panel



van project, and will be working with Renault, while Toyota – a latecomer to the previous generation van with the Proace – has committed engineering input to the next-generation model.

We're not sure yet whether the new Citroën van will retain the Dispatch name, as people carrier versions in mainland Europe seem to be adopting the Space Tourer name.

We can expect to see the van version making its UK debut at this year's Commercial Vehicle Show in Birmingham.

Making its debut at the Paris Motor Show in October will be an all-new Citroën C3. We can expect some of the new design language from the C4 Cactus to begin to help define the new family of Citroën cars.



DS

French upmarket brand DS (formerly a sub-brand in the Citroën range) unveiled a revised version of the DS3 earlier this month.

Along the lines of changes to the other models in the DS range in 2015, it eliminates the double chevron Citroën identity from the front and helps complete the current DS family. There will be no further DS models in 2016, but new additions to the range are planned for the future.

HONDA

We're expecting one major launch from Honda in 2016 following a year where most of its range was renewed.

There could be a production version of the latest FCX Clarity fuel cell car expected to go on sale in the UK, joining the Hyundai ix35 FCV and Toyota Mirai, both launched in 2015.



FCX Clarity fuel cell

HYUNDAI

Hyundai's i20 range will gain a more rugged looking member in the spring with the addition of the i20 Active.

The Active will be the third body style in the i20 range after the five-door hatchback and three-door coupé launched in 2015.

Designed to edge the i20 range closer to compact crossover territory, the Active has raised ground clearance by 20mm, skid plates on the front and rear as well as off-roader styling around the wheel arches.

Hyundai's new three-cylinder 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine will be available with two power outputs in the Active after arriving in other i20 body types from the end of 2015.

The 100hp version is tuned to maximise fuel economy, while the 120hp output has been developed to facilitate more spirited driving but without a big impact on fuel efficiency.

Later in the year, Hyundai will seek to redefine expectations of an alternative fuel vehicle with the new Ioniq.

It will be offered with hybrid, plug-in hybrid and EV powertrain choices and will be shown for the first time in Europe at the Geneva motor show, followed by a US debut at the New York International Auto Show in April.



i20 Active

JAGUAR

The F-Pace is Jaguar's first SUV, and the company is expected to work hard to distinguish it from models in the Land Rover and Range Rover line-up.

Firstly, the off-road ability of the F-Pace will be limited. However, Jaguar will be promoting its all-weather capability.

The all-wheel drive system in the F-Pace is made more effective still by Jaguar's adaptive surface response (ASR) technology. ASR adapts the maps of the throttle, transmission and stability control system according to the type of surface.

Replacing rain, ice and snow modes in the Jaguar drive control system, ASR operates throughout the vehicle's entire speed range and enables even finer optimisation of the vehicle's systems to make the most of the available traction, helping the driver to make smooth progress even in the most challenging conditions.

ASR debuted in the all-new XF with two modes – one for low-friction surfaces such as snow and ice, and one for medium-friction surfaces such as wet tarmac or gravel. In the F-Pace, a third mode has been developed for high-drag conditions such as deep snow and deep gravel to further exploit the vehicle's capability.

Designed more as an all-round sports car than as an SUV, it will share engines with the latest XF, which means a great deal of fleet interest in the four-cylinder diesel variant, although the one we really wish we could have would probably be the six-cylinder 3.0-litre diesel producing 300hp.

The 180hp 2.0-litre diesel will be offered as a rear-wheel drive entry-level variant, with CO₂ emissions of 129g/km, or with optional all-wheel drive. All other variants will come as all-wheel drive versions. The only petrol variant will be a 380hp supercharged 3.0-litre V6.



F-Pace

INFINITI

Infiniti will be hoping to bring greater sales volume in 2016, beginning with the Q30 lower-medium hatchback in January.

Derived from a partnership between the Renault-Nissan Alliance and Daimler, the Q30 shares much structurally and mechanically with the Mercedes-Benz A-Class, and is targeting a share of its market alongside the Audi A3 and BMW 1 Series.

Its styling will help it stand out, and should help drive some much needed sales for the brand alongside the new QX30 due in the spring.

A crossover derived from the Q30, the QX30 stands taller and has a more rugged look. As demand for crossovers and SUVs continues to grow across Europe, the QX30 can't come soon enough for Infiniti and its plans to increase the size of its sales network.

A new coupé will be added to the Infiniti range late in 2016 with the arrival of the new Q60. Based on the Q50, we expect the majority of interest to be in the four-cylinder diesel version, although a turbocharged petrol variant and possibly a hybrid powertrain could also be offered.



Q30

KIA

Kia's best-selling model in Europe, the Sportage, is replaced by a new model in February. It has a tough act to follow, and brings a new exterior design, a range of new technology features and greater quality.

The interior has been redesigned and contains a number of more expensive looking and feeling materials than before, while Kia is claiming improved practicality and a range of features to improve comfort, convenience, connectivity and safety.

New and updated engines and transmissions will result in enhanced efficiency and performance, while ride,

handling and refinement are all said to be improved.

For the first time, a new GT Line equipment grade is available to Sportage customers.

Designed to appeal to those looking for a sportier driving experience, the GT Line specification adds greater visual and dynamic appeal.

Later in the year we're expecting to see an estate version of the Optima arrive. It is influenced by the styling of the Kia Sportspace concept shown at the 2015 Geneva motor show, and the new body style should give interest in the Optima a boost.

Sportage



LAND ROVER

Already available to order, and with prices starting at £47,500, the new Range Rover Evoque convertible should have no problem appealing to retail customers who feel their current Evoque doesn't stand out enough.

Available in 180hp 2.0-litre diesel versions (with CO2 emissions of 149g/km), or with a 240hp turbocharged 2.0-litre petrol engine, both using automatic transmissions, the Evoque fills a niche that has had relatively few occupants, and it is perhaps the first truly upmarket production 4x4 convertible.

Later in the year we will see glimpses of the next-generation Discovery, which will be lighter and promise more capability than ever, but sales won't start until 2017. As for a new Defender, we could get sight of the replacement in 2016 too, as we know production of the current model has ceased.



Range Rover Evoque convertible

MASERATI

The manufacturer of famous Italian sports cars and saloons will follow Porsche, Jaguar and Bentley in 2016 and launch an SUV. The Levante is expected to boost sales further across the world, and will be offered with a six-cylinder diesel engine in the UK.



Levante

MAZDA

Mazda had an exceptionally busy 2015, with much of the model range being renewed and an all-new member of the range in the CX-3.



1.5-litre Skyactiv Mazda3 range

Things will be quieter in 2016, but there will be important additions to current ranges, beginning the year with the 1.5-litre Skyactiv diesel being offered in the Mazda3 range for the first time.

The engine, which made its debut in the Mazda2 range in 2015, will make the Mazda3 more appealing for fleets, especially those that use AFR for reimbursement. The 1.5-litre engine will bring down mileage payments by two bands compared with the current 2.2-litre diesel, and bring CO2 emissions below 100g/km for the first time.

C-Class Coupé



S-Class Cabriolet



E-Class



MERCEDES-BENZ

Big news for fleets in 2016 will be the introduction of the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class, which was unveiled at the Detroit International Auto Show earlier this month.

We can expect to see the first deliveries of the saloon variant in the summer, and it's possible we'll see coupé and estate versions before the end of the year.

Also at the start of the year is a mild facelift and re-badging exercise for the SLK two-seat roadster, which now takes the SLC name.

We will see the introduction of a new C-Class coupé during 2016, as well as the S-Class Cabriolet make an entrance, as well as the GLS, the new name for the old GL-Class.

The CLA will undergo upgrades in the spring to bring it in line with the facelifted A-Class hatchback.

Mercedes-Benz will also launch an S600 Pullman variant of the Mercedes-Maybach saloon, longer and more opulent than the current Mercedes-Maybach and with six seats.



The new GS will take inspiration from the CS concept car

MG

The Chinese-owned MG brand has struggled so far to gain recognition beyond enthusiasts of the marque.

The MG6 upper-medium model was revised in 2015 and is said to be much improved, while the newer MG3 small hatchback has always been desirable for offering a lot of car for the money.

A new model in 2016 could see the brand gain greater visibility as it

enters the burgeoning crossover sector with the new GS.

Little has been revealed about the GS so far, but some disguised development prototypes have been spotted in the UK and styling will be inspired by the CS concept car.

We expect petrol and diesel engines to be offered as well as front-wheel and four-wheel drive variants.

NISSAN

There is no official confirmation yet, but we could see two important new Nissan models in 2016.

The next Micra was previewed at the 2015 Geneva motor show with the Sway concept. It looks like Nissan wants to inject a little more personality into its smallest car.

The fourth-generation Micra, which has been on sale since 2010, while well equipped and good value for money, has had a more dowdy image than its quirky predecessor.

As with all concept cars, we may not see the new Micra enter production with quite such a radical design, but we can guarantee it will have much more of an identity using some of the visual cues from the Sway concept.

The Nissan Juke is likely to be next in line for replacement. Launched in 2010, a new model sometime in 2016 would be along the lines of modern vehicle lifecycles. While the Juke defined the small crossover sector, the market is now growing with a number of alternatives, many of which are much roomier and more practical.

We think these are areas that might be addressed in a new model.

Sway concept will provide new Micra with more on an identity



The 500hp 308 R Hybrid



PEUGEOT

The first new Peugeot we will see in 2016 is likely to be the panel van that will replace the Expert.

Developed in partnership with sister brand Citroën and Toyota, the new van is expected to be shown for the first time in the UK at the Commercial Vehicle Show in the spring before going on sale in the summer.

It's likely to offer improved space, efficiency and comfort, in a competitive segment which also includes the Ford Transit Custom, Volkswagen Transporter, Vauxhall Vivaro and Renault Trafic.

Peugeot previewed plug-in hybrid technology in 2015 with a high-performance concept car based on the 308.

The 308 R Hybrid used two electric motors as well as a turbo-charged petrol engine to deploy up to 500hp. We might not see a production version of this particular performance-oriented car in 2016, but Peugeot seems intent on exploring the plug-in hybrid route with its existing line-up.

MITSUBISHI

We don't know too much detail about the replacement for the forthcoming ASX replacement, but we do know it will be inspired by the Concept XR-PHEV shown at last year's Geneva motor show.

As last year's Outlander facelift showed, its styling should remain fairly close to the concept car, and Mitsubishi has confirmed there will be a plug-in hybrid variant.

When the Outlander PHEV was launched in 2014, it rapidly became Mitsubishi's most successful model in the UK, and there could be strong demand for the plug-in version of the new medium crossover.

There will be a couple of key differences in how it's powered, however. While the Outlander uses a normally aspirated 2.0-litre four-cylinder petrol engine, the plug-in hybrid version of the ASX replacement will use a three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine and will not be offered with four-wheel drive.

However, it is likely that four-wheel drive variants will be offered without

Concept XR-PHEV will inspire new ASX



the plug-in hybrid powertrain.

We're not expecting to see any more new models from Mitsubishi in 2016, with a new Shogun and a hybrid version of the L200 still a year or two away.

ŠKODA

Following the launch of the new Škoda Superb in 2015 it's possible that we'll see 'Outdoor' badged versions of the estate later this year, with raised ground clearance, all-wheel drive and a protective body kit.

Škoda is also rumoured to be working on a true SUV, which could be launched in 2016.

It is thought to be similar to the Volkswagen CrossBlue concept, which previews a large SUV, between the Tiguan and Touareg in size, destined for the North American market.

The CrossBlue was designed with three rows of two seats, and an SUV in a similar format could appeal to Škoda customers, particularly as there is currently no large people carrier or SUV in the range.

The production version of the CrossBlue will be available with seven seats, and we expect Škoda's SUV to seat seven in UK versions.

The Volkswagen concept car is a plug-in diesel hybrid, but we think Škoda will stick to conventional diesel and petrol engines for its version, at least initially, to help minimise costs.



Superb Estate

SUBARU

We're expecting Subaru to introduce a new Impreza in 2016, based on a new vehicle platform.

It will retain Subaru's traditional all-wheel drive system and will be offered with a choice of petrol and diesel engines.

As it's a new platform, we can expect a range of technology and safety features previously unavailable on the Impreza, and it's likely that Subaru will have worked to improve the perceived quality of the interior, bringing it more in line with the Levorg and Outback launched in 2015.



Impreza concept

SUZUKI

A new small hatchback will be added to the Suzuki range in 2016. The Baleno will have a more upmarket feel than other Suzuki small cars and will be slightly larger than the Swift.

Suzuki says the Baleno will address some of the customer feedback regarding the Swift not being spacious enough.

The Baleno will be better equipped to take on cars such as the Ford Fiesta, Vauxhall Corsa and Volkswagen Polo, with a roomy interior and generous luggage compartment.

It will also be offered with some advanced powertrains, including a turbocharged 1.0-litre Dualjet engine and hybrid technology.



Baleno interior



Baleno

VOLKSWAGEN

A range of Volkswagen models start 2016 with a variety of equipment upgrades.

The new Polo Match replaces the old SE and adds items normally priced at £900 for an increase of £100.

Cruise control, front and rear parking sensors, front fog lights with static cornering function, tinted rear windows and new 15-inch Stratford alloy wheels are part of the standard equipment list.

Two new equipment grades are added to the Golf range: GT Edition and R-Line Edition.

The GT Edition replaces the GT and gains items priced at £1,795 (including 18-inch Durban alloy wheels, and panoramic sunroof), for a £300 premium over the outgoing model.

The R-Line Edition replaces the R-Line and adds 18-inch Serron alloy wheels and a panoramic sunroof for a price increase of £250.

The SE Business version of the Passat has been revised with navigation, front fog lights, electric folding door mirrors and tinted rear windows for £100 over the now deleted SE.

Volkswagen will also introduce a new Tiguan in 2016. First seen at the 2015 Frankfurt motor show, the Tiguan is larger than the model it replaces, but is up to 50kg lighter and will have more fuel-efficient engines.

The Tiguan has been engineered for trailer loads of up to 2,500kg, and is available with the new safety systems that feature on the latest generation of Volkswagen cars, including standard autonomous emergency braking.

Up to eight engines will be available, while a plug-in hybrid concept was also shown last year at Frankfurt. This is also likely to make it into production in 2016.

The new Tiguan



Golf R-Line Edition



Golf GT Edition





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EVENTS

ON SALE: SPRING

VOLVO S90

Pitched against the big beasts of the premium saloon sector, this offers low CO₂ and a luxurious, roomy interior. *Christopher Smith* takes a closer look

The second new car developed wholly by Volvo since it was sold by Ford in 2010, the S90 premium saloon is being positioned against the BMW 5-Series, Jaguar XF and Audi A6.

The S90 shares a platform with the XC90 SUV launched last year, and makes use of several technologies and design cues debuted on that car.

Order books are likely to open in spring, with first deliveries expected in the summer.

EXTERIOR

The S90 is a big car – at 4,963mm long, it's longer by 50-100mm than the XF and 5-Series. Visually, the design is familiar, with the 'Thor's Hammer' LED headlights and nose bearing more than a passing resemblance to the XC90. This saloon sits low and wide, with a number of metallic and pearlescent paint finishes on offer. Three trim levels will be available – Momentum, R-Design and top-spec Inscription.

"Fleets are likely to opt for D4 or D5 diesels, offering CO₂ from 109g/km, or the plug-in hybrid, with CO₂ of 44g/km"

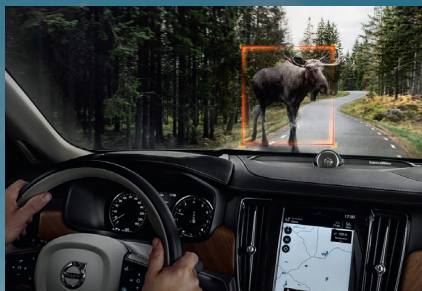


INTERIOR

The additional length means excellent rear legroom of 91cm, which Volvo hopes will help the car find favour with chauffeur fleets. Volvo has achieved this by pushing the front wheels 15cm forward, and the passenger area 25cm back. A 500-litre boot offers plenty of storage. While the seating position is not quite as upright as its big brother, the car inherits style, fit and finish from the XC90. Leather seating is standard, as is the sat-nav.

On the dash, wood, leather and digital dials all make an appearance, along with a large portrait touchscreen.

The big screen means few buttons, leading to a clean and uncluttered dashboard, while the infotainment system is compatible with Apple's CarPlay and Google's Android Auto systems for smartphone connection. For music lovers, a high-end stereo system is available from Bowers and Wilkins.



SAFETY

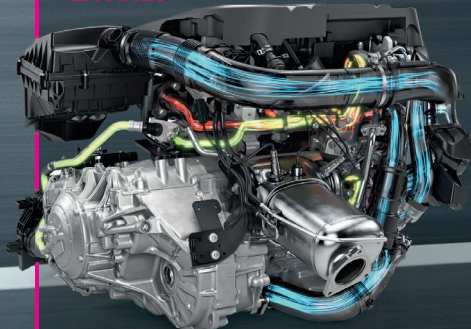
The S90 introduces more safety functionality, with a number of new technologies making a debut.

The car includes a 'large animal detection' system, taking autonomous braking further on from simply detecting vehicles.

The second generation of Pilot Assist, first launched in the XC90, offers semi-autonomous driving in low speed traffic jams, as well as adding steering assistance up to 80mph where road markings allow. The driver must, however, remain in full control of the vehicle at all times – the system only currently offers assistance, not total control. A comprehensive range of city braking, medium speed braking, blind spot and lane assist technologies are also included as standard.



ENGINES



Engines in the S90 come from Volvo's new universal engine range, made from 2.0-litre, four-cylinder blocks.

A 316hp T6 petrol will be available, although the majority of fleet buyers are likely to opt for D4 or D5 diesels, offering 187hp and 232hp respectively. The D4 offers low CO₂ emissions of 109g/km, but these are eclipsed by the T8 'twin engine' plug-in hybrid

powerplant already seen in the XC90. Producing 401hp from a petrol engine and electric motor, this combination emits 44g/km CO₂, with an estimated fully electric range of 31 miles.

Both six-speed manual and eight-speed automatic transmissions will be available, as well as an all-wheel drive option.

THINKING CAP



By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

cap hpi

It seems an age since the Christmas holidays. The mince pies are long gone, so it's back to it – onwards and upwards. I've been looking at what is coming this year and, I have to say, there is plenty of new stuff just around the corner.

Executive SUVs will be in abundance, with the Bentley Bentayga, Maserati Levante and the Jaguar F-Pace, the last of which is looking good value with prices starting from around £35,000. There are new executive saloons from Mercedes-Benz and BMW with the introduction of the E-Class and 5-Series, Alfa Romeo is launching its all-new Giulia and Aston Martin will be showing us the DB11.

"There are loads of new fleet cars on lists for the first time, like the Fiat Tipo"

Hyundai has an interesting car in the form of the Ioniq, with three powertrains: pure electric, plug-in hybrid and conventional hybrid. Talking of hybrids, Toyota has the all-new Prius on the way, up to 20% more efficient than before.

There are loads of new fleet cars that will be on lists for the first time, such as the budget-priced Fiat Tipo, the Qashqai-sized MG GS, Seat SUV and the long awaited Audi Q1. Fiat will be offering the two-seat 124, based on the Mazda MX-5, and Suzuki is bringing back the Baleno name, a car which is slightly larger than the Swift. The Ford Edge comes to Europe, with prices for this SUV starting at around £30,000.

The new Kia Sportage looks fantastic and Hyundai will introduce a pumped-up version of the i20, called the i20 Active.

The all-new, and very pretty, Megane goes on sale soon. Also expected from Renault this year is a new double-cab pick-up.

Volvo will replace the not-so-popular S80 with the very much improved S90. But the one to have this year in Chelsea and Cheshire has to be the very desirable Range Rover Evoque Convertible priced from £40,000 – the 'seen-in' car of 2016.



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AUDI TT COUPÉ

Third generation of surprisingly popular sporty choice for fleets



'Agressive' new styling designed to appeal to male drivers

NEED TO KNOW

- 116g/km CO₂, putting model into 21% BIK bracket
- 52mpg fuel economy achieved on test
- Autonomous emergency braking not yet available

By Sarah Tooze

The sporty Audi TT coupé isn't an obvious company car, and it won't make it on to the choice lists of job-need fleets that stipulate five doors, but it has a surprising number of corporate sales.

Last year, the manufacturer sold around 2,500 TTs, with nearly a third (31%) going to fleets. Of those fleet sales, around 85% were coupés and 15% were roadsters.

As a perk car, the coupé is an attractive choice with the third generation's more aggressive styling designed to appeal to male drivers (although it's arguably equally appealing to women).

Financially, the 2.0-litre TDI Ultra that we tested – the most efficient TT coupé – sits in the 21% benefit-in-kind (BIK) bracket (including the 3% diesel supplement) with CO₂ emissions well below the 130g/km limit many companies impose. It emits 116g/km – just 1g/km higher than other diesel rivals (see column) and a 16% reduction over the previous model. Efficiency has improved by 17.5% with a combined fuel economy of 62.8mpg (up from 53.3mpg). During our week with the TT we averaged a reasonable

52mpg, based mainly on short urban trips with one 100-mile round trip.

On the road, the TT's firm suspension matches its sporty looks but it's not an uncomfortable ride and acceleration is a brisk 0-62mph in seven seconds.

Its light steering means parking and manoeuvring can be handled with ease (although our S Line model came equipped with Audi's parking system plus, with park assist, for £640).

The biggest change behind the wheel is Audi's new virtual cockpit, which replaces the traditional instrument cluster. It is based around a 12.3-inch, high resolution LCD display that fills the driver's instrument binnacle.

Drivers can choose between two display modes: 'classic' (with the speedometer and rev counter in the foreground) and 'infotainment' (with smaller virtual instruments, allowing more room for other functions such as the sat-nav map). The displays for the outside temperature, time and mileage are permanently visible.

The virtual cockpit has divided opinion with critics, who say that it focuses too much on the driver as the passenger is not able to see the sat-nav and media system. However, I appreciated being able to quickly glance down at the sat-nav while driving.

S Line specification includes 19-inch alloy wheels, all-weather LED headlights, which give optimum visibility in varying conditions, and the option of S Line sports suspension (which reduces the ride height by 10mm, at no extra cost).

Available safety technology includes Audi side assist (which uses rear-mounted radar sensors to help the driver change lanes more safely), a camera-based traffic sign recognition, the Audi pre sense basic safety system (which takes protective action such as closing the windows and tensioning the seatbelts if sensors detect an impending collision) and Audi active lane assist, which corrects the steering or warns the driver if there is a danger of unintentionally drifting out of the lane.

However, an autonomous emergency braking system is not yet available on the TT.

Audi is keen to suggest that the TT is "a sports car for everyday use" and the boot is a reasonable 305 litres (13 litres more than before). It can be increased to 712 by folding the rear seat backrests forwards.

THE RIVALS

- VW Scirocco 2.0 TDI 184 R Line
- BMW 220d Coupé M Sport

P11D PRICE

Scirocco	£28,320
220d	£29,645
TT	£30,055

BIK TAX AND CO₂

Scirocco	115g/km/21%
220d	115g/km/21%
TT	116g/km/21%

FUEL COSTS

220d	7.75ppm/£6,200
Scirocco	7.75ppm/£6,200
TT	7.92ppm/£6,336

DEPRECIATION

Scirocco	25.28ppm/£20,224
TT	25.38ppm/£20,304
220d	25.84ppm/£20,672

SMR

220d	5.04ppm/£4,032
Scirocco	5.12ppm/£4,096
TT	5.71ppm/£4,568

RUNNING COSTS

Scirocco	£30,520/38.15ppm
220d	£30,904/39.0ppm
TT	£31,208/39.01ppm

VERDICT

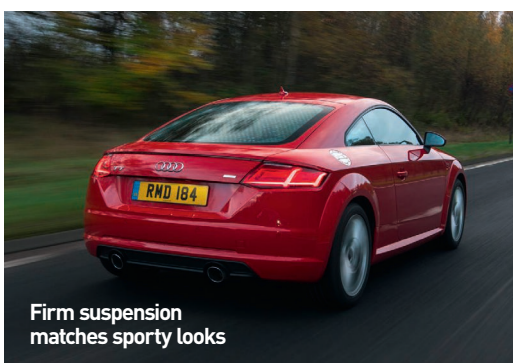
We were hard pressed to find suitable rivals for the TT coupé as the number of diesels in this sector are dwindling with Peugeot no longer producing the diesel RCZ. Of the diesels we compared, the Volkswagen Scirocco costs £384 less to run than its closest rival, the BMW 2 Series coupé, and £688 less than the TT coupé. The TT also fails to beat the Scirocco on P11D price, fuel costs, depreciation or SMR.

It just has the edge over the 2 Series coupé for depreciation (by £368) – perhaps a reflection of the appeal that the TT coupé has to buyers.

The costs might say otherwise, but the style and attractiveness of the TT make it the winner for user-choosing drivers.

Winner: Audi TT

Running cost: KeeResources (4yr/80k)



Firm suspension matches sporty looks

FleetNews PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE DO IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Fleet News magazine

The leading business publication for the fleet sector, offering insight, analysis, best practice and in-depth profiles of fleets and suppliers every fortnight. But don't take our word for it: 96% of readers say *Fleet News* is the most useful fleet publication (*Fleet News* reader survey). Every issue is packed with information that helps companies to run efficient and effective fleets – and our readership of 16,000 is restricted to named decision-makers, running fleets of 10-plus vehicles.

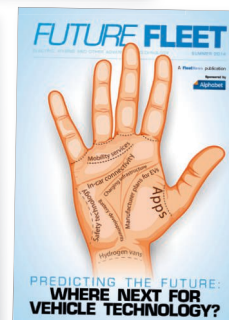
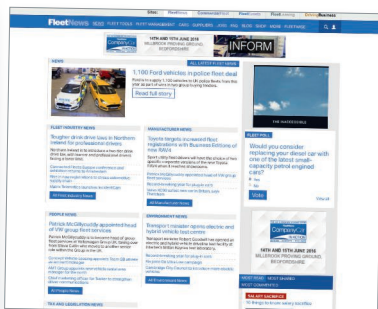
Commercial Fleet magazine

Commercial Fleet offers insight into the world of light commercial vehicles and trucks to provide operators with detailed analysis on key topics such as operations, safety, remarketing and the environment. Case studies in every issue provide best practice advice to help you to improve your efficiency. The magazine is supported by the commercialfleet.org website and events.



Fleet events

Fleet News events are the biggest and best in the sector. Our annual awards night attracts more than 1,500 people; the FN50 Dinner sees 950 leasing, manufacturer, rental and supplier companies networking; Congress and *Commercial Fleet* Summit provide insight into key areas of fleet operation; monthly roundtables enable 10-15 fleets to discuss issues and share solutions.



Driving Business magazine

This quarterly magazine is sent to managing directors and finance directors at 25,000 small to medium enterprises (SMEs) that are running fewer than 50 vehicles. Focusing on the key elements of running cars and vans, *Driving Business* provides practical advice to reduce cost and improve safety with a minimum of time and effort.

Websites and newsletters

The *Fleet News* website is an extensive library of best practice advice, fleet case studies, news and tools. Compare car and van running costs, check how much tax employees will pay and find out which models use the least fuel with our easy-to-use tools. We also send *Ignition*, a monthly newsletter which contains car reviews and interviews not included with our print magazine.

Fleet Leasing magazine

Fleet Leasing provides insight and analysis to board level executives, senior management and regional sales staff at contract hire and leasing companies. Its objective is to inform and educate about fleet trends, new models and technological developments, once a quarter, supported by a website regularly updated with the latest leasing news.

Bespoke publications

Magazines, supplements, brochures and digital products are produced for commercial partners. These bespoke publications inform fleets about companies and topics relevant to their business. They include manufacturer and supplier reports, in which *Fleet News* journalists interview key personnel to unearth the developments of interest to fleet operators.

MERCEDES-BENZ C220

Efficient, refined and practical, but can it beat premium rivals?



NEED TO KNOW

- 1,510-litre capacity with seats down
- 64.2mpg claimed fuel economy
- Five-star Euro NCAP safety rating

By Andrew Ryan

Estate cars have long been about more than just being able to carry huge amounts of cargo, with manufacturers increasingly placing greater emphasis on sleeker designs. Boxy vehicles with obviously cavernous boots are out; sharper-styled cars with seemingly less practicality are in.

The premium car sector probably typifies this best, with cars such as the Audi A4 Avant and the Mercedes-Benz C-Class estate – the vehicle on test here – arguably better looking than their saloon siblings.

Sharing its platform, interior and much of its exterior styling with its saloon counterpart, the C-Class's rakish rear gives it a sophisticated, streamlined appearance while still providing significantly increased practicality over the four-door model.

With its rear seats in place, the estate can carry 490 litres of goods and, when folded, this rises to 1,510.

Both figures are competitive for the class: the A4 Avant offers 505 and 1,510 litres respectively, with the BMW 3 Series Touring providing 495 and 1,500.

However, for sheer cargo carrying capacity, all three trail the Volvo V70, which provides 575 litres with the rear seats in place and 1,600 with them folded.

The C-Class's practicality is boosted by an electrically-powered tailgate and low boot lip which allows straightforward loading and unloading. Its rear seats fold down at the touch of a button to provide a completely flat load area.

The C-Class was named the best premium car in the 2015 *Fleet News* Awards, with judges praising the range for its class-leading interior quality, low emissions, frugality on fuel, and strong residual values.

Much of this still holds true, although its interior has now been surpassed by the A4 Avant's. The C-Class's cabin is not far behind, though, and still offers excellent build quality and a design which gives it a more upmarket feel than its German rival.

'Excellent' aerodynamics mean minimal wind noise



Generous levels of safety equipment as standard

Performance of the C220 CDI Sport estate 7G-Tronic is also highly competitive. Its 2.1-litre diesel engine produces CO₂ emissions of 114g/km and provides an official combined fuel economy of 64.2mpg. Its 170hp provides more than ample performance (0-62mph in 7.6 seconds) and is delivered to the wheels through a smooth-shifting seven-speed automatic gearbox.

Steering is well-weighted and exceptionally refined; the standard suspension provides a controlled and comfortable ride while excellent aerodynamics mean wind noise is barely audible. For those wanting limousine-like levels of comfort, Mercedes-Benz offers its Airmatic air suspension as an £895 option.

The C-Class provides a generous level of safety equipment. Standard kit on our test model, which has a five-star Euro NCAP rating, includes active bonnet, which detects an impact and raises the bonnet to reduce injuries to pedestrians, and collision prevention assist plus, which will brake the car automatically if it senses it is about to collide with a vehicle in front. Optional additions include the driving assistance package (£1,495) which features blindspot assist, lane-keeping assist and pre-safe anticipatory safety system, which can sense when a collision might be imminent and prepare for it by tightening seatbelts, adjusting the front head restraints and even closing the windows.

The package also includes Distronic Plus, which allows the car to follow traffic flow at speeds of up to 40mph with no driver input.

THE RIVALS

- Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI 150 S-Line STron auto
- BMW 320d Touring 190 Sport PMedia auto
- Volvo V70 2.0 D4 181 Business Edition GTron

P11D PRICE

V70	£28,890
320d	£33,965
A4	£34,475
C-Class	£34,815

TAX AND CO₂

A4	112g/km/20%
C-Class	114g/km/20%
320d	119g/km/21%
V70	122g/km/22%

FUEL COSTS

A4	7.57ppm/£6,056
320d	7.92ppm/£6,336
C-Class	7.94ppm/£6,352
V70	8.28ppm/£6,624

DEPRECIATION

V70	27.24ppm/£21,792
A4	29.59ppm/£23,672
C-Class	30.52ppm/£24,416
320d	31.05ppm/£24,840

SMR

320d	4.55ppm/£3,640
V70	4.63ppm/£3,704
A4	5.96ppm/£4,768
C-Class	6.44ppm/£5,152

RUNNING COSTS

V70	40.15ppm/£32,120
A4	43.12ppm/£34,496
320d	43.52ppm/£34,816
C-Class	44.9ppm/£35,920

VERDICT

The C-Class is efficient, refined, good to drive and practical, but the model on test here is the most expensive to run in our comparison. The cheapest, both in terms of its P11D value and its wholelife cost, is the V70, which cannot be beaten on sheer practicality either. But the Volvo doesn't feel as special as its rivals, and it's the Audi which offers the best combination of cost, practicality, quality and refinement.

Winner: Audi A4 Avant

Running cost: *KeeResources* (4yr/80k)



Peugeot 2008 1.6 Allure BlueHDi 120

Our 2008 heads back to Peugeot with a tinge of sadness. Throughout the 5,000 miles I've been running this compact crossover, it's proved to be a comfortable and practical companion.

The magic head-lining was a talking point for passengers, especially those in the back. The thin, long strips of LED-illuminated loveliness are cleverly positioned so that as a driver they don't distract you – in fact you barely notice them, and often forget they are installed until you carry people in the rear seats. The only concern was that the strips felt a little exposed – laser cut into the head-lining, there's little protection and you could easily see how a stacked box or an exploratory child's finger could cause the edges to get a little tatty over time.

Back at eye level, the next niggle was the position and shape of the fuel gauge. It may look nice, angled around the edge of the instrument dial, but it proved quite difficult to judge how much fuel was left – the fuel level markers play an optical illusion on your eyes (see below).

Just a few miles away from home and, at a filling station I planned to visit, the fuel light illuminated. The 2008 didn't appear to give you much grace when the light illuminates, with 'miles remaining' zeroing out on the trip computer. The central screen also reminds you the 'fuel level is too low' every five minutes.

The other niggle was with the parcel shelf in the boot. Very handily, it has two different fold points, to allow easy access to the tall storage area. But it lacks supports to open and close with the tailgate, so if you don't remember to fold it back down, it flaps in your rear view mirror.

But, as the only problems of note, it definitely feels like Peugeot has got it right with the 2008 – an accomplished car with great fit and finish, comfort, and good looks.

Christopher Smith



See extended long-term tests at fleetnews.co.uk/cars/car-reviews/

1.6 SE NAV CRDI DCT

HYUNDAI I30

'Compliant ride' reaches a pleasing conclusion



COSTS*

P11D price	£20,740
BIK tax band	19%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£788
Class 1A NIC	£544
Annual VED	£0 then £20
RV (4yr/80k)	£4,625/22%
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.81
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (4yr/80k)	31.08ppm

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,582
Power (hp)	110
Torque (lb-ft)	221
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	109
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	67.3
Max speed (mph)	115
0-62mph (sec)	11.8
Test mpg	57.24
Current mileage	12,000

*Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

By Maurice Glover

Styling is such a prime motivator in car purchase nowadays that it's small wonder designers go to great lengths to make sure each new model reflects the latest trends.

But comfort is likely to be just as significant to the drivers who have to spend their working days behind the wheel – and this has proved to be one of the key strengths of our Hyundai i30 SE Nav.

Over 12,000 miles, a combination of compliant ride, supportive seats, ample space and low noise levels have allowed our long-term test model to tick all the boxes as comfortable transport for work or pleasure.

And it's been a friendly car to operate, thanks to an array of simple convenience features. Despite being relatively inexpensive to manufacture, a huge centre console box, generous provision for bottles and cups, 12v power outlets, auxiliary and iPod sockets make a big difference to everyday driving and are particularly useful.

Another example of thoughtful design is the provision of internal hand grabs on each side of the rear hatchback. Two grab holders cost no more than one, but they allow the big door to be swung down and closed from either side of the car, a feature that proves handy in crowded car parks.

The i30 has shown itself to be easy to live with, although the chunky A-pillars cause visibility problems at junctions and the narrow rear window would create reversing difficulties if it were not for the excellent rear-view camera system.

Handling and steering precision doesn't quite match the Golf, but this car is not that far behind and boasts tremendous mile-munching capability. It's also a great car for all seasons with air conditioning that copes well with cold winter mornings and continental-level temperatures in summer.

During our test, economy has ranged from 48 to 69mpg to reach an average of almost 58mpg, a return that shows the i30 to be easy on the wallet into the bargain.

"Handling and steering precision doesn't quite match the Golf, but it's not that far behind and boasts tremendous mile-munching capability"

BMW 3 SERIES

'Highly enjoyable' time with much-improved model



3 Series leads a highly competitive pack

COSTS*

P11D price	£30,350*
BIK tax band	18%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,093
Class 1A NIC	£750
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£7,711/25.4%
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.07
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	39.17ppm

* Without additional specification

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,995
Power (hp)	163
Torque (lb-ft)	295
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	104
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	70.6
Max speed (mph)	143
0-62mph (sec)	8
Test mpg	53.8
Current mileage	5,168

*Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

By Stephen Briers

Our three-month loan of the 3 Series comes to an end this month as part of a series of back-to-back long-term tests which saw us downsize from the 5 Series to the 4 Series to the 3.

It also enabled us to gauge the technological enhancements with each newer generation of BMW, culminating in the much improved 3 Series – we've noted the quicker auto transmission changes and easier selection of driving mode, for example.

The 3 Series, facelifted last year, keeps the car at the head of a highly competitive pack with improved engines, transmission and suspension.

Our car came with the adaptive M Sport suspension, a £750 option, which transforms the driving experience by allowing the car to be sporty when you want, but more comfortable on longer drives. It's an excellent drive, matched by the responsive steering, but we wonder how many company car drivers will be up-spec'ing their cars to benefit from it. The standard suspension is not nearly so fulfilling.

Our 3 Series came with an eye-watering £10,000-worth of options, including three packs: Interior Comfort (£695 – rear head restraints, split-folding rear seats, extended interior lights), Media (£900 – uprated sat-nav, real time traffic info, online services) and Visibility (£850 – LED fogs and headlight, high-beam assistant). So which were our favourites?

Parking sensors are a must-have on any car to minimise the chances of front or rear bumper scrapes (£395) and the adaptive suspension makes the world of difference in real-life conditions. And it's surprising how quickly you become accustomed to the head-up display (£825) and how much it's missed when you switch cars.

Our time with the 3 Series has been highly enjoyable. The car has served us well on both short and long runs, on high speed roads and the twisties. And throughout, it has returned a steady mid-50s mpg, rising close to 60mpg on steady runs.

FINAL TEST



Vauxhall Insignia 1.6 Elite nav CDTi S/S ecoflex

For many company car drivers their vehicle is their office. Therefore, I can think of no greater compliment for our Insignia as it returns to Vauxhall than to describe it as a great office to work in.

Having spent a few thousand miles behind the wheel it has combined connectivity with comfort in a way that is becoming ever more essential in the web-enabled business world. The built in wi-fi proved its worth on more than one occasion and now the Insignia has been returned I will miss that key piece of technology provided as part of the OnStar service.

Originally, I thought the fact that I could access customer services at the touch of the button would be most useful, but I have mainly used this to download routes to the sat-nav system. As I tend to just use my phone's sat-nav app for journeys, particularly as I can programme it in the house, I haven't put it to that much use, although I am sure there are instances where it might prove invaluable.

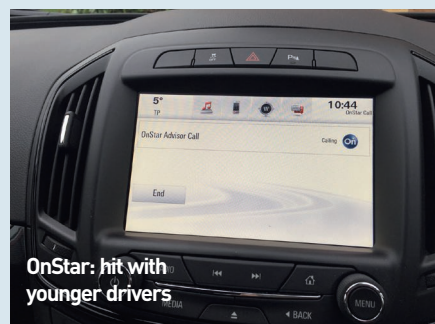
What might also prove invaluable, as I have mentioned in a previous test, is an alarm to tell you the handbrake switch hasn't been engaged.

The driver's handbook is very clear that, when engaging the handbrake, you need to pull the switch for at least a second, but in a recent rush to leave the car I just pulled the switch and assumed it was on, only for a colleague to warn me that my car had rolled out of its space.

I have seen several mentions about this on the internet, so it's a common driver failing, but it would be good to have some form of audible warning to avoid future errors.

The car performed well, dispensing long journeys with ease, although not at the claimed fuel consumption level.

John Maslen



OnStar: hit with younger drivers

See extended long-term tests at fleetnews.co.uk/cars/car-reviews/

"Our time with the 3 Series has been highly enjoyable. It has served us well on runs and has returned a steady mid-50s mpg"

MARK HUGHES

MANAGING DIRECTOR, JOLLY GOOD VEHICLE RENTALS

He loves cooking (he mentions it twice) and is not a fan of parking fine companies or arrogance. Jolly Good MD Mark Hughes is likely to make you an offer you can't refuse.

I would tell my 18-year-old self to pay more into his pension and make a move onto the property ladder.

One of my earliest memories associated with a car was travelling with my gran in her Singer Gazelle to collect her pension every Tuesday.

My favourite film is *The Godfather: Part III*. It's one of the most intriguing films I've seen.

Away from the office, I am a chef at heart and love cooking, eating out in restaurants and going to the theatre. I also love spending time with my eight-year-old daughter.

I'd like to be remembered as being jolly different.

The pivotal moment in my life was changing career paths from petrol retailing and setting up Jolly Good Vehicle Rentals. I've also lost 11 stone in weight over the past two years, which has enabled me to have a more active and fulfilling life.

If I was made Prime Minister for the day, I would make parking fine companies illegal, which would make my job a lot easier.

I love cooking for family and friends, so a book I would recommend would have to be any good cook book.

The three vehicles I would like in my garage are a Land Rover TD90, a Tesla electric car and a Piaggio Tuk Tuk.

My pet hate is arrogant people.

First fleet role Setting up Jolly Good Vehicle Rentals was my first fleet role, but prior to Jolly I operated an Esso franchise. I want to stay in the market as I enjoy what I do. Every day is different. Being in a customer-facing role provides its challenges but is also extremely rewarding. I also get the opportunity to attend some fantastic events.

Career goals I want to continue with our business strategy, which involves increasing the number of our branches from eight to 20. I also want to continue to deliver consistently high levels of service.

Biggest achievement in business This year was the fourth consecutive year we have been listed in the FastGrowth50, which lists the top 50 fastest growing companies in Wales. This was a huge achievement for us. We also picked up a FastGrowth50 award for most sustainable growth in a company.

Biggest career influence It has to be our financial director John Powell. Having been a financial director in the banking industry for years John has brought the knowledge and skillset to help develop business going forward.

Biggest mistake in business I don't feel as though I've made any huge mistakes so far, but not learning to trust my instincts sooner springs to mind. Many business decisions are made using your head, but learning to trust my gut feeling would have prevented some minor mishaps along the way.

Leadership style Sensitive but firm.

If I wasn't in fleet If I could choose any profession it would be an astronaut. I love flying but the idea of travelling into space is beyond belief. I was in awe watching Tim Peake on his recent mission.

Childhood ambition To be in business like my parents. They owned a car bodyshop and I always aspired to have my own business.

"Learning to trust my gut feeling would have prevented some minor mishaps"

Next Issue: Dominic Gill, business sales operations manager, Volvo

The new Ford Focus Zetec S Black Edition (shown with non-standard 18in wheels)



Ford small car range is big and bold on colour

Ford's successful small car range heads into 2016 further strengthened by a number of colour editions.

The new five-door Focus Zetec S Red features a Race Red exterior with Panther Black roof; Focus Zetec S Black reverses the combination.

Black leather sports steering wheel, gear lever gaiter, handbrake lever and gaiter, black floor mats and black sport seats all feature contrasting red stitching.

They have unique Panther Black 18in alloy wheels, a black grille and a Race Red diffuser element. Sport suspension features stiffened springs with tuned shock absorbers and front anti-roll bar, optimised for front-end grip and turn-in.

There is a choice of 1.5-litre EcoBoost 182PS petrol engine delivering 127g/km CO₂ and 51.4mpg or 2.0-litre Duratorq

TDci 150PS diesel engine with 105g/km CO₂ and 70.6mpg.

The Fiesta Red and Fiesta Black, based on the Fiesta Zetec S, offer punchy performance courtesy of the most powerful 1.0-litre engine available in a production road car – a 140PS version of the multi-award-winning EcoBoost that offers more power on a litre-for-litre basis than supercars like the Bugatti Veyron and Ferrari 458 Speciale.

Three new Zetec-based B-MAX colour editions in red, white and silver, with black roof and door mirrors, are available with 140PS 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine with auto stop-start, delivering 0-62mph in 10.4 seconds with 116g/km CO₂ and 56.5mpg, together with 1.4-litre 90PS and 1.6-litre 105PS PowerShift versions. Further features include a rear spoiler, privacy glass and 16in black alloy wheels.

Ford Fiesta: punchy performance



Ford B-MAX: 116g/km CO₂



UNIQUE FEATURES IN NEW FORD ECOSPORT

A new Ford EcoSport Titanium S available from March production with 1.0-litre EcoBoost 140PS petrol engine, will have unique 17in black alloy wheels, black painted roof and mirrors and features including retuned rear dampers, new springs and an updated Electronic Stability Programme calibration.

The EcoSport Titanium S standard

specifications also include keyless entry and power start button, Sony radio with DAB and rear privacy glass.

Ford expects to sell 200,000 SUVs in Europe this year – a 200% increase compared to 2013. The compact EcoSport, medium-sized Kuga and upscale Edge will meet the demands of growing numbers of SUV customers.



MORE TIME FOR BUSINESS



PI1D	BIK	CO ₂	COMBINED MPG
£29,290 - £33,410	14% - 26%	176 - 99g/km	37.2 - 67.3

THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY PRESENTS

VIGNALE

DESIGNED TO GIVE YOU THE LUXURY OF TIME

SEARCH **FORD VIGNALE**

Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Ford Mondeo Vignale range: urban 27.2-100.9 (10.4-2.8), extra urban 47.9-68.9 (5.9-4.1), combined 37.2-67.3 (7.6-4.2). Official CO₂ emissions 176-99g/km.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.



Go Further