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News:

SIGN, CLOSE, WAIT: FLEETS' **MIXED REACTIONS** TO SAL/SAC

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# Salary sacrifice tax changes gain mixed reaction from fleets

Some decide to abandon schemes, some wait for fuller clarification, others are now signing up

By John Charles

**E**mployers have been warned by fleet representative body ACFO and tax experts against taking knee-jerk decisions to abandon salary sacrifice car schemes and removing the car or cash allowance choice from employees amid proposed new Government rules.

As Parliament debates the draft 2017 Finance Bill, which outlines the new rules for limiting the tax and National Insurance benefits of salary sacrifice car schemes and cash alternatives, there are clear differences with regards to the actions companies are taking.

More than a third (34.4%) of respondents to a *Fleet News* poll said they would be 'less likely' to introduce a salary sacrifice scheme, while 16.7% said they were 'less likely to retain' one.

Power systems provider Rolls-Royce told *Fleet News* that it would be closing its salary sacrifice car scheme, while other organisations are considering the implications. Additionally, some employers have already highlighted to staff what the Government is proposing, while others are seeking "absolute clarity" prior to issuing any form of communication.

More than a quarter (28.9%) of respondents to the poll said they were not taking any action yet.

Employees who opt for a salary sacrifice arrangement or take a company car in lieu of a cash alternative will pay tax linked to the greater of the taxable value of the vehicle or the cash alternative (salary sacrifice or cash allowance) – but only if the car emits more than 75g/km.

Ultra-low emission cars with CO<sub>2</sub> up to 75g/km will be exempt from the new rules.

The measure will impact on all contracts for car salary sacrifice/cash allowance arrangements entered into on or after April 6, 2017.

Those employees already in contracts before that date will be protected from the new rules until April 2021.

There are also implications for employers, who will no longer be able to take advantage of national insurance savings on salary sacrifice cars unless they are up to 75g/km.

The final content of the Finance Bill 2017 will be subject to confirmation at the spring Budget 2017.

ACFO deputy chairman Caroline Sandall said: "It is very tempting to see the scale of change and look to react by closing or limiting schemes but that is not necessarily the right next move.

"This is not the end of salary sacrifice as it will still work for many cars. Businesses must consider the impact of the change taking into consideration employer position on CO<sub>2</sub> limits and available cars – there are many cars that are largely unaffected, others will perhaps become more attractive, such as ultra-low emission vehicles, and others will become less attractive. But that doesn't mean the destruction of choice lists; it just requires careful consideration of the impact on available vehicles."

Where vehicle choice is available, Sandall suggested that employees would be able to find cars that represented "good value", but added: "The new rules may signal a change of selection patterns and different vehicles becoming popular,



but many fleets may well find that, when they look at the impact, a healthy choice of good value vehicles remains."

Similarly, employers offering a car or cash option should examine the new rules closely and, according to Sandall "adjust policy accordingly".

She said: "Some fleets may look at reviewing allowance levels but others may take no action at all. It very much depends on the allowances available versus the car choice lists."

She added: "It's important for employers to be looking at the immediate impact – especially on any orders in place that will be affected by this change; employers may want to offer options to any drivers who will be impacted, including cancelling orders.

"But it is vital that drivers receive sufficient communication to fully understand what the new rules mean for them and be permitted to look at alternative options. Analysis of the impact of these

## COULD COMPANIES TURN TO ECO?

The forthcoming benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax increases – for example, drivers of a company car emitting more than 75g/km CO<sub>2</sub> will see their tax burden rise seven percentage points from 2016/17 to 2019/20 – could see companies turn to employee car ownership (ECO) schemes.

Keith Cook, deputy financial controller at Computacenter, which has a blended funding approach with some vehicles funded through ECO and some on contract hire, believes that a number of companies will "seriously explore implementing ECO schemes", once again, amid the forthcoming BIK tax increases.

He said: "They are not as complicated to administer as people would have you believe, and the savings generated are increasing year on year."

Alastair Kendrick, director at tax adviser MacIntyre Hudson, said he does not believe ECO schemes are affected by the new rules because there is no car or cash allowance choice.

However, he added: "There could be a demand for ECO schemes, but I think that the market has moved on with tighter Financial Conduct Authority regulations and many leasing companies are not equipped to run schemes."



*"It's important for employers to be looking at the immediate impact – especially on any orders in place"*

Caroline Sandall, ACFO





changes can take some time so consideration should be given to immediate order patterns to ensure drivers are fully aware of the financial impact of any new car they order that will be impacted by the change."

However, Roll-Royce has already decided to close its car salary sacrifice scheme. Launched two-and-a-half years ago and with more than 1,000 vehicles taken up, fleet manager Claire Bowman said as employees' three-year contracts came to an end they would not be renewed.

Bowman said: "It is a shame, but the financial benefits will no longer be there for employees so we will abandon the scheme."

She continued: "We have yet to decide whether to end the scheme now or continue it until April; we will then communicate our decision to employees."

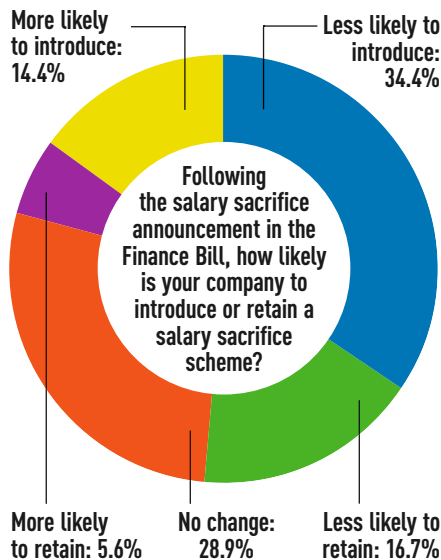
Rolls-Royce also has in place a cash allowance scheme involving 200 employees that have opted out of having a company car. Those employees pay tax on the payment at their marginal rate with Bowman saying: "The tax position does not change for those employees with the new rules."

Unipart Group, which has had a salary sacrifice scheme since the 1990s with about 350 employees taking a car, and a similar number opting for a cash allowance, is adopting a 'wait and see approach'.

It is consulting with its tax advisers and fleet manager Martyn Rees said: "When we have obtained absolute clarity we will communicate with our colleagues. We don't want to scare-monger."

Salary sacrifice schemes have been popular across the public sector and whether the changes will deter public sector fleets from launching new schemes remains to be seen.

Following publication of the Finance Bill, an NHS Employers' spokesman said: "The new



rules are likely to make it more expensive for employers to run salary sacrifice car schemes. While it is too early to assess the impact of the new complex tax calculations, feedback suggests affordability could be a more significant issue for employers."

Nevertheless, he added: "We believe that salary sacrifice for cars will continue to be an attractive option for many NHS staff and we welcome the exemption of low emission cars and the protection for existing arrangements."

That view is supported by car salary sacrifice provider Tusker, which reports increased interest in its schemes, since future tax treatment was confirmed in the autumn statement. Several new schemes have now been given the green light.

While the Finance Bill is in draft form, the Government is accepting responses to its proposals. A spokesman for the Local Government Association said: "We will study the implications of these announcements for the use of employee incentives as tools to improve recruitment, retention and productivity. We will respond to consultations."

Many fleet managers spoken to by *Fleet News* declined to comment directly saying they were involved in discussions with HR departments, finance directors and professional advisers as to how the new salary sacrifice/cash allowance rules would impact on current schemes.

Paul Taylor, fleet manager at construction and regeneration group Morgan Sindall, where about 800 employees opt for a cash allowance, summed up the mood, saying: "We are waiting for the view from HR as to what the impact will be and the way forward. No actions have been taken as yet."

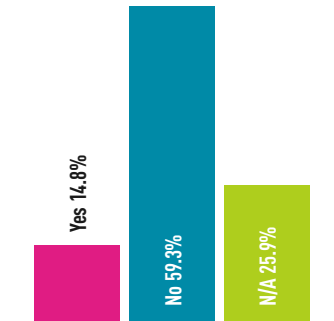
However, some employers which operate salary sacrifice and cash allowance schemes, said they had immediately posted the Government's autumn statement announcement on their intranet sites to alert employees ahead of getting to grips with the detailed implications.

Alastair Kendrick, director at tax adviser MacIntyre Hudson, advised companies that employees who are driving more than 5,000 business miles should be in a company car although, in some cases, it may also be appropriate for staff travelling fewer miles to have a company car.

## FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

### OPINION POLL

Have you seen a reduction in the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for the Dartford Crossing over the past six months?



### FleetNews view:

While a quarter of fleets who responded have registered drivers onto a Dart Charge account, this is not practical for all – particularly those with a large number of perk drivers for whom the crossings are may not be business journeys. The majority of fleets haven't seen a drop in PCNs, so the administration burden now passed onto fleet departments doesn't appear likely to reduce any time soon.

This week's poll: Have you used a car club?

[fleetnews.co.uk/polls](http://fleetnews.co.uk/polls)

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# Company car tax and sal/sac top list of concerns for the new year

*Fleet News* poll reveals what fleet operators think are their 2017 challenges

By Matt de Prez

**C**hanges to company car tax and salary sacrifice rules will be the biggest challenge that fleet operators will face in 2017.

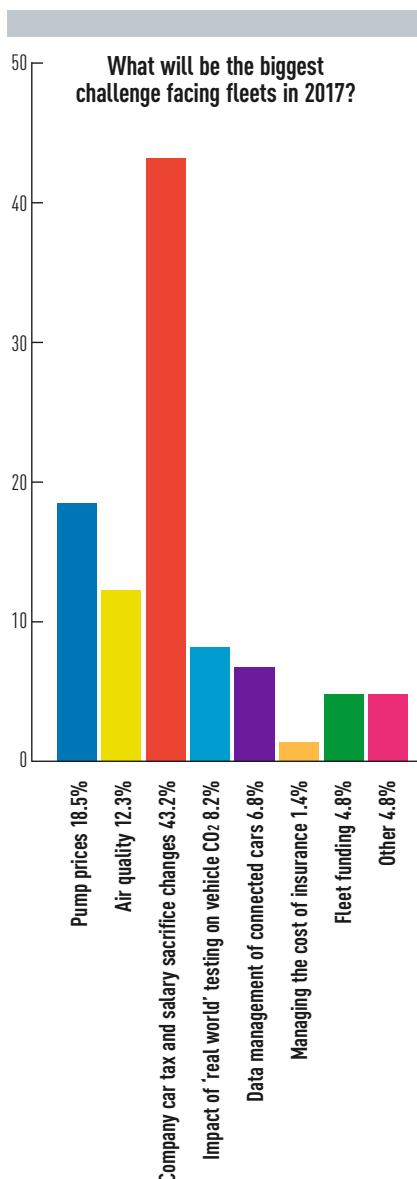
According to a *Fleet News* poll the changes announced in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn statement – which will affect salary sacrifice and cash-or-car schemes (see pages 4-5) – are expected to cause the most headaches for fleet departments (43.2%) this year.

Matt Sutherland, chief operating officer at Alphabet, said: "A significant concern is that with the additional complications in company car taxation, announced from April 2017, we could simply see organisations offering less choice to employees for company car options, resulting in a big shift into 'cash-for-car' schemes.

"The consequences of which would be to increase existing grey fleet problems by putting older, more polluting, less reliable and less safe vehicles on UK roads."

Furthermore, rising benefit-in-kind (BIK) bands will take a u-turn in 2020 dropping from 16% to 2% for the lowest emitting models (0-50g/km) – reducing the incentive for drivers to switch to plug-in vehicles until this point.

With fuel prices predicted to rise (see page 8) 18% of respondents said fuel costs will affect them the most this year, despite it being the



seventh successive year fuel duty has been frozen.

James Monks, finance director at vehicle tracking service provider RAM Tracking, said: "Despite the freeze, fuel is expected to continue to rise and costs have been impacted by a 19% pump price increase since February 2016."

Other pressures on fleets, especially those operating within London, are likely to arise from Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's assault on air quality.

He wants to speed up the introduction of central London's Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), implement a surcharge for the most polluting vehicles entering the city and propose a country-wide diesel scrappage scheme.

Caroline Sandall, deputy chairman of ACFO, told *Fleet News*: "We have already started to see a shift in selection of engine types and any further changes with regard to diesel uptake will further influence this trend."

Real world emissions testing is also due to start this year and Sandall thinks many fleets may not be aware of the impact yet.

"This is going to be a major influencer in vehicle choice lists/selection but this is a largely unknown quantity and there is uncertainty over timescales.

"The scale of change informally quoted by some is considerable and we [ACFO] look to HMRC to ensure these changes are carefully considered for BIK tables to ensure fairness to drivers," she explained.



*"We could simply see organisations offering less choice"*

Matt Sutherland,  
Alphabet



*"Despite the freeze, fuel is expected to continue to rise"*

James Monks,  
RAM Tracking

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# Diesel prices could hit 130p a litre this year, warn experts

OPEC production cut, Trump election and Article 50 to blame for rises

By Tom Seymour

Industry experts are warning fleets to prepare for continued increases in the price of fuel in the UK this year. Cuts in global fuel production and political uncertainty are expected to have a knock on effect at the pumps pushing the price of diesel to between 120p and 130p a litre. The average price for petrol was 117p and the average price for diesel was 119p as *Fleet News* went to press.

Both the AA and Petrolprices.com have predicted the price jumps due to the decision by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to cut oil production, the impact of President-elect Trump being voted in and the uncertainty around Prime Minister Theresa May triggering Article 50 before the end of March.

UK fuel prices are intrinsically linked with the price for a barrel of oil, which is traded in US dollars.

OPEC is an inter-governmental organisation of 13 nations based across the Middle East, Africa and South America. It produces 40% of the world's crude oil and controls more than 70% of the world's crude oil reserves.

The 13 nations have agreed to OPEC's first output cut in eight years in a bid to reverse the global decline in oil prices. It will see the group reduce production by 1.2 million barrels a day from the start of this month.

The scarcity of oil will, in turn, drive up the price per barrel and this will make it more expensive at the pump. At the time of writing the price for a barrel of oil was \$53.30 (£43.39).

Luke Bosdet, fuel spokesman for The AA, expects this to increase to US\$60 (approx £48) this year. A \$10 (£8) rise in the cost of a barrel of

*"The value of the pound will likely fall against the dollar if it (Article 50) is triggered, pushing fuel prices upwards"*

Jason Lloyd, Petrolprices.com

oil can move the pump price by around 5-6p.

He said: "The other thing to look at specifically on diesel is the price of biofuel. It makes up around 4.75% of diesel fuel and there has been a rubbish harvest of oil seed. That scarcity can also push the price up by another 1-2p per litre for diesel."

Jason Lloyd, Petrolprices.com managing director, said fleets can expect "a difficult year" for fuel costs. However, both he and the RAC are not expecting prices to reach the eye-watering highs of 148p a litre like they did during the 2012 oil strikes (see chart below).

Lloyd said: "Trump will be sworn in as President on January 20. How prices will be affected will depend on his protectionist policies for oil and gas production in reaction to the OPEC deal."

"The decision in March on whether Article 50 is triggered will also be likely to cause fluctuations. The value of the pound will likely fall against the dollar if it is triggered, pushing fuel prices upwards."

Lloyd said it is also possible prices could fall if Brexit is not triggered as the markets become more confident the UK is moving towards a "soft Brexit" with partial involvement in the EU.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams wouldn't go as far to put an exact figure on an increase, but said fleets should expect uncertainty this year.

The RAC's analysis suggests prices may well rise going into the New Year, which happened the last time there was an oil production cut in 2008.

Williams said: "On the other hand, the higher oil price, which will be the inevitable result of the six-month OPEC cut, will enable the USA to put more fracking rigs back into action."

"This, of course, is what the over-production strategy was designed to prevent and may well ultimately lead to OPEC reversing its decision and upping production again when it meets in May. If that happens, fuel pump prices may not rise as sharply as some are predicting."

Eduarda Amaro, Lex Autolease principal consultant, said fleets can prepare for fluctuations in fuel prices, which can make up to 25% of costs, by making sure they run their fleet as efficiently as possible based on wholelife costs.

Amaro also said businesses that are not currently using fuel cards could look at whether they would help to reduce costs by using data collected to help improve driver behaviour and efficiency.

While the spring Budget is still a way off and will be replaced later in the year by a new autumn one, Amaro is predicting fuel duty will continue to be frozen into 2018 because of the expected increases in the price of fuel this year.

She said: "With prices rising at the pumps hitting drivers with the double whammy of that and an increase in duty would be too much."

## PETROL AND DIESEL PRICES OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, PENCE PER LITRE

RAC Foundation (Source: BEIS)







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# Thames Water brings together fleet partners to align standards

Utilities company seeks collaboration and consistent policy across its branded fleet

By Matt de Prez

**T**hames Water launched its Branded Fleet Partnership, an initiative to align the operating standards of its alliance partners, at an event in London last month.

The aim was to bring together the fleet departments of partners who operate Thames Water branded vehicles and create a single fleet partnership agreement to be signed by all members, ensuring transparency and consistency across its branded fleet.

Jon Loveday, commercial and transformation director at Thames Water, said: "We have changed significantly in the past three years. Our alliances are now the backdrop of the way we work as a business and we now share commercially how we work and our intelligence.

"When we look at fleet, that's an area we haven't touched. There's a huge amount of opportunity in this space, we still operate in silence.

"Across other parts of Thames Water our teams are really well embedded and work together in a collaborative way."

To facilitate the initiative, 8Works, a specialist consultancy, was appointed following its assistance with the implementation of Thames Water's capital programme, last year.

The capital programme was an alliance partnership between Thames Water's biggest construction partners to carry out £4 billion of capital investment programmes and network and developer services over five years.

8Works applies a 'non-conventional' approach, using short, interactive sessions, and promotes an open and inclusive working environment where everybody has a voice.

The 30 participants to the Branded Fleet Partnership, which came from fleets such as Clancy and Murphys, were split into groups and tasked with exploring specific areas of the proposed agreement.

Loveday said: "Some of the things we really want to think about are our attention to standards, how can we share, what are some of the challenges of working in London, how do we



There are 3,000 branded vehicles on the Thames Water fleet

benchmark and what commercial opportunities are there.

"Currently there are 3,000 branded vehicles on Thames's fleet. What we need to establish is if we can work together, get some terms of reference, highlight responsibilities and agree on reporting requirements.

"Road risk is the biggest health and safety consideration every month in our business. We want to change that, change how we behave and change our approach to road risk."

Before talking through the finer details, four workshops were run to brief delegates on the areas where the partnership can add value. They covered health and safety, the value of the brand, operational requirements and future innovation.

If the partnership goes ahead it could more than double the number of vehicles displaying the Thames Water branding to more than 6,000. This means the company's reputation is at risk if vehicles are seen to be operating in an anti-social manner.

It is already believed that more than 60 million Thames Water customers see one of its vehicles each year, and with a rise in popularity for social media sharing, a single incident captured and posted online could impact heavily on the brand.

Therefore the company is keen to implement

brand awareness among partner fleets and ensure anyone driving a Thames Water branded van is representing the company positively.

One aspect of the partnership which had universal appeal was the prospect of group buying power. This would leverage the discounts available to larger fleets with particular benefit to smaller partners.

With increasing pressures on alliance fleets to have vehicles available at short notice, the partnership is also investigating the feasibility of sharing branded vehicles to reduce the overall fleet size.

The agreement isn't as straightforward as it may first appear, however. Alliance partners with more than one contract may not be able to afford a dedicated fleet of Thames Water vans, especially if their contract is short or near its renewal date.

Loveday said: "A key message from today is that we must look at aligning our contracts. While some have larger contracts, others don't. If we want them to make investments then we will need to consider how we will work and engage in the long term."

The next meeting of the fleet partnership is scheduled for the end of this month, where the final agreement will be presented to the group.

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# PSA Group merges contract hire brands to become 7th in the FN50

Citroën and Peugeot contract hire companies combine to form Free2Move Lease

By Sarah Tooze

**T**he PSA Group has launched a new contract hire brand, Free2Move Lease, which has been formed from the merger of Citroën Contract Motoring and Peugeot Contract Hire.

The new brand has a combined fleet size of more than 64,000 vehicles. Citroën Contract Motoring had 44,777 and sat 10th in last year's FN50, while Peugeot Contract Hire had 19,286 and was 13th. The new brand is now seventh in the FN50 table, leapfrogging Zenith (58,392), Arnold Clark Finance (51,717) and Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions (51,420).

Duncan Chumley, former sales director at Citroën Financial Services, has been appointed managing director of Free2Move Lease, with the brand officially launching on January 3.

Free2Move Lease sits within the newly created Free2Move brand, which launched in October and brings together the Group's mobility services, including car sharing, connected services, fleet services and leasing.

Mobility is an important part of the group's Push to Pass growth plan, which aims to deliver 10% group revenue growth by 2018 versus 2015, and an additional 15% by 2021.

Free2Move Lease is the first division of Free2Move to be launched in the UK. Other mobility services will follow and will be determined by market demand. Some will be aimed at retail rather than fleet customers.

In his first interview since his appointment on

*"In the first instance we are concentrating on our core business, which is contract hire"*

*Duncan Chumley, Free2Move Lease*



FREE<sup>2</sup>  
MOVE  
LEASE

October 1, Chumley told *Fleet News*: "In the first instance we are concentrating on our core business, which is contract hire. Our focus is to use the strength of both organisations [Citroën Contract Motoring and Peugeot Contract Hire], bring them together, and to be able to create a stronger leasing company and a better proposition for our customers."

The PSA Group began communicating the changes to its customers last month.

"It's a trading style change from Citroën Contract Motoring and Peugeot Contract Hire to Free2Move Lease with PSA Finance still being the legal entity for the finance contracts," Chumley said. "Existing websites will remain and then over time we will slowly close those down and replace them with a new one."

Chumley has also been on a recruitment drive with Martin Hamill, former director – quality and The Academy at PSA Peugeot Citroën (and prior to that, Citroën fleet director), appointed sales director, Shane Coomber moving over from PSA Finance to become operations director and former head of Citroën Contract Motoring James Birch appointed marketing and PR director from December 1.

A key change has been bringing all of the sales, operations, marketing and call centre staff together at Pinley House in Coventry rather than having staff in Coventry and Redhill.

It's a move which has been welcomed by Martin Gurney, director of fleet and used vehicles at PSA Group, as the fleet team now have "one entity that we can work hand-in-hand with to secure fleet opportunities".

All seven account managers from Citroën Contract Motoring and Peugeot Contract Hire

have been retained but they now have a wider remit rather than simply looking after their respective brands.

"It will benefit corporate customers because rather than having to see two account managers, now they will see one," Chumley said. "We tend to find in customer relationships that someone might have a lead relationship and if we can, if that person is available, they will remain the key contact. It's not always possible, but we will try to keep consistency."

For the first time there will be dedicated residual value (RV) and service maintenance and repair (SMR) management resource rather than this being looked after by Peugeot and Citroën DS.

Chumley is recruiting a remarketing and RV manager and an SMR manager, each with a team of two.

A public sector team of five, including a specialist vehicle manager, has also been created.

"The majority of public sector is via tender and the disadvantage we've had in the past is we've always been tendering with one product. So whenever we go to a tender we face fierce competition from the likes of Arval and Lex Autolease who tender a variety of products, including our own. Now we can tender for the whole PSA range," Chumley said.

Free2Move Lease also has the ability to be multi-marque so if a request cannot be met by the PSA range it will look to other manufacturers. However, only a small proportion of the fleet mix is expected to be competitor brands.

Chumley expects the SME channel to remain the backbone of the new business as the majority of business has traditionally been through the dealer networks.

# THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*



Happy New Year to all *Fleet News* readers – I hope you had a good festive break and are suitably refreshed for 2017.

We'll need our wits about us over the next 12 months ('twas ever thus) as fleets face a number of changes on company car taxation that will affect both businesses and employees.

Arguably the most significant is the new Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rates from April. Despite coverage in *Fleet News*, many fleets remain unaware of the changes.

In summary, the standard rate for cars with a list price up to £40,000 becomes £140 for every vehicle except zero emission cars (which remain £0). The rate for more expensive cars will be £450. First-year rates also change with charges starting for cars emitting from 1g/km (to date cars up to 130g/km were exempt).

## "Government taxation rules on company cars and emissions remain muddled"

So, a car costing £20,000 with, say, emissions of 125g/km which was previously exempt would now be hit with a £160 first-year charge and a standard rate of £140 (previously £110). So, over a four-year operating cycle, fleet costs would rise £280.

Bad news? That's nothing compared to an ultra-low emission 75g/km vehicle where costs over four years will rise by up to £585 for a car priced up to £40,000 or £1,825 for something more expensive.

April also sees the new salary sacrifice and cash allowance rules. The exemption of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) reduces the impact but the changes still create uncertainty, confusion and, for fleets offering cash alternatives, increased admin.

Then there's the two percentage point increases in employee benefit-in-kind (BIK) thresholds which also affects employer national insurance costs – also in April.

Government taxation rules on company cars and emissions remain muddled. On one hand it wants to raise more money; on the other it wants to encourage the update of ULEVs. It has yet to strike the right balance.

## YOUR LETTERS

### TELEMETRICS

## Don't let marketers have field day with vehicle data

EDITOR'S PICK



#### Derek Webb wrote:

Having read 'BVRLA concerned over access to vehicle data' ([fleetnews.co.uk](http://fleetnews.co.uk), Dec 5), I agree with these apprehensions – not so much about who owns the data, more what is done with it.

The information gathered by connected cars is red hot stuff. Marketing companies will have a field day with product placement – fuel stops, pubs and restaurants visited, shops used, school runs (children ads),

where one lives (income category) and on and on. As well as this, it will tell who your customers are and how often you visit them.

My car tells me all I need to know about its roadworthiness and up-coming service needs as well the prevailing road and journey conditions without being 'connected'.

I don't believe that any 'it's good for the consumer' claim is a one-way street and connected cars certainly fit into that category.

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

### VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

## Open all hours sounds good to us

#### Eric Bristow wrote:

Having read 'BT fleet garages to open 24 hours a day' ([fleetnews.co.uk](http://fleetnews.co.uk), Dec 7), as a customer service support company, this is just what is needed and should be applauded.

The demands nowadays to be 110% available between 7am and 11pm from restaurant outlets and to be at full

capacity; are greater than ever before.

Planning scheduled maintenance means we can be more productive and reduce our clients' downtime on their equipment.

It should be noted, though, that Mercedes-Benz has offered this support for all commercial vehicles through their truck division for many years.

### CORRECTION AND APOLOGIES

In the news article 'Fleet demand for EVs rising at a rapid rate' in the December 15 issue of *Fleet News*, the figures in the table for the two Renault cars were incorrectly added up. The Zoe running cost should have read £22,580 (not £31,839) while the Clio is £21,246 (not £33,810).





## ELECTRIC VEHICLE UPTAKE

# EVs must address range reservations

### Glenn Ewen wrote:

Having read 'Fleets must start planning for the transition to electric vehicles now' (*Fleet News*, Dec 8), I feel fleets will start planning as soon as there are viable electric vehicles that can eliminate range anxiety and are flexible enough to replace traditional ICE vehicles.

The vehicles have to fit the job, not the other way round. You can alter work practices, but you cannot change the fundamental requirements.

Currently, and for the foreseeable future, businesses will need to have conventionally powered vehicles on standby for when electric goes flat, will take too long to recharge, or has to travel a greater distance than the range of the electric vehicle.



## DRIVER DISTRACTIONS

# Touchscreens should not be used to Skype

### Ian M wrote:

Having read 'Volkswagen introduces high-specification Polo Match edition trim level' (*fleetnews.co.uk*, Dec 19), am I missing something here? Why would you want access to Skype and Spotify from your car's touchscreen? You're supposed to be driving not accessing your phone to use software such as this. It's about time manufacturers started taking responsibility for causing driver distractions.

## CYCLING HAZARDS

# No consolation to be in the right in an accident

### Andy wrote:

Having read 'British Cycling calls for drivers turning left to give way to cyclists heading straight on' (*fleetnews.co.uk*, Dec 9), as a cyclist (who also drives for a living) I wouldn't feel safe or comfortable coming up the near side of a vehicle which is about to turn left. To expect them to give way to me is too much to hope for. The blind spot for HGVs and other larger vehicles is just too large for them to see the cyclist.

### Doug added:

This makes no sense at all – it should be beholden on cyclists, for their own safety, not to pass vehicles on their nearside, precisely because the vehicle could manoeuvre left and so engender them.

In no other circumstance would a vehicle approaching from the left have right of way on a UK road. Changing this in this instance would only increase confusion. Will it cushion the blow on impact to cyclists if, as they fly through the air, they do so in the knowledge that they had right of way?



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**Burning question:**  
Which festive gift pleased you most?

### Editorial

#### Editor-in-chief

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#### New swimming goggles and jammers

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#### Earrings from my husband

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#### A brass poppy pin made from the cap of a shell fired by British artillery in the Battle of the Somme

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#### Hedgehog coasters

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#### Much needed new laptop

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#### I bought my daughter a hoverboard.

#### She almost burst with excitement

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#### New kettle ahead of move to new flat

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#### New guitar strings from my sons

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#### A Teasmade

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Richard Green and Russell  
Sidebottom, Give the dog a bone



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## FLEET OPINION

## VEHICLE IMPORTS

## A good year for 'New World' cars?

By Steve Whitmarsh

**“** We are in a 'pre-Article 50 triggering' twilight zone. What effects are we likely to see in the UK's fleet industry?

With exports cheaper, and some sectors booming, even the latest forecasts from the International Monetary Fund indicate that the UK economy is set to grow faster than any other economy in Europe. Of course, for every positive forecast, one can find a negative one, which only serves to demonstrate that no one really knows yet.

However, aside from the arguments over the economy, it is worth pausing to consider what effect Brexit will have on our vehicle parc over the next five-10 years.

Could the costs of European vehicles increase dramatically as exchange rates change and we apply tariffs on a tit for tat basis with the EU? Could the barriers of entry to the UK come down for manufacturers from nations we don't currently consider mainstream?

Whatever happens, it is highly likely we will see some very different brands start to explore our market from America, Japan, China and even the Indian sub-continent.

Looking to the East, we may well see some of the many Chinese manufacturers make an entry to our market. Brands like Geely, Chery, Hafei, Jianghuai and Roewe could be joining Great Wall on the drives of our leafy suburbs.

Not so long ago, Chinese manufacturers were not considered a threat, and often treated with ridicule.

However, the tide is changing. They have established modern, credible manufacturing bases, and ownership of some European brands.

There is capacity in the Chinese market, but as it starts to mature, manufacturers will need to look further afield, and post-Brexit Britain is likely to be attractive to them.

While our manufacturers are already foreign owned, we still need to be careful they are not pushed to extinction with the influx of non-native species. After all we don't want the automotive equivalent of the grey squirrel.

It may not be all bad though. After all, many of us enjoy a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc – who knows, we might well see some good 'new world' cars too. **”**

*“We may see some of the many Chinese manufacturers make an entry to our market”*



**Steve Whitmarsh**  
managing director,  
Run Your Fleet



**Ashley Sowerby**  
managing director,  
Chevin Fleet Solutions

## QUESTIONS FOR 2017

## Preparing for an uncertain outlook

By Ashley Sowerby

**“** There can't have been many years that seem as unpredictable as their outset as 2017 does. Will we see much progress in leaving the EU or will the process drag on – and to what effect? Will new air quality plans impact on company vehicles? Will fundamental company car and van tax rules change?

By the time you read this, the answers to some of these questions might have become more obvious. But possibly not. Events could have considerable impact – or they might simply dissipate.

As a fleet manager, how do you prepare for such an uncertain outlook? The answer is both simple and complex: thoroughly.

This is a time to look at your operations and question whether they are as good as they could be. Are your costs under control? Are you running the right kinds of vehicles? Is your risk management policy really reducing accident rates?

One thing that continually raises its head when I see such questions being asked is how often different answers apply for different organisations. This is not a one-size-fits-all industry. The solutions you find will probably need to be closely personalised to your requirements.

It's also worth being prepared to adapt or change your approach in line with market developments.

The industry's need for flexibility is something we have built into our fleet management software products, making them as adaptable as possible to meet the needs of organisations of different sizes, compositions and operational needs.

This is especially relevant in key areas such as workflow management, emission reduction, compliance and risk management – where we are continually working on new products and updates alongside industry developments to help clients meet and exceed their KPIs. Your identified priorities might be completely different to another organisation.

However, one advantage of working in fleet here is that an answer is almost certainly available, either from service providers like ourselves or our highly-professional industry bodies.

So whatever 2017 brings, help should be at hand. Here's wishing you a very happy one. **”**

*“One advantage of working in fleet here is that an answer is almost certainly available”*



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# 'WE DELIVER ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING'

Established 150 years ago but with a modern approach, this multi-tasking delivery and chauffeur fleet is dedicated to professionalism. *Stephen Briers reports*

**C**ouriers don't enjoy the best of reputations, particularly those operating at a local level: turning up in grubby vans, throwing fragile packages over fences when no one is home, manic lane jumping to gain a few yards in the city – customer perceptions are often well-founded.

Absolutely wants to change all that. The company, which offers same-day, next-day and international deliveries as well as executive car/chauffeur services, recently rebranded its 21 trading names under the new moniker with clear objectives in mind: promote professionalism and its ability to deliver 'absolutely everything'.

The company was established 150 years ago by current owner Jeremy Thompson's great grandfather George, a station master at St Pancras, as a freight agent for the privately-owned railway companies. It has, says Thompson, the oldest account at NatWest's Holborn Circus branch, with just six digits.

Thompson diversified into the courier business in 1984 when disposing of a travel

business that had been set up in the 1920s. The courier operation now accounts for the majority of the £20 million revenue – 50% from same-day, 15% overnight, 15% international – with the remaining 20% from the executive cars.

"Our acquisition strategy was to maintain the old brands as trading names although our main brand was A to Z Couriers," Thompson says. "But we got to a certain level and needed to make more impact in the London market for our size of business. To do that, we brought everything under one brand."

He deliberately sought to forego the usual trend for names including the words 'speed', 'courier' and 'logistics'. "We wanted a fresh approach, one which gets across our capabilities and our range of services."

The livery tells the company stories, such as the vans featuring a lobster which relates the time when a driver rang the office to report that a lobster he was transporting had made a break for freedom and was now trapped under his seat. Or the Alsatian, which was used by a client as a size description – 'the box is as big as an Alsatian'.

Other vans feature scissors, cheese and trainers, and a multitude of colours which reflect the London tube map.

The vehicle fleet ranges "from pushbikes to 7.5-tonne trucks – and everything in between", Thompson says.

All drivers are self-employed, and around half use their own vehicle. The rest are provided by Absolutely, leased via its manufacturer partners' finance houses.

The mix includes 100 cars, from Toyota Prius to Mercedes-Benz E-Class and S-Class; 110 vans, from car-derived to Mercedes-Benz Sprinters; 50 motorcycles; and 40 bicycles, including five 'cargo bikes' which are heavier and long-wheel base with a parcel frame on the front accommodating a box or bag.

The cargo bikes are deployed for local collections in London, replacing vans. They are both quicker and more environmentally friendly.

The cars are kept for two years on a full-maintenance package, which gives Absolutely an average fleet age of one year.

"This is important for our clients – they want newer, quality cars," Thompson says. "It also means we have modern vehicles which have lower emissions."

The Prius models satisfy the requirements of clients that have environmental concerns;







Jeremy Thompson decided to unite his company's 21 brands under one name



## FACTFILE

**Company** Absolutely  
**Managing director** Jeremy Thompson  
**Fleet size** 300 – 100 cars, 110 vans, 50 motorcycles, 40 push-bikes  
**Funding method** contract hire with maintenance  
**Operating cycle** cars – two years; vans – three years  
**Brands on fleet** cars – Toyota, BMW, Mercedes-Benz; vans: Peugeot, Mercedes-Benz



the Mercedes-Benz and BMW models meet the demands of VIP and executive customers who expect high quality cars.

Vans are leased for three years, which enables the company to budget its monthly costs. The Sprinters make up a large proportion, chosen for their reliability.

"We have used others but we find problems, especially with the side-sliding doors. Ours get opened and closed 100 times a day; the Sprinter can cope with that," Thompson says. "We also have Peugeot vans and the Toyota Yaris which has congestion charge benefits but we are looking at the Renault Trafic which is a good medium-size van for us."

He adds: "We have three or four vehicle suppliers and we have built our relationship with them as we have grown. We are leasing in significant numbers which brings the price down."

Thompson leases directly with Toyota Financial Services and Mercedes-Benz Financial Service, believing that using the in-house leasing provider for each brand's cars gives him the best deal.

Around 150 drivers use their own vehicles, guided by strict rules. They have to be in good condition, insured and maintained. Absolutely's fleet team, which is based out of four locations and headed by fleet manager Graham Cross, inspects every vehicle before giving clearance to carry out deliveries and also periodically checks them when drivers visit the office.

"We have no age restrictions; it's the condition that is key, although we do also have consideration for emissions," Thompson says.

"Cleanliness is important because it is part of our image as a professional company. The fleet team will check cleanliness inside and out, especially on the cars."

Driver performance is dealt with during the recruitment process. Thompson only

## DOUBLE CHALLENGE FACED BY ABSOLUTELY

**Jeremy Thompson highlights two challenges facing his business: the economy and congestion.**

"Our business is a bell-weather of activity, especially in the city," he says. "If the economy is depressed and quiet, it affects our volumes."

The run-up to the referendum in July resulted in a slow-down but, since the result, business has picked up again. Volumes are traditionally lower in August and during half-term anyway, rising towards Christmas with the growth in internet shopping.

"We have to bring in short-term hire of vehicles and drivers then, especially for the overnight business," Thompson says.

He adds: "Our main issue is congestion. Few of our clients drive in London – they use buses or taxis with their own lanes – so they don't understand when we say it can take an hour to drive a distance they can walk in the same time."

"Congestion is appalling with the Crossrail work, cycle lanes and volume of traffic; the speed of our vans is no quicker than our horses were 100 years ago. The only solution is to use bikes."

He doesn't see drones as a solution: "It's PR more than anything else. Goods have to be delivered and they will be delivered in vans for the foreseeable future."

employs drivers with previous experience of couriering; it enjoys a good reputation so has no shortage of people wishing to join. Some drivers have worked for the company for more than 20 years.

New recruits undergo a series of tests, such as their knowledge of London, to gauge their suitability and are required to carry out daily maintenance and safety checks.

"As they are self-employed, it's in their own interests to ensure their vehicle is maintained and on-the-road. This is the only way they can earn money," says Thompson. "It's their career and they take pride in looking after their vehicles and doing a good job."

"When we take on a driver, they commit to certain things, such as insurance, staying legal, maintaining the vehicle and keeping it looking smart. They are the face of our business."

Consequently, incident rates are low and Absolutely does not see the need to carry out any driver training. Any prangs or crashes that do occur require an accident report to

be written up which is handled by the transport department. Persistent offenders will be interviewed about the causes, although this rarely happens.

Absolutely does track drivers via their hand-held personal digital assistant (PDA), which is also the communications tool for scheduling work.

The GPS tracking system has been developed in partnership with courier software supplier DA Systems. It plots each driver in real-time and, by clicking on any individual, Absolutely's controllers can see what speed they are travelling at and where they are. Customers can also track their parcel online.

It also records a 'snail trail' of their route with start/finish times which can be used to respond to customer complaints; a snapshot can be taken and emailed to the client. The controller can zoom in via a satellite picture which can be useful if the driver cannot find the delivery location.

Drivers have strict rules about what to do if someone is not in. Occasionally the contract will allow them to post the package through the letter box. In these cases, the driver takes a picture of the house which is filed should evidence of delivery be required at a future date.

Most same-day jobs are allocated the moment the assignment comes into the office. The controllers will decide which driver to send dependent on proximity and their workload – it's a combination of speed

*"We have no age restrictions (on drivers own vehicles); it's the condition that is key, although we do also have consideration for emissions"*

Jeremy Thompson, Absolutely





Jeremy Thompson outside his company's base in Brownlow Mews, Bloomsbury, not far from St Pancras where his great grandfather started the business more than a century-and-a-half ago

for the customer and ensuring drivers earn enough money.

Absolutely is also an agent for nationwide delivery franchise APC, covering north-west London. Those drivers receive daily run sheets with pre-determined routes.

The company operates six circuits, each with two controllers plus a back-up. The 'minimum' circuit is for deliveries that start and finish in central London and largely consists of the bikes; two 'out-of-town' circuits cover work that goes out of London; two van circuits mop up the rest.

Each circuit has around 40 vehicles. On a busy day, Absolutely expects to take on 5,000 jobs, typically 1,250 from APC, 1,250 overnight, 300-400 international and the rest same-day. It also takes 400-500 executive

car bookings and has more than 5,000 corporate accounts ranging from high street fashion brands to law firms.

Despite all this activity, particularly in and around London, the company does not have a problem with parking tickets. Drivers are careful where they park as they are responsible for paying any charges – unless they can show that they had no other option but to park there.

"We find that parking wardens are sensible about delivery drivers. They are understanding of the job and realise that our drivers aren't parking there for fun," Thompson says.

He has further ambitions to grow the company, including through acquisition – talks are on-going with at least two couriers based in London.

"We are always on the look-out for further acquisitions; we are aggressively growing the business," Thompson says.

His team is experienced in integrating people and vehicles into the fleet. A few fall by the wayside, but most stay with the business. "They see it as an opportunity and they will generally earn more because we are a bigger fleet with more drops that make each job more worthwhile," Thompson says.

"It isn't difficult to integrate an acquisition into our modus operandi and our culture."



For more fleet profiles visit:  
[fleetnews.co.uk/  
fleetprofiles](https://fleetnews.co.uk/fleetprofiles)

# CROSS-PARTY COMMITTEE PUTS POLITICS TO ONE SIDE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

*Stephen Briers* interviews Louise Ellman MP, chair of the influential TSC, which can summon company bosses and ministers to give evidence to its inquiries

**W**ho holds the Department for Transport (DfT) to account? Decisions taken by the Government office have major, long-lasting implications for fleets, whether it's investment in road infrastructure, action to tackle safety, approving trials of autonomous cars, incentivising uptake of alternative vehicles or even wider travel matters such as airport expansion and HS2 rail links.

Does the DfT make the right decisions? Could money be better invested in other areas? Can it justify its policies? This is where the Transport Select Committee comes in.

The Transport Select Committee (TSC) comprises 11 Members of Parliament, appointed by the House of Commons and drawn from the three largest political parties (Conservatives, Labour and SNP). It is responsible for examining the expenditure, administration and policy of DfT and associated public bodies, like Highways England, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the traffic commissioners.

However, its remit extends further, into other motoring matters of public interest. Over the past 15 months, for example, two major automotive stories aroused interest: the Volkswagen NOx emissions scandal and the Vauxhall Zafira fires (the recent news about Corsa fires is sure to now come under its gaze).

In both instances, the TSC summoned senior executives at the companies to explain what happened and how they intended to resolve the issues. These sessions are often hostile and uncompromising – just check the YouTube clips involving Volkswagen UK MD Paul Willis.

Louise Ellman MP has chaired the committee for the past eight years and has been a member since 2002. Key to its success, she says, is having members who can put aside party politics to work together for a common goal.

"Overwhelmingly that does apply; we try very hard to concentrate on the issue in front of us," Ellman tells *Fleet News* at her parliamentary office in Portcullis House, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament.



Louise Ellman has served on the TSC since 2002. "We can make a difference," she says

## WHO'S WHO: THE TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Louise Ellman,  
Labour (chair)



Clive Efford,  
Labour



Robert Ffello,  
Labour



Karl McCartney,  
Conservative



Stewart Malcolm  
McDonald, SNP



Mark Menzies,  
Conservative



"Our aim is to try to improve transport for the public and identify issues of concern, conducting inquiries where we think it is appropriate into different topics which we decide."

Committee members have full autonomy and are completely independent from parliamentary bias. It slots in the topical inquiries around its main transport scrutiny responsibilities.

Each inquiry has terms of reference. They are made public via the website and TSC invites interested parties to submit their views. It will also call relevant people to provide face-to-face evidence, including ministers.

Once the TSC is satisfied with the information it has gathered, it draws up a report with recommendations which goes to the appropriate minister. That minister is duty-bound to respond.

"Our aim is two-fold: it's to highlight issues of concern and bring about change where we feel that's justified," Ellman says. "And it's to influence what happens. We're not an arm of government so we don't have a power to enforce something, but we definitely do influence."

The Volkswagen emissions scandal is one area where the involvement of TSC prompted the Government to raise its game.

"We could see it was a matter of concern. And although it is far from resolved, our actions have made the Government become much more involved," Ellman says.

"We're not satisfied that they've done enough and we think that our minister should be more involved, but it's an ongoing issue."

Ellman is keen for fleets and leasing companies to contact the committee about any issues they believe are worth investigating.

"It is always good for the industry to make me aware of issues," she says. To that end, she asks *Fleet News* for its view.

Our reply: road safety and data protection, two issues raised in the Fleet Manifesto published by *Fleet News*, ACFO and BVRLA in 2015 which Ellman now has a copy of.

"We did a lot of work on road safety in the past and I think it's time we looked at it again, [especially as] accident rates have gone up recently," Ellman says.

TSC has also focused on road traffic law enforcement, drawing a parallel between the shortage of traffic officers and the rise in drivers using hand-held mobile phones.

"People aren't supposed to do it, but it's not enforced. There has been a much bigger attention by the Government on that since we highlighted it," Ellman says.

DfT announced late last year that drivers would now face tougher penalties for using hand-held mobile phones. This includes six points instead of three and a doubling of the fine to £200.

In addition, newly qualified drivers could be made to retake their test the first time they are caught and more experienced drivers could go to court if they offend twice, and face fines of up to £1,000 and at least a six-month driving ban.

The transport committee has also been high profile in the debate over all-lane running on major sections of motorways, which DfT is extending across the country.

Its report detailed safety concerns and apprehension that trials had not been sufficient to establish the true impact of using hard shoulders as an extra lane to alleviate congestion.

"We wanted the Government to stop the roll out of that programme until safety was assessed," Ellman says.

"Somebody could break down on the lane during the night and it not be known that they're there. There is technology that would alert the control agents but that wasn't going to be fitted so we've said something must be done about that."

The DfT is ploughing ahead with the roll-out, which Ellman believes is "cost-led because you get more road space for less money if you use the hard shoulder".

She adds: "If they're not going to stop the roll-out, they've got to do something about refuges – including the length of the refuge area for haulage vehicles and how you can safely get a vehicle in to tow them out if they break down – and more information for people on the motorway."

In its response to the TSC, released in December, the DfT has ceded some ground: while the roll-out will continue, it is committing to take action on creating more refuge areas and fitting a radar-based vehicle detection system to reduce the risk to broken down vehicles. It also intends to meet with TSC shortly to discuss its other concerns.

Continuously monitoring projects is key to the Transport Select Committee's success.

"That's one of the secrets: you mustn't just produce a report and then leave it if it's something you feel strongly about and it's got public resonance," Ellman explains.

"You have to keep raising it at the right time. We call ministers in front of the committee for general questions and that's when we might well raise issues like this. What is happening on this topic? What is being done? They know that we do that as well."

The TSC's latest inquiry is looking at urban road congestion, with the first oral session due to start this month. Its aim is to identify cost-effective and safe strategies for managing limited road space in towns and cities, minimising disruption to local communities and businesses, and keeping traffic flowing.

The proposal came from TSC members during a debate on the Buses Bill. Views were divided on whether bus priority lanes were a good or bad idea, so Ellman proposed widening the debate to look more generally at roads management, usage and congestion.

She says: "That's going to be very interesting to your audience: who gets priority, is it the buses, is it the cycle lanes? Is it the regular drivers who are driving in and out of metropolitan areas? Is it the people going to school? Who has priority on the roads and how do we make that better?"

Ellman is the longest serving member of the Transport Select Committee. So what is its appeal to her?

"Its remit is so wide – road, rail, air, sea – and it's so important to everything: how industry functions, environmental issues, how people get around," she replies.

"And we can make a difference; over time you see changes and different ideas."

## CURRENT AND ONGOING TSC INQUIRIES

### ■ Urban congestion

*Inquiry announced October 20, 2016*

### ■ Departmental priorities and annual report and accounts (one-off session)

*October 13, 2016*

### ■ Safety and security of the rail network

*September 25, 2016*

### ■ High Speed Two (one-off evidence session)

*December 8, 2016*

### ■ Transocean Winner incident and emergency towing vessels

*November 17, 2016*

### ■ Bus Services Bill

*July 19, 2016*

### ■ Rail technology: signalling and traffic management

*February 23, 2016*

### ■ Volkswagen Group emissions violations (one-off evidence session)

*October 7, 2015*

### ■ Road haulage sector: Skills and workforce planning

*September 11, 2015*

### ■ Vauxhall Zafira B fires

*June 10, 2016*

### ■ Rail franchising

*May 5, 2016*

### ■ Improving the rail passenger experience

*April 19, 2016*



**Huw Merriman,**  
Conservative



**Will Quince,**  
Conservative



**Iain Stewart,**  
Conservative



**Graham Stringer,**  
Labour



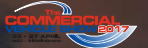
**Martin Vickers,**  
Conservative

*"Our aim is two-fold: to highlight issues of concern and influence what happens"*

*Louise Ellman, Labour*

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# SELECT THE RIGHT SOFTWARE PACKAGE FOR YOUR FLEET

Choosing the right product and supplier can increase operational efficiencies, save money and improve compliance, *reports Catherine Chetwynd*

**S**electing the right fleet management software system and supplier can be a time-consuming and confusing task. As well as a vast number of packages and modules being available on the market, service levels and support also varies from supplier to supplier.

However, while this may seem an onerous task, taking on a new system tends to be the beginning of a long-term buyer-supplier relationship, so thorough market and product research is necessary.

The first step is to be clear on what you want the software to do. "Fleet managers need to understand what they want to get out of their fleet management software," says John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators association ACFO. "And then they need to make sure it is compatible with the systems they already have."

Maurice Elford, fleet manager of housing association L&Q, adds: "Is it for keeping records? Will you drive reports out of it? What do you want to record on it?"

"We upload our fuel data, maintenance; we have everything in one place."

*"If you choose a system that is cheapest at face value, you may end up paying out more in the long term"*

Ashley Sowerby,  
Chevin Fleet Solutions

The increasing number of sources of data such as telematics, online licence-checking services and fuel cards, may mean managers require their software packages to accept information from many places.

In addition, those running a large fleet may need customisable tools that allow them to create workflows, approval processes, key performance indicators (KPIs), and the like, and that can be developed to respond to the growth or changes in the fleet, company or industry.

Highlighting specific requirements can also often lead to a supplier creating specific functions. For example, North Yorkshire Police worked with Civica to develop a module to increase the usage of under-utilised vehicles. They were re-classed as pool cars, making them available to anyone in the force.

This enabled the organisation to save £33,000 in the first 12 months of the initiative and cut CO<sub>2</sub> through reducing the use of higher-emitting grey fleet vehicles.

Drive Software Solutions often sees large fleets, its specialism, using the wrong type





of system for their needs. "Again and again we have found myriad systems from multiple software providers being run in parallel," says Simon West-Oliver, sales and marketing director at Drive Software Solutions.

"For the most part, none of these systems were designed with anything other than a single function in mind, much less integrating with others. So fleets end up having multiple repositories of customer and vehicle data – and that's where expensive mistakes start to happen."

Key to success in finalising specification is to involve all parties who may use or rub shoulders with the software: drivers, finance, HR and more.

"A lot of businesses operate in virtual silos, so it is important to involve the whole business and to fully understand their objectives, along with the problems they typically encounter," says Martin Evans, Jaama managing director.

Other areas to consider include current problems that can be fixed and the impact of that on other departments, where relevant data is held and what problems disparate locations may have and how this will change.

When drawing up a list of requirements, it is also worth considering if any future changes to a fleet operation will affect what is required from the software package.

"Think about tomorrow as well," says Elford. "One of the biggest pitfalls is systems that do not offer the flexibility to make alterations."

Failing to prepare carefully compromises the fleet manager's ability to write a tender document which allows potential suppliers to understand exactly what is required. This may lead to a mismatch of software and fleet.

## £36,000

saved in a year by North Yorkshire Police, which reclassified under-utilised vehicles as pool cars

## 2,500

vehicles in the Skanska fleet

smaller suppliers, says Carl Nicholson, fleet manager at North Somerset Council. "We were trying to cut overheads by reducing staffing costs, so we needed a system that would automate a lot of processes," he adds.

"We were finding it quite hard to get the development we needed to make a system that worked – being 100 or so vehicles, we did not have the clout of some of the bigger players.

"We were trying to find a solution that linked our telematics data and enabled a web-based, more efficient fleet system.

"Do not go to the big players straightaway because web-based technology has changed the game."

Nicholson says the council's telematics provider Quartix suggested its software partner FleetCheck and "the pricing was significantly better".

He adds: "We have had FleetCheck for two years and are very happy with it."

Having narrowed down potential suppliers to a manageable number and defined the specification, a fleet manager should "send the vendor a request for information (RFI) containing specific questions: what services are provided, what service level is relevant and what it covers", says Ashley Sowerby, managing director of Chevin Fleet Solutions. "Suppliers should be able to use this to explain how their software meets your requirements."

SLAs should also be appropriate to the risk to the business if something goes wrong with the software.

A supplier should also be asked to compile a timeframe for implementation. Introducing a fleet software package is not an overnight process.

"Fleet management technology is about marrying up vehicles, drivers and requirements; it is simply a tool to facilitate the professionalism of that delivery," says Geoffrey Bray, chairman of Fleet Industry Advisory Group. "Technology is our servant, not our master."

## CHOOSING A SUPPLIER

When the list of requirements is finalised, an obvious place to start when looking for a supplier is the major players such as Chevin Fleet Solutions, Jaama and Civica.

However, organisations should also be open to contacting

*"A lot of businesses operate in virtual silos, so it is important to involve the whole business and to fully understand their objectives"*

Martin Evans, Jaama

## CASE STUDY: SKANSKA

Improving usage of data to reduce costs and cutting fleet administration were two reasons behind Skanska's decision to introduce Jaama's Key2 fleet management software package.

The project development and construction company also

wanted a system that was future proof, with the ability to evolve modules – and develop new ones – to keep the software up to date.

"We wanted a system to manage our vehicle and equipment assets, hold all information in a single location, and to interface with our HR system, feed data back to our finance department and link with our workshops and stores," says Julie Madoui, head of fleet at Skanska.

The company operates a UK fleet of around 2,500 vehicles from company cars to heavy commercial vehicles, and also uses its vehicle management software to manage some plant equipment assets.

Skanska's expansion through acquisition meant the fleet was operating on two parallel systems, which proved administratively cumbersome and operationally inefficient.

Fleet provides a range of services to customers, so the chosen system was required to undertake a significant volume of financial work such as cost allocation and vehicle and driver management.

The software package also had to manage vehicle service, maintenance and repairs on Skanska's and some third-party



## BEWARE A FALSE ECONOMY

Price is also a key consideration, but fleets should take a broader view than merely how much a system costs.

"This is an involved purchase that costs more than just the licence fee and if you simply choose a system that is cheapest at face value, you may end up paying out more in the long term," says Sowerby.

"We recommend you get a full cost breakdown to cover the entire process of buying and implementing the software within your business."

This breakdown should cover installation, configuration, data conversion, on-site training and ongoing support.

Matt Goodstadt, sales director at Civica, adds: "Ensure you are getting a like-for-like price comparison by checking it includes the same software modules.

"See if you can get a fixed price, this may be slightly more expensive but it is really low risk for you.

"And if a supplier is significantly cheaper than the others, ask yourself 'why?'. Is it trying to buy the business from you as a loss leader? If so, it is likely to try to skimp on the implementation."

Similarly, value is quantifiable. "Basing fleet software buying decisions on price could prove to be a false economy and focus should be on issues such as value added service delivery and product innovation," says Evans.



A good software system will monitor, control and reject erroneous expenditure and provide automated checks and balances to make sure that processes are operating as intended and within predefined parameters. It will not require someone to constantly intervene and run manual checks."

In addition to greater efficiencies and more robust processes, "quantify the savings and the potential costs of being legally non-compliant in areas such as licence checking, vehicle compliance and recording driver certificate of professional competence (CPC) details, automating time-consuming tasks such as road fund licence renewals and understanding costs, accidents and the like", says Evans.

vehicles at the company's network of workshops. The web-based, modular Key2 system enables Skanska to manage all activities in one place.

"The management information available is powerful and has enabled us to remove lots of spreadsheets," says Madoui.

"The ability to link data from different parts of the system enables us to make business critical decisions."



Julie Madoui (left) with Alison Moriarty at the 2016 Fleet News Awards

## SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Ashley Sowerby, managing director, Chevin Fleet Solutions



Organising your fleet can generate enormous amounts of information, such as equipment records, maintenance schedules, fuel receipts, accident reports or purchasing/leasing costs and other fleet-related invoicing.

Meanwhile, the amount of data becoming available to fleets continues to increase, in part due to new technology such as connected vehicles. Keeping track and making sense of all this information can be extremely difficult.

Fleet management software helps tackle this issue by storing all of your fleet information in one centralised database – and helping improve the oversight of costs, performance and processes involved in managing your operation.

Typically, this software can support aspects such as procurement, equipment allocation, driver management, fuel tracking, service and maintenance planning, regulatory compliance and disposal.

*"The most effective systems can be used to control almost any business scenario"*

### What to look for when choosing a system?

The most effective systems are hugely configurable and can be used to control almost any business scenario. The best approach is to work out what you would like to achieve.

Considerations might include:

- What challenges would you like to resolve?
- What are your cost and productivity goals?
- What reports and KPIs do you need?
- Who should be able to view this data?

### How can you sample the market?

Ask potential vendors to demonstrate their system based on your requirements and to provide case studies and references from existing customers.

Typically, suppliers will offer remote or on-site presentations but make sure they show you 'real and working' software. Consider the parts of the system that will be used daily. If it is difficult to use the system, workforce acceptance issues are likely.

Above all, be clear on requirements and how the system can meet them. If you have any questions

about choosing the right fleet management software, or would like to arrange a demonstration with Chevin, contact [sales@chevinfleet.com](mailto:sales@chevinfleet.com) or 01773 821992.





## MEET SUPPLIERS

Ongoing support is essential, whether by email, telephone or an online chat facility to ensure that day-to-day help is available, as well as answers to particular questions or problems.

Face-to-face is the best form of contact, says West-Oliver. "Visit the software supplier at its office, so you can see the operation and how it works, and speak directly with the people you will be dealing with on a day-to-day basis," he adds.

Nicholson says fleet managers should also speak to their counterparts at other organisations when considering new fleet management software.

"It is imperative buyers get the experience of other users by seeking testimonials from existing clients of suppliers they are looking at and speaking to fellow fleet managers," he says. "And test drive software with them because seeing a demonstration from a supplier is not necessarily going to show you the real-world experience.

"When people are looking at our current system, I will go into it with them and show them, warts and all. Software is an investment, so it is important to get it right."

Elford also recommends asking for access to a demonstration site, so potential buyers can do a trial run.

Fleet managers can check online for levels of client satisfaction and to read reviews. Awards suppliers have received and quality marks such

as ISO and IIP accreditation are other measures, as is associateship of the Freight Transport Association (FTA) or Fleet Operators Recognition Scheme (FORS).

Another area to look at is the software company's management and ownership structure. "Can the supplier cope if things change or key staff leave?" asks Goodstadt.

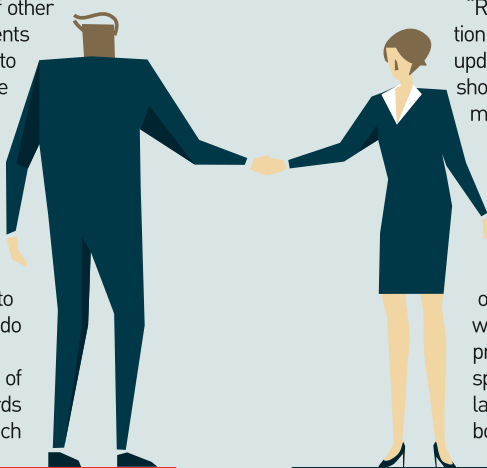
## LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP

Because fleet management software is a long-term project, a fleet manager's partnership with their provider should also have longevity. Cultural fit is important – if your company is dynamic and forward thinking, a progressive vendor is a must.

"Regular, easy and quick two-way communication with your software provider, with regular updates, are essential," says Sowerby. "This should extend from tendering, through implementation, delivery and beyond."

Staff training is also important, possibly with customer feedback available online.

Taking on fleet management software is no easy task and there are many angles to consider, but thorough preparation will stand fleet managers in good stead: work out what you want the software to do and why, write a specification and, after researching the providers most likely to meet that, allow the spec to inform your tender document. It may be labour intensive but it will also be rewarding, both for you and your supplier.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### Web-based or enabled?

- Is your system web-based or web-enabled?
- How do the speeds of the different systems compare?
- Which would suit your requirements more?

### Cost of investment

- How does the cost of the software break down?
- Are there any extra charges?
- How and when are payments made?
- Is hardware paid for upfront?

### Implementation process

- What happens during implementation phase?
- How long is it likely to take?
- Who be involved in implementation?
- Is there an implementation fee?

### Contract terms

- Am I locked into a contract?
- How long does it last?
- How do I terminate that contract early?

### Training

- What training is provided as standard?
- How long is the training likely to take?
- Does the training involve only the fleet manager, or every staff member who will use it?
- Training – in-house, remotely or even online?
- Will there be an additional cost for any further training after implementation

### Service support

- What happens if the system crashes?
- Is there a back-up server?

- Do you pay an additional/monthly fee for service support?

### Software updates

- How often will these updates be necessary?
- How often will it be necessary to build a whole new system?
- How are mini updates carried out – remotely or in-house?
- What will the updating process consist of?

### Security and data

- What security measures are in place?
- Who owns the data? Will it be lost if you change provider?
- Can system pull in data from other sources?
- What systems will it integrate with?





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It collects and delivers vehicles, has LCV capability in more than half its centres, and provides a single point of contact for account management and problem resolution.

A spokesman said: "We were delighted to see South East Coast Ambulance Service win its category and echo the judges' comments."

Green fleet of the year  
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**SOUTH EAST COAST AMBULANCE  
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# 'Telematics will change the culture of the organisation'

Seacamb has stripped a lot of cost from the fleet and improved efficiencies. Now its focus is on driver culture, says John Griffiths

By Christopher Smith

**T**he pressures of operating an emergency service around the clock are immense.

John Griffiths, head of fleet and logistics at South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (Secamb), is comparatively new to the organisation's fleet department, but he's no stranger to the demands placed on its vehicles, having previously been head of operational support, looking after areas such as driver training and standards.

He took over the fleet last summer from Justin Wand, who is now at London Ambulance Service. A trained paramedic, Griffiths spent the first few months taking stock, and is now ready to start applying what he has learnt from an operational viewpoint into fleet policy and direction.

The trust itself has seen several changes to process over the past decade, including the gradual conversion of ambulance stations into 'make-ready centres' – the first of which opened in Chertsey nine years ago.

**Fleet News: What benefits do make-ready centres have?**

**John Griffiths:** Each of the 12 make-ready centres has a vehicle workshop, so, if maintenance is needed, the vehicle

doesn't have to travel and face downtime. It comes in at the end of the shift, is cleaned, and given to an on-site technician for any issues. It increases the speed at which the vehicle can be repaired and reduces mileage.

It means these technicians feel a real part of the team and understand better the day-to-day operational pressures faced by the service. The perfect make-ready centre is one which the paramedics go to in the morning, the ambulances are there, the technicians are there and engineering and medical stores are all on site.

**FN: How else does this concept improve efficiency?**

**JG:** The paramedics come in, pick up their vehicle and go to a cover point in their local area. This is a point designed to be close to areas likely to face a 'red one' high priority call. It could be a shop, a fire station, or a community centre.

Historically, an ambulance station may not have been in the best location to serve incidents, and the new process means we can strategically position our team, and use the savings by closing the ambulance stations to reinvest in the make-ready centres.

It also improves the speed of response, and reduces our fleet mileage. Our crews are proactively in the right place,



Justin Wand, former head of fleet and logistics, South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, is presented with the award by Sam Harrison, head of fleet, Halfords Autocentres



Mike Bowron, South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, is presented with the award by Hannah Bishop, BMW i national corporate sales manager, BMW (UK)



## FACTFILE

Head of fleet and logistics John Griffiths  
Fleet and logistics team 100  
Fleet size 835 bluelight vehicles, 106 leased cars  
Makeready centres/workshops 12

John Griffiths has taken a little time to access fleet needs but now he is ready to put what he has learned into practice



close to the incident, and not having to travel out from the hub for each incident. Putting crews within four miles of a job instead of seven cuts the response time and removes three miles of travel. Our paramedics are so well trained and equipped now. An ambulance no longer just gets someone to hospital, it enables serious healthcare in the field.

### **FN: How are other new systems improving your fleet?**

**JG:** Three elements of our vehicle systems are being developed with three partners – Wilker, the converters; Ferno, which provides the integrated patient transport system (stretchers and racking); and Along Track Scanning Radiometers (ATSR) vehicle control systems, including telematics.

Instead of having cupboards in an ambulance we now have racking. This means you can bolt on and off medical components instead of stowing them inside a box that may, in the future, no longer be the right fit. The new stretcher system means we don't need tail-lifts, saving £5,000 per vehicle, and taking 250kg off the weight.

If all these systems were rolled out to every vehicle, we believe it will save £10 million over five years.

The patient transport developments are in progress – we have a couple of vehicles with all these systems which we're testing to ensure they are fit for purpose before a full roll-out.

### **FN: How does telematics work in a bluelight environment?**

**JG:** Every driver will log in with a swipe card, so we can track both the vehicle and the driver. We can work with our driver training team to help improve driving issues. Also our workshop teams can undertake preventative maintenance on vehicles showing heavy use.

We've been operating speed limiters on our vehicles, set at 62mph. As soon as the 999 button is pressed, those are removed and the vehicle is unrestricted.

The limiters have already shown fuel savings of £600,000 a year, which we can reinvest in the organisation as a whole.

When the telematics roll-out is complete (currently 75%), I would love to remove the limiters and allow education to lower speed, instead. That will change the culture and behaviour of the organisation.

We're soon to appoint a driver standards manager to work within the fleet team. The manager will analyse and interpret the data from telematics and work with our driver training team to act on the findings.

### **FN: Does your fleet use in-cab cameras?**

**JG:** We've fitted forward-facing cameras for around three

years on all new vehicles, and the drivers are really pleased. We've settled insurance claims quickly with the footage, and in several cases where our crews believed they were in the wrong, they were exonerated. It's reduced our insurance premiums and claim costs.

### **FN: What else have you done to reduce accident claims?**

**JG:** Our fleet covers 17 million miles a year, and we believe one of the easiest ways to reduce accidents is to reduce our mileage. We've sent managers on investigation courses to better understand the cause of accidents, and have been running a driver education programme.

Accidents have now reduced from one every 25,000 miles, to one every 35,000. That's significant for us.

Our demand is going up by thousands of jobs a year. If we can maintain the mileage, even though we're doing more jobs, that will help our efficiency.

### **FN: As green fleet of the year, are there any specific initiatives that you are proud of?**

**JG:** When our crew pulls in, the vehicle is sat with all the systems on, requiring a good auxiliary battery. If the vehicle is not moving and not plugged into a shoreline, it trashes the battery. We have to replace a number of these a year, meaning more downtime, so we're now introducing a small solar panel array to the vehicles to provide a trickle of power to them. It reduces pressure on the crews to plug in, massively reduces damaged shorelines, and provides green energy to charge the battery.

### **FN: Are there any projects on the horizon for you soon?**

**JG:** I want to look at replacement cycles of our fleet. At the moment, we have some vehicles up to 11 years old, and I want to bring that down. Introducing a gradual replacement cycle, where a vehicle is replaced every other week, instead of introducing a large batch at once which had historically been the case, is one of my priorities.

It's testament to our teams that these vehicles are still maintained exceptionally well, in good condition and performing frontline duties, but their replacements are due.

**D**espite the full telematics and patient stretcher system roll-out being already underway, it's likely the public sector body will face further financial pressures in coming years. Griffiths is keen to continue to innovate to ensure the fleet remains fit for purpose and within budget.

## Judges' comments

**FLEET OF THE YEAR - 251-1,000 VEHICLES**

“South East Coast Ambulance Service takes a refreshing new approach to fleet management with some ground-breaking initiatives. It operates at a high level of sophistication and its comprehensive strategy exceeds customer expectations, while achieving cost and environment savings at the same time. A clear winner.”

**GREEN FLEET OF THE YEAR**

“South East Coast Ambulance Service has introduced a range of initiatives that address every element of the fleet and its drivers. Innovative technology, such as dynamic speed control and monitoring of assets, reduces emissions while redesigned ambulances have reduced weight and removed tail-lifts, further improving efficiencies.”



# AUDI Q5

Mexico-built all-new Q5 faces tougher competition than its predecessor



## NEED TO KNOW

- All-new Q5 brings improved efficiency
- Higher specification and safety features
- Better comfort and refinement

By Simon Harris

**A**udi's new Q5 is set to have a tougher time than its predecessor which was launched back in 2008. Then the only other premium SUVs of equivalent size (in the UK, at least) were the BMW X3 and Volvo XC60.

The new model, which will arrive in the UK in spring 2017, will also be facing competition from the Mercedes-Benz GLC, the Lexus NX and Jaguar F-Pace, while a new X3 and XC60 are on the horizon.

Although it has come to dominate this premium SUV segment globally, the Audi needs to be particularly good to maintain its desirability and popularity here.

**132**  
g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
for the 2.0 TDI SE



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running-costs](http://fleetnews.co.uk/running-costs)

It shares a platform with the latest A4 and A5 range, which brings with it more efficient engines and new safety and connectivity technology. The Q5 has also slimmed down and, despite being slightly larger than its predecessor, it is up to 90kg lighter.

SE and Sport models come with xenon headlamps, while the S-Line has LED ones. All models are available with optional LED 'matrix' headlamps (which can adjust the main beam and avoid dazzling road users ahead) and 'dynamic' LED indicator lights.

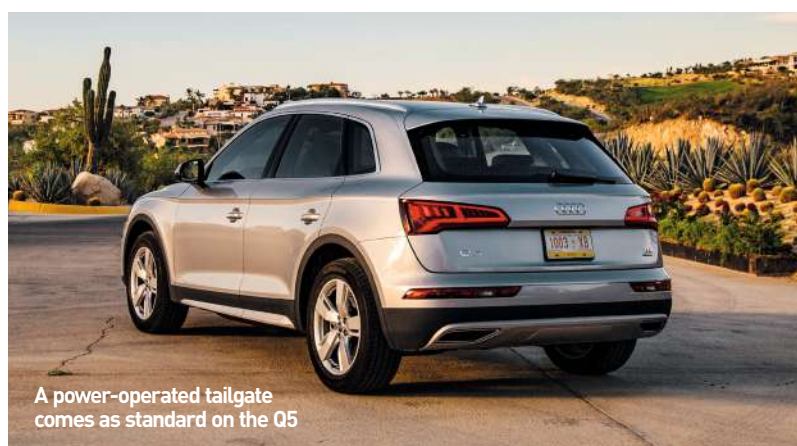
A power-operated tailgate is also standard, as well as Audi Drive Select (where the driver can choose different throttle, steering and – with optional adaptive suspension – ride settings), plus front and rear parking sensors. Sport and S-Line models come with sat-nav as standard.

Production of the new Q5 has been moved from Ingolstadt in Germany to a sophisticated new plant at San José Chiapa, making it Audi's first Mexican-built model. Even in the pre-production models we drove there, everything looks and feels better than before. That said, many might be hard pushed to identify it as all new.

There's a little more space inside, and the luggage compartment is also slightly larger. The rear bench is split into three, and customers can choose optional rear seat adjustment, including the base and seatback angle.

Audi's 'Virtual Cockpit' 12.3-inch configurable instrument display is an option. The car is also compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone systems, and can be specified with Audi 'phone box' which boosts network reception by using the car's antenna, and also has an inductive charging pad for suitable phones.

Driver assistance and safety systems (all optional) include predictive efficiency assistant, which pre-emptively the road ahead according to a selected route in the navigation and optimises fuel efficiency, adaptive cruise control and lane-keeping assistance. The latter two also combine in 'Traffic Jam Assist' to enable hands-free and feet-free travel in stop-start traffic.



A power-operated tailgate comes as standard on the Q5





Driver assistance and safety systems are available as options

*"Improved noise insulation leaves occupants feeling happily remote from the outside world"*

Rear cross traffic alert, exit warning system, collision avoidance and traffic sign recognition are also available to help avoid collisions and improve safety.

Initially available with the 190PS 2.0 TDI or 252PS (22PS more than before) 2.0 TFSI engines, the range will later be joined by a 286PS 3.0-litre V6 diesel. For ultimate pferdestärke (PS), it is likely that we'll see a high-performance SQ5 at some point in the model's lifecycle, but the bulk of sales, especially to businesses, will be the 2.0-litre diesel.

The cars we tried on the launch were fitted with optional adjustable air suspension (a first for the Q5), while it's also possible to choose adaptive damping with steel springs as an option. But Audi expects 96% of UK models to be fitted with standard suspension.

The effect of the car's reduced weight, and new chassis components, certainly make it feel nimble for an SUV, if perhaps lacking the slightly more connected feel of the Jaguar F-Pace. Improved noise insulation leaves occupants feeling happily remote from the outside world.

The seven-speed S-tronic automatic transmission is slick and a new on-demand quattro four-wheel drive system, which leaves the rear axle uncoupled when extra traction is not required, helps improve fuel efficiency. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions now start at 132g/km for 2.0 TDI SE and Sport models on standard wheels, with 133g/km for the S-Line.

Our test route included a 30-minute stretch of a sandy gravel track, which allowed the quattro system to be deployed full-time, giving no cause for concern about the responsiveness of the on-demand system. However, other manufacturers have been using four-wheel drive in this way for quite some time.

The Q5 is a remarkable improvement over its predecessor, and comfortably bests most of its rivals in terms of ability. Perhaps its main challenge, like many Audis, is not appearing sufficiently 'new' alongside the likes of desirable recent rivals, such as the F-Pace and GLC.

## COSTS

P11D price	£40,035
BIK tax band (2016/17)	26%
Annual BIK tax (40%)	£4,164
Class 1A NIC	£1,436
Annual VED	£130
RV (4yr/80k)	£15,075/38%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.86
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	47.34ppm

## SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	190/400
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	133
Top speed (mph)	55.4
0-62mph (sec)	7.9
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	135

## KEY RIVAL

Jaguar F-Pace 2.0 D 180 R-Sport AWD auto	
P11D price:	£41,025
BIK tax band (2016/17)	27%
Annual BIK tax (40%)	£4,431
Class 1A NIC	£1,529
Annual VED	£130
RV (4yr/80k)	£16,525/40%
Fuel cost (ppm)	10.1
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	47.08ppm

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

# THINKING CAP



By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

**cap hpi**

Well ... 2016 came and went, and the years continue to pass quickly.

But no real traumas last year, all went smoothly. We saw many pre-registered cars for sale, but this is not new, it has been going on for as long as I've been in the industry.

I can remember starting my first job selling cars in 1971 on a Monday. On the Wednesday my boss sent me on to the tax office (no online stuff back then) to register four brand new unsold Minis. We had been told by the factory to tax them to get some bonus money.

I think there will be more upset in the industry in 2017 than there was in 2016.

*"The (VED) scheme, in my humble opinion, will be a mess"*

Come April we will have the 'pleasure' of the new vehicle excise duty (VED) system which disadvantages lower CO<sub>2</sub> cars where the annual duty rises dramatically. Cars more than £40,000 have a huge penalty to pay, and the scheme, in my humble opinion, will be a mess.

I can only imagine the 'discussions' that went on between interested Government bodies. I'm sure there were some heated debates. But the Treasury, as always, won.

I predict March registrations will be the highest in memory and April, quite simply, the worst. It will be a case of whether manufacturers will be able to get enough cars in March to supply the predicted rush. Leasing and contract hire companies need to adjust their rates in anticipation of extra monthly costs... it is going to get messy.

In September, we will have a new vehicle testing system for new cars and vans called worldwide harmonized light vehicles test procedures (WLTP) replacing the current NEDC. WLTP findings are more realistic, but will inevitably put CO<sub>2</sub> figures up and reduce mpg. No doubt the Treasury will again want a piece of these new numbers in the form of benefit-in-kind tax. More on WLTP as the year progresses.

## Advertisement feature



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MONEY**

# Fines management goes digital

Process that can last months will be handled within days using this system

**T**he fleet industry is developing at a fast pace, integrating new technologies into its processes in a bid to work smarter. For example, the futuristic concept of telematics and connected cars have been embraced and are now a reality. Being able to receive real time notifications directly from the vehicle on its health to prevent roadside breakdowns *before* they happen is extremely advanced and has endless potential for the industry.

So, considering the fleet world is benefiting from such high-tech solutions, why is one of the most basic and most frequently used functions – fines processing – still reliant on a massive paper trail that results in a hugely time-consuming and expensive administration process?


There are approximately 2.9 million fleet fines processed across 31 traffic offences per year, which equates to a huge amount of time, paper and money being used each time; often meaning that a fine's lifecycle can last for months.

Currently, a fine begins life digitally as an image on a screen which, ironically, then gets printed and turned into a lengthy paper trail. This system is archaic, open to human error and is often a long and arduous process that requires data to be inputted numerous times by each stakeholder, wasting valuable resources.

A huge amount is spent each year by both fine issuers and fleet companies on the postage, paper and ink that is required to maintain this manual system which not only hits the company purse but also the environment.

All Fleet Services is revolutionising the fines administration system and launching it into the 21st century with the introduction of Fleet Fine Online – a secure online system that has been developed with fleet companies in mind.

Fleet Fine Online is a digital platform



“There is a real demand for an online fines management solution. It simply makes sense”

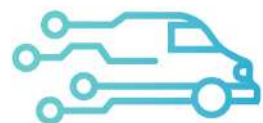
that streamlines communication between issuing authorities and fleet companies, making the process much more efficient. Fines can be processed from start to finish digitally, reducing the lifecycle of a fine to 72 hours maximum and avoiding escalation charges.

Dave Scobie, managing director at All Fleet Services, said: “Our 14 years in the industry highlighted that there is a real demand for an online fines management solution. It simply makes sense. In a world where almost everything is processed and paid for online, Fleet Fine Online transforms another painful, paper-led process into a slick and smarter way of working that has the added benefit of saving money and the environment.”

No matter how big the fleet, the Fleet Fine Online service is flexible and scalable. When a driver incurs a fine, the issuing authority will transmit the relevant details onto the online portal and fleet companies will get a notification. Whether the fleet wishes to pay or transfer the fine to the driver, the communication with the issuing

authority is all handled digitally, ensuring the fine is resolved in a matter of hours.

Fleet Fine Online is the first launch of many digital products connecting the industry for All Fleet Services with future instalments of this theme set to be released over the next 12-18 months; supporting the companies change in focus from being a people business that provides technology based solutions, to a technology business providing people solutions to support the digital transformation.



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# SEAT LEON

Withdrawal of low CO<sub>2</sub> Ecomotive diesel model makes petrol an appealing option



Numerous safety features are now available as options on the Seat Leon

## NEED TO KNOW

- New trim level targets those who desire comfort
- BIK on petrol version is £174 lower than diesel
- SE petrol achieves 64.2mpg; SE diesel hits 67.3mpg

By Christopher Smith

**Y**ou might have to look quite closely to spot the changes Seat has made to its best-selling model, the Leon. Look hard enough, though, and you'll find the Spanish manufacturer has made good use of the Volkswagen Group parts bin to bring the car up-to-date, and rectify some of the notable omissions to its interior specification.

The range is broadly similar, although the brand has added a new trim level to cater for those wanting more comfort than sport. Trims available include SE Technology, SE Dynamic Technology (which adds larger wheels), FR (the sporty edition) and the new Xcellence level, which was introduced earlier in the year on the Ateca. This trim adds new alloys with higher profile tyres, part leather seating and a suspension set up for comfort and ride quality.

Standard fit technology now includes an electronic handbrake and a larger, eight-inch touchscreen. The touchscreen is high resolution but the omission of buttons either side means drivers will take their eyes off the road for longer.

A change in location of cupholders thanks to the removal of the handbrake increases handy cubbyholes, but puts bottles squarely in the way of gear changes.

The rest of the interior, bar some different fabrics on the seats, remains unchanged.

Buyers can now also option keyless start, blind-spot assist, traffic sign recognition, park assist, and pedestrian protection, as well as traffic jam assist on DSG models.

At some point next year, a digital dashboard, as seen on some Audis and Volkswagens, will be available as an option.

But, while the technology has been improved, there have

## COSTS

<b>P11D price</b>	£19,040
<b>BIK tax band (2016/17)</b>	17%
<b>Annual BIK tax (20%)</b>	£647/£1,295
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£447
<b>Annual VED</b>	£0 then £20
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	£4,350/23%
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	8.26
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	11
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	29.19ppm

## SPEC

<b>Power (PS)/torque (Nm)</b>	115/200
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)</b>	102
<b>Top speed (mph)</b>	123
<b>0-62mph (sec)</b>	9.6
<b>Fuel efficiency (mpg)</b>	64.2

## KEY RIVAL

<b>Vauxhall Astra 1.0 105 Turbo Tech Line</b>	
<b>P11D price:</b>	£17,260
<b>BIK tax band (2016/17)</b>	16%
<b>Annual BIK tax (20%)</b>	£552/£1105
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£381
<b>Annual VED</b>	£0 then £0
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	£4,075/23%
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	7.89
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	11
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	26.77ppm

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



Not too many changes to the interior apart from the switch to an electronic handbrake

been some curious changes to the engine line-up in SE trims, where the bulk of fleet drivers are likely to sit.

The 94g/km 1.6-litre Ecomotive diesel is no longer available, so the lowest emitting vehicle in the range is now the 102g/km 1.0-litre three-cylinder Ecomotive petrol. From a driver's perspective, the 1.0-litre 110PS petrol-powered Leon isn't a bad option. It is quiet and offers ample power, and, unlike the new 107g/km 115PS 1.6-litre base diesel, offers a six-speed transmission, making motorway driving easier. Both these engines are only available on the SE.

It achieves 64.2mpg, with the diesel offering only slightly more at 67.3mpg.

Benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax on the petrol is £174 lower than the diesel per year for a 20% taxpayer, and the expected cost-per-mile difference is just 0.02p per mile.

To drive, the Leon is as good as it was before the facelift – handling well in the twisty mountains around Barcelona, with smooth gear changes and a comfortable, if basic, seating position.

Visibility is good, and all essential controls are to hand.

The diesel remains a good choice, but the figures mean there is more incentive to at least consider a petrol version.

# SUZUKI IGNIS

Carmaker hopes to create a new niche in the marketplace with distinctive model



Suzuki says the Ignis is for business people who want their transport to stand out

## NEED TO KNOW

- High versatility with three grades available
- Stand-out styling and roominess
- Aggressive pricing starts at £9,999 for basic model

By Maurice Glover

**B**usiness drivers are expected to welcome the chance to try something different in company transport when a unique small Japanese car model goes on sale in Britain next year.

The first compact crossover to be offered with the choice of two- or four-wheel drive, a hybrid powertrain, full personalisation packaging and affordable pricing will set a fresh benchmark in A-segment motoring, Suzuki believes.

"Fade away Fiat 500, move over Mini, there's a new car category in town. What we have here is funky, iconic, retro cool and technically advanced – our new Ignis is so distinctive and different that it has all the ingredients to make it a must-have, storming success. I'm convinced it will create a new niche in the marketplace," said Suzuki GB sales and marketing director Dale Wyatt.

"This is a model that should appeal to people who want their business transport to stand out and I think it will be as much a hit with midwives as it will be with estate agents and driving schools."

Speaking at the media launch in Italy, he added: "I don't think I've ever been so enthusiastic about a new model launch. I believe we're on the verge of achieving a repeat of what Nissan managed to do with the Qashqai and then the Juke – this is a little icon that will be in demand from customers of our competitors."

With surprising roominess in sharply-styled bodywork stretching to just 3.7 metres long, the Ignis reaches the showrooms in January and is expected to play a key role in boosting Suzuki's registrations tally of 38,000 units this year to 45,000 in 2017.

## COSTS

P11D price	£11,444
BIK tax band (2016/17)	17%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£389
Class 1A NIC	£268
Annual VED 0 then	£20?
RV (4yr/80k)	n/a
Fuel cost (ppm)	n/a
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	n/a

## SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	90/120
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	104
Top speed (mph)	106
0-62mph (sec)	13.5
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	61.4

## KEY RIVAL

Fiat Panda 0.9 Lounge	
P11D price:	£11,440
BIK tax band (2016/17)	16
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£336
Class 1A NIC	£253
Annual VED	£20
RV (4yr/80k)	£2,175
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.88
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	23.17ppm

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



Slick five-speed gearbox helps the Ignis to punch above its weight

"My conservative estimate for the first 12 months is 6,000 sales but because the car is so different, the total could well go to 10,000 and the good thing for us is that these will mostly be conquests. This is not a 25-plus fleet car, but it will still help us achieve 10,000 fleet sales next year. A substantial number will go to small businesses and utilities and it will be perfect for people in rural communities who need all-drive capability," Wyatt told *Fleet News*.

Keenly priced from £9,999, the Ignis is available in three grades as well as mild hybrid or all-drive form along with extensive paint finish and trim options for personalisation. With air conditioning, DAB radio, Bluetooth, sat-nav, a rear-view camera, 16-inch alloy wheels and roof rails all fitted as standard, the mid-range front-drive SZ-T is expected to be the most popular fleet choice. Also equipped with sliding rear seats, this version adds further carrying flexibility to a platform that holds between 514 litres and 1,100 litres of cargo.

With a lively demeanour, supple suspension and a slick five-speed gearbox, the Ignis has a size-bigger personality and punches above its weight in comfort and driving ability for a vehicle tipping the scales at just 855kg.



# GRAND C4 PICASSO

Mid-life facelift improves the look of this proven MPV winner



The Picasso now offers a more contemporary look in addition to its super spaciousness

## NEED TO KNOW

- Boot size up to 2,181 litres (165 when all seats used)
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 106 g/km and 111 g/km
- 17-inch alloys and 12-inch displays are standard

By Stephen Briers

**T**he Grand C4 Picasso has long been the benchmark against which other full-size people carriers must be measured. Twice a *Fleet News* Awards winner in the past three years, the car's spaciousness, innovative seating system and comfort have singled it out for recognition in a fiercely competitive market.

A mid-life facelift for both seven- and five-seat models has subtly, yet noticeably, improved its looks. Never the most attractive of MPVs, the GC4 and C4 Picassos now have fresher lines, updated lighting and bold chevrons for a more contemporary appearance.

Its main job – indeed its *raison d'être* – is to accommodate people and their luggage. Here it is faultless: seven comfortable seats with sufficient legroom even for adults in the rearmost, with flexible seating which enables boot space to be increased to 2,181 litres on the Grand C4 thanks to tilt-and-slide seats. Even with all seven seats in use, you get a serviceable 165 litres.

Functional as a mobile office or for family catering needs, the front passenger seats can be folded into a table – or completely flattened for long loads.



Even with seven seats in use there is good storage space

*"Picasso cars are excellent options for those requiring greater space without sacrificing driving enjoyment"*

Meanwhile, the C4 Picasso maxes out at an equally impressive 1,851 litres, or 793 litres with seats up.

The mid-trim Feel specification includes massage function on both front seats for those requiring the ultimate in relaxation (as long as it's not a distraction), while the middle seats are all full size and separate with adjustable recline.

Equipment levels are high, with 17-inch alloys, leather steering wheel, auto lights/wipers, cornering lights and 12-inch display all standard.

Our test GC4 was the 1.6-litre Blue HDi 120 diesel (£24,450), which claims up to 70.6mpg combined and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 106g/km. We averaged 58mpg over the week.

For the C4 Picasso, we opted for the 1.2-litre Puretech 130 petrol (£25,245 in range-topping Flair trim). With six-speed auto transmission, it returns up to 55.4mpg with emissions of 111g/km. We achieved 39.1mpg.

Both cars offered an excellent driving experience, with precise handling and minimal body roll, belying their size. The diesel was perky and refined, while the petrol had smooth power delivered with a slick auto gearbox selected via an American-style gearshift on the steering block.

One negative was the push button ignition. Unlike some cars, a brief push is not sufficient to either start up or stop the ignition. The button has to be pushed and held for several seconds.

On occasion with the quieter petrol version, we opened the door to exit and realised the engine was still running.

We were also surprised by a patchy signal from the digital radio in areas where the strength is usually good.

Niggles aside, both seven- and five-seat Picasso cars are excellent options for those requiring greater space without sacrificing driving enjoyment, wrapped up in a cost-efficient package.

## THE RIVALS

- Ford Grand C-Max 1.5 TDCi 120 Titanium Nav
- Renault Grand Scenic 1.5 dCi 110 Dynamique Nav
- Volkswagen Touran 1.6 TDI 115 S

## P11D PRICE

Touran	£24,340
Grand C4 Picasso	£24,450
Grand C-Max	£24,640
Grand Scenic	£25,690

## BIK TAX AND CO<sub>2</sub>

Touran 1	19g/km/23%
Grand Scenic	104g/km/20%
Grand C4 Picasso	106g/km/21%
Grand C-Max	113g/km/22%

## FUEL COSTS

Grand Scenic	7.49ppm
Grand C4 Picasso	7.64ppm
Grand C-Max	8.23ppm
Touran	8.80ppm

## DEPRECIATION

Touran	23.39ppm
Grand C-Max	23.89ppm
Grand C4 Picasso	24.61ppm
Grand Scenic	25.18ppm

## SMR

Grand C4 Picasso	3.80ppm
Touran	3.86ppm
Grand C-Max	4.21ppm
Grand Scenic	4.32ppm

## RUNNING COSTS

Grand C4 Picasso	36.05ppm/£28,840
Touran	36.05ppm/£28,840
Grand C-Max	36.33ppm/£29,064
Grand Scenic	36.99ppm/£29,592

## VERDICT

The Picasso and Touran are neck-and-neck on costs (although the former's RV looks low) but the Citroën just edges it for seven-seat functionality and comfort.

**Winner: Citroën Grand C4 Picasso**

Running cost: KeeResources (4yr/80k)

# SUBARU XV

When the going gets tough, the XV gets going



The all-wheel drive Subaru XV is brand's version of a crossover

## NEED TO KNOW

- Test model is listed at £23,795
- Luggage space is 380 litres
- Top-mounted display shows direction of the wheels

By Christopher Smith

Crossovers are everywhere. Many hold the Nissan Qashqai responsible for the rapid rise of the raised-height family hatchbacks that have become so popular.

They may look like 4x4s or off-landers, but the majority are two-wheel drive. Not the Subaru XV, though, where all vehicles are all-wheel drive.

The XV is the manufacturer's version of a crossover. It's smaller than the rest of the Subaru range, yet manages to retain most of the off-road ability of its siblings.

The XV is unlikely to make it onto many shortlists – with 141g/km CO<sub>2</sub> and a list price of £23,795 as tested here – but the car has a niche appeal for those looking to tackle slightly tougher terrain.

Our test took in a challenging outdoor course, wading through streams and mud, down steep drops and up the other side.

It coped with far more on the boggy half hour test route



Luggage space is slightly less than that of a close rival

*"Our test took in a challenging outdoor course, wading through streams and mud, down steep drops and up the other side"*

than most drivers will throw at it during a four-year operating cycle – rural and isolated drivers may well find the reassurance the vehicle offers its key selling point.

The car makes use of Subaru's 'boxer' engine, that sits low and wide in the bonnet of the vehicle. It's not the quietest on road, but it performs well enough, and delivers the power needed in an off-road environment.

The interior could perhaps be described as utilitarian, with few soft touch plastics, but it's impressively well put together and all the materials are high quality.

The large infotainment touchscreen is high resolution and easy to read alongside a pleasing number of hot key buttons and tactile heating controls.

When off-roading, a handy top-mounted display shows the direction of the wheels, and the power output being sent to each. When faced with large amounts of mud, it's invaluable in getting back on track and staying in control of the vehicle.

Interior space for passengers is good, both in the front and back, though luggage space at 380 litres is a little less than the Škoda Yeti, at 416 litres.

The 4WD version of that car is perhaps the XV's closest rival – both are 2.0-litre diesels with similar economy, cost and CO<sub>2</sub>.

The XV about costs 2ppm more than the Yeti to run, but is slightly more powerful, with 147PS against 110PS. It will cost a 20% taxpayer £92 per year more than the Yeti in benefit-in-kind (BIK) charges.

So it may be a little more expensive, and not entirely refined, but drivers may appreciate being behind the wheel of something a little different and quirky, and the comfort of knowing they will get home at the end of the day.

## THE RIVALS

- Škoda Yeti Outdoor 4WD 2.0 TDI 110 SE Drive
- Kia Sportage AWD 2.0 CRDi 134 KX-2
- Ford Kuga 4WD 2.0 TDCi 150 Zetec Nav

## P11D PRICE

Yeti	£22,985
XV	£23,795
Sportage	£24,365
Kuga	£25,755

## BIK TAX AND CO<sub>2</sub>

Kuga	135g/km / 27%
Yeti	137g/km / 27%
Sportage	139g/km / 27%
XV	141g/km / 28%

## FUEL COSTS

Kuga	9.74ppm
Sportage	9.74ppm
XV	10.11ppm
Yeti	10.19ppm

## DEPRECIATION

Sportage	20.43ppm	£16,340
Yeti	21.64ppm	£17,310
XV	22.18ppm	£17,745
Kuga	22.60ppm	£18,080

## SMR

Yeti	4.06ppm
Sportage	4.10ppm
XV	4.90ppm
Kuga	4.93ppm

## RUNNING COSTS

Sportage	34.27ppm
Yeti	35.89ppm
XV	37.19ppm
Kuga	37.27ppm

## VERDICT

The Sportage is the cheapest to run, but may not be the go-to choice for those looking for hardy off-road ability. The Yeti is perhaps the obvious choice, but for really difficult terrains, the XV has merit.

**Winner: Škoda Yeti**

Running cost: KeeResources (4yr/80k)





Sharp exterior and good choice of engines

## SEAT ATECA

SE NAV 1.6 TDI ECOMOTIVE

Keen price, good ride and strong RV in Ateca's favour

### COSTS

P11D price	£22,905
BIK tax band	22%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,008
Class 1A NIC	£695
Annual VED	£0 then £30
RV (4yr/80k)	£6,975/30%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.05
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (ppm)	31.61ppm

### SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,598
Power (PS)	115
Torque (Nm)	250
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	113
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	65.7
Max speed (mph)	114
0-62mph (sec)	11.5
Test mpg	51.2
Current mileage	4,776

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

By Gareth Roberts

**S**eat may be late to the SUV party, but thanks to the Ateca's keen pricing it looks set to make an impression with the fleet sector.

There is a choice of five engine options, ranging from a 2.0-litre diesel with 190PS, to a 1.0-litre turbo-charged petrol with 115PS and a P11D price of £17,935.

That's even more impressive when you consider that underneath its sharp exterior is, essentially, the much pricier Volkswagen Tiguan.

No surprise then that the Ateca has become the best performing Seat model in its history for a residual value (RV) forecast from pricing experts Cap HPI. The 1.0 TSI S, for example, is set to retain an impressive 59% after three years/30,000 miles, while our version on test – the 1.6 TDi Ecomotive – offers a 30% return after four years/80,000 miles.

The 1.6-litre variant will give fleets flexibility for a mix of town and motorway miles. But, after travelling up and down the M6 ahead of

Christmas, the 115PS and 250Nm available underneath my right foot left me a little underwhelmed, and wondering whether the 2.0-litre variant would be the better choice.

Fuel economy on our test version shows a 22% shortfall against the claimed combined (51.2mpg versus 65.7mpg), some of which will be down to trying to squeeze a bit more power out of the 1.6-litre diesel engine.

A lighter right foot would certainly achieve a better return or, again, the 2.0-litre diesel variant could offer the better balance in terms of power and economy.

What has really impressed, however, is the ride and handling of the Ateca. Body roll when cornering is minimal thanks to Seat getting just about the right level of firmness with the SUV's suspension.

The steering is precise and the car feels quite agile despite its size, making the Ateca a lot of fun to drive. With emissions starting from 113g/km, it is another reason for company car drivers, and fleets, to consider the Ateca above some of its rivals.

## MINI CLUBMAN COOPER 2.0D 150



Our Mini Clubman has a feature called 'Easy

Opener' which allows you to open the rear doors by waving your foot below the bumper.

This sounds great, and the first time I tried it, loaded down with bags, I was impressed. After the lights flashed, the doors opened, one at a time, leaving me free to load up.

However, on another occasion it failed to respond to my foot waving, causing a few odd looks from colleagues standing nearby.

The keyless entry for the driver's door is more reliable. Our last Mini long-term didn't have this and I've been reminded how useful it is.

I've also tried out the 'eco' driving mode, which is one of three available (the others are 'mid' and 'sport'), and found it made a difference of 1mpg on a 65-mile trip. I didn't stick rigidly to the eco tips on the dash, which suggested I drop my speed to 50mph rather than 70mph on the motorway.

Sarah Tooze

## FORD FOCUS 1.5 TDCI TITANIUM



Our Ford Focus long-term was given the chance

to stretch its legs with a 650-mile round trip to Ireland for a weekend with family.

Loaded up with my parents and gifts, the hatchback proved to be an ideal companion for the journey from my point of view: it was quiet, comfortable and efficient, reporting an average fuel economy of 60.1mpg.

The 120PS 1.5 TDCi engine produces plenty of power too, while the safety equipment fitted helped make the journey hassle-free.

However, my rear seat passenger was less impressed, saying that it felt cramped there. As a result, I tried the rear seats out and, having recently ridden in the back of a Vauxhall Astra, found it to be less spacious than its key fleet rival.

The Focus suffers in the cargo carrying stakes, too. We didn't take any particularly large presents with us, but it was a squeeze to fit both them and our luggage into the boot.

Andrew Ryan



## AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET

### Renault Kadjar 1.5 DCI 110 S Nav

- + Strong road presence
- Horn too quiet.



### Vauxhall Astra 1.0 Elite Nav

- + Just discovered heated seats in the back
- Broke down completely. AA had to be called.



### Mazda CX-3 1.5D SE-L Nav

- + Good looks
- Only achieving an average of 49mpg



# SIMON JACKSON

MANAGING DIRECTOR, VEHICLE QUALITY SOLUTIONS LTD

In his youth Jackson wanted to raise the roof and be a thatcher but he ended up in fleet and is quite contented. When he feels the need for speed a kit car is rolled out to set his pulse racing

**My earliest memory associated with a car was sitting between my grandparents on the front bench seat of their Vauxhall Viva. Great days! And the Viva brand has even made a comeback recently which is amazing to see.**

**The three cars I'd like most in my garage are a classic Mini Cooper S to recapture my youth, an AC Cobra for weekend cruising and an Audi RS6 for motorway mile munching.**

**If I was Prime Minister for the day I would make a much fairer taxation system to ensure all companies contribute regardless of turnover and company size.**

**The most pivotal moment in my life was getting married and having children. It certainly gives your life some perspective and focus.**

**I'd like to be remembered quite simply as a good husband and dad.**

**Away from the office I enjoy fast cars and I currently have a V8 Dax Rush kit car for blasts on warm sunny days. Most of the winter months are then spent maintaining it.**

**I'd tell my 18-year-old self to do what I did. Work hard and enjoy watching your family grow up. And make the most of it while you can as the time soon goes.**

**What book would you recommend others read? I've never been a great reader of books, usually just when relaxing on the beach, for which any thriller will do.**

**My favourite film is *The Shawshank Redemption*. The plot and acting are great.**

**My pet hate is mess. There is no excuse for untidiness.**



**First fleet role** I was a vehicle inspector for GE Capital. It gave me an excellent experience and understanding of high volume vehicle defleet processes.

**What makes me stay in fleet** It's a constantly evolving industry with the majority of customers having a varied requirement. This results in having to continually adapt our business and service offering to stay at the forefront of our specialist area.

**Career goals at VQS** We are the largest provider of independent inspection services to the major motor manufacturers and fleets in the UK. Our aim is to expand our field team to provide lease end inspections to the same scale.

**Biggest achievement in business** In 2015 we completed in excess of 250,000 vehicle inspections for the year. Quite an achievement in just our 14th year, which includes major contracts with the likes of FCA and Vauxhall.

**Biggest career influence** My current employer, David Thomas. Over the past 14 years he has taught me that honesty, hard work and meeting the customers' expectations are key to running a successful company.

**Biggest mistake in business** Creating a new start-up in a niche market. We quickly learned that sub-contracting to specialist businesses was more efficient and profitable than managing and running your own.

**Leadership style** Assertive with a strong and committed direction, and to always listen and be prepared to adapt.

**If I wasn't in fleet** Hospitality. My wife has her own catering company and I enjoy helping her when I can.

**Childhood ambition** To be a thatcher. Not sure why, it seemed like a good idea at the time.

**Next issue:** Henry Williams, head of fleet, Škoda UK



# 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](http://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 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.





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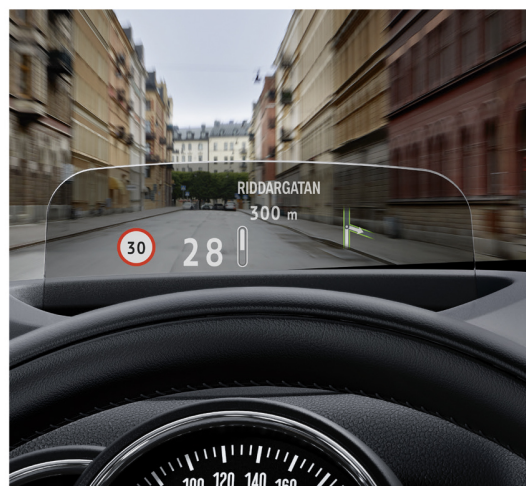
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