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News ACFO CALLS FOR **OFFICIAL AFR** FOR PLUG-IN HYBRIDS

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Fleet in focus: Interserve

THREE INTO ONE DOES GO

David King turned three ways of working into one – and saved millions of pounds

Insight: SMR

Car manufacturers' aftersales fleet service charters explained

Spotlight: Suzuki GB

Graeme Jenkins on why Suzuki wants your business

Awards: Swansway Group

How dealer takes 'total control of the customer experience'

LAND ROVER **DISCOVERY**

Upmarket SUV with big gains in efficiency

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REGULARS

CAR/VAN REVIEWS

Interserve group fleet director David King explains how he rolled three methods of managing fleet in one and saved millions

What service, maintenance and repair promises are manufacturers making to fleet managers and their drivers? And do they keep them?

Fringe player Suzuki is seeking to go mainstream in fleet – a big change from its position a decade ago. Graeme Jenkins explains why

Fleets are relying more heavily on suppliers according to delegates at the Fleets Informed roundtable. However, they voiced their support for in-house fleet managers

Call to publish AFRs for plug-in hybrids

Fleet body says official mileage rates from HMRC 'would encourage' drivers to switch to EV mode

By Gareth Robert

The problem of plug-in hybrids not delivering fuel savings could be solved if the Government published official mileage reimbursement rates. That's according to fleet representative body ACFO, which says company car drivers should be paid from 4 pence per mile (ppm) for pure electric vehicles (EVs) and 5ppm for plug-in hybrids.

The figures for 100% electric vehicles (EVs), range-extended EVs, and plug-in hybrid petrol and diesel models have been submitted after ACFO hosted a fleet industry summit.

The meeting included representatives of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), contract hire and leasing companies, motor manufacturers producing plug-in vehicles and fleet managers operating zero emissions and plug-in hybrid cars.

ACFO chairman John Pryor told *Fleet News:* "The fleet industry is awash with stories of company car drivers choosing plug-in hybrid vehicles in pursuit of lower benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bills, but not reaping fuel economy savings."

As a result, some contract hire and leasing companies report having plug-in hybrids returned, with fleets incurring early termination charges, due to poorer than anticipated mpg returns. However, Pryor said: "The reality is those cars were not being used in the way they were intended."

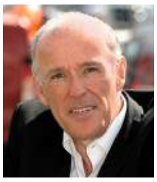
ACFO is calling on the Government to issue Advisory Fuel Rates (AFRs) for plug-in cars after providing HMRC with real-world mileage reimbursement figures.

HOW AFRs ARE APPLIED

AFRs apply where employers reimburse employees for business travel in their company cars, or require employees to repay the cost of fuel used for private travel. Published quarterly, they provide a range of rates based on engine size and fuel type (petrol, diesel or LPG), and, when used, are deemed to be tax-free.

"AFRs for plug-in cars are essential," explained Pryor. "The figures we have calculated deliver a simple pence per mile mechanism that is cost-effective for employers; they are seeing a benefit from the more efficient technology, while employees are being fairly reimbursed for business mileage based on the capabilities of the plug-in vehicle technology.

"ACFO would urge HMRC to take the data and calculations the summit has provided and publish AFRs for plug-in vehicles from the quarter beginning September 1, 2017."



"The figures we have calculated deliver a simple pence per mile mechanism that is cost-effective for employers"

John Pryor, ACFO

ACFO's calculations for plug-in cars follow a similar format to existing AFRs and account for the mean battery capacity from manufacturers' information, weighted by available models and average battery capacity (kWh). Electric mileage range, adjusted downwards by 15% to take account of real driving conditions and impact on manufacturers' stated range, also helps determine the rates, as does the average battery recharge cost.

It allows the plug-in rates to use the same AFR bandings based on engine capacity; they are simply adjusted for electric mileage range. The greater the zero-emission mileage range of a vehicle, the lower the reimbursement rate.

ACFO says it is vital that plug-in rates are published, particularly given from April 2020 company car BIK tax rates for ultra-low emission vehicles look set to be linked to a car's zero-emission mileage range (although this element was removed from the recent Finance Bill).

Pryor explained: "That development adds complexity to the current company car BIK tax system, but, without an incentive linked to how an ultra-low emission vehicle is used on the road, it will not prevent drivers using the combustion engine alone in a plug-in hybrid car.

"Plug-in hybrid vehicles are at their most efficient when driven for as many miles as possible on electric power. Therefore, publishing lower AFRs for plug-in cars will help to encourage drivers to use the car in the optimal environmentally-friendly way."

Without a reliable fuel cost figure it is also difficult for fleets to forecast a wholelife cost for EVs.

Alphabet, with more than 7,600 plug-in vehicles on its risk fleet, is keen to grow that figure further. David Bushnell, product manager mobility at Alphabet GB, said: "One of the key issues that industry bodies, leasing organisations and corporate customers have consistently demanded a resolution to over recent years is the lack of an AFR for electricity – also known as an 'e-rate'.

"It seems a complete anomaly that while HMRC publishes AFRs for petrol, diesel and LPG on a quarterly basis, the Government is still lagging behind in publishing an AFR for a fuel which we are increasingly being told is a social, environmental and economic priority."

Diesel remains the dominant powertrain in the corporate sector, accounting for 56% of fleet registrations at the end of Q1, while petrol accounted for 40% of the market. Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) meanwhile, were responsible for 4% of all fleet registrations – just 9,741 units out of a total fleet market of more than 260,000 cars.

The Mitsubishi Outlander plug-in hybrid is the most common plug-in hybrid car on the road. Analysis by the RAC Foundation of the latest Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data shows there were 25,447 Outlanders on the road at the end of 2016, significantly ahead of the pure-battery electric Nissan Leaf at 14,718 (fleetnews.co.uk, April 20). Third most popular was the Mercedes-Benz C350 e (5,890) which pushed the BMW i3 (5,858) down into fourth place. Fifth was the Renault Zoe (4,974).

There were 83,169 licensed plug-in car and van grant-eligible vehicles on the UK's roads at the end of last year – a 74% increase on 2015 (47,922).

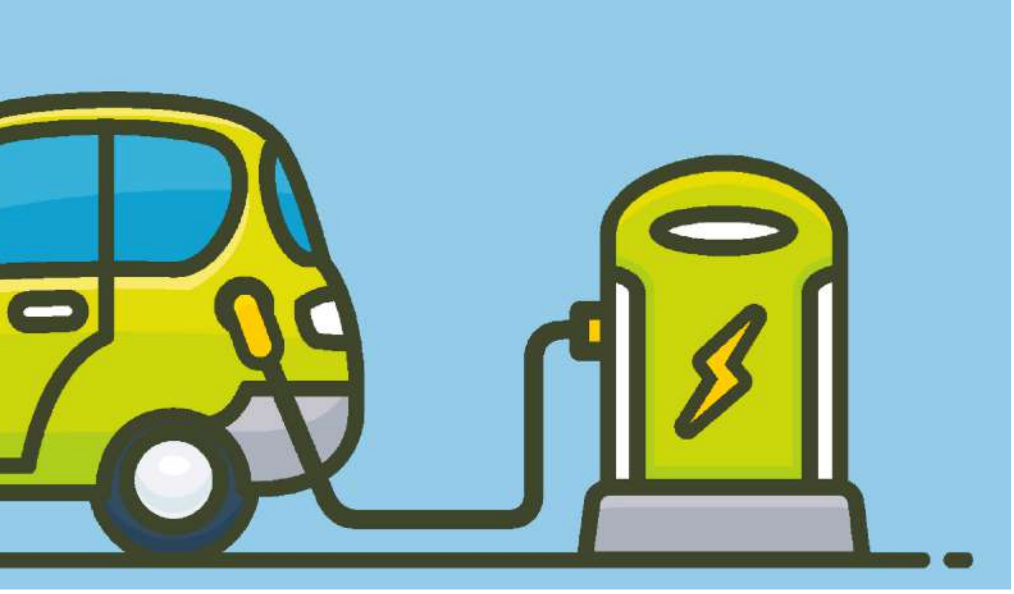
THE BENEFITS

Bushnell believes publishing an official 'e-rate' would be a simple and effective way to overcome some of the remaining objections to EVs in the corporate market and would incentivise plug-in hybrid electric vehicle drivers to do the right thing and actually 'plug in'.

"This has been an ongoing discussion topic for the fleet industry and HMRC for nearly five years," he said. "Now is the right time to take action for the benefit of UK businesses and our air quality."

ACFO also argues that a plug-in AFR would help drive adoption. In fact, it believes the absence of defined mileage reimbursement rates has been a handicap to some organisations including plug-in vehicles on their choice lists.

Pryor said: "ACFO acknowledges it is possible for businesses to calculate rates themselves and then obtain permission from HMRC to use them to reimburse drivers. However, it can be extremely time-consuming and difficult to obtain all the relevant data to undertake those calculations. Far better for HMRC to publish official figures as it does for petrol, diesel and LPG cars."



ACFO'S RECOMMENDED ADVISORY FUEL RATES

PLUG IN HYBRID (DIESEL)

Engine size	EV range (miles)	E-AFR (ppm)
Up to 1600cc	<30	9
Up to 1600cc	30-39	8
Up to 1600cc	40-69	7
Up to 1600cc	70-129	5
Up to 1600cc	>130	5
1601cc -2000cc	<30	10
1601cc -2000cc	30-39	9
1601cc -2000cc	40-69	8
1601cc -2000cc	70-129	6
1601cc -2000cc	>130	5
Over 2001cc	<30	12
Over 2001cc	30-39	11
Over 2001cc	40-69	9
Over 2001cc	70-129	6
Over 2001cc	>130	5

PLUG IN HYBRID (PETROL)

Engine size	EV range (miles)	E-AFR (ppm)
Up to 1400cc	<30	10
Up to 1400cc	30-39	9
Up to 1400cc	40-69	8
Up to 1400cc	70-129	6
Up to 1400cc	>130	5
1401cc -2000cc	<30	13
1401cc -2000cc	30-39	12
1401cc -2000cc	40-69	9
1401cc -2000cc	70-129	7
1401cc -2000cc	>130	5
Over 2001cc	<30	19
Over 2001cc	30-39	17
Over 2001cc	40-69	13
Over 2001cc	70-129	8
Over 2001cc	>130	6

The calculations for plug-in cars follow a similar format to existing Advisory Fuel Rates (AFRs). They take account of the mean battery capacity from manufacturers' information, weighted by available models and average battery capacity (kWh). Electric mileage range, adjusted downwards by 15% to take account of real driving conditions and impact on manufacturers' stated range, is also used to determine the rates, as is the average battery recharge cost.

PURE ELECTRIC

Battery capacity (kWh)	AFR (ppm)
Up to 40kWh	4
Over 40kWh	5

Range-extended EVs are calculated using above figures based on 90% of the EV range and 10% of the petrol/diesel mileage range using the appropriate AFR figure.

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) worked with ACFO in developing a methodology to calculate the plug-in rates. EST fleet advice manager Ian Featherstone, said: "AFRs are easy to use and ensure tax liabilities are not incurred and fleets need the same mechanism to fairly reimburse drivers for whichever ULEV technology is chosen.

"This coordinated call for AFRs for plug-in vehicles will help accelerate their mainstream use and, ultimately, the market penetration needed to meet our carbon and air quality ambitions."

Dale Eynon, head of group fleet services at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), agrees. "Plug-in vehicles are an increasingly important part of the company car fleet and provide a more environmentally-friendly alternative to standard petrol and diesel powered cars," he said.

"As we all look to see how we can best meet the operational needs of our business, at the lowest cost to our budget and the environment, the need to seek alternative powertrains such as plug-in hybrids becomes more important.

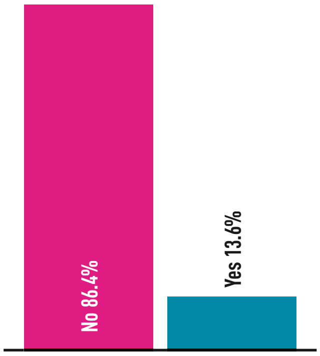
"Ensuring drivers are paid a mileage rate for business travel that is both transparent and fair, is vital to the successful deployments of such vehicles and the development of an agreed AFR will underpin this approach."

HMRC was unable to comment on the ACFO proposals due to the forthcoming general election.

FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

OPINION POLL

Do you think the road network is ready for self-driving cars?



FleetNews view:
The RAC Foundation has warned that potholes and poor road markings could hamper the development of self-driving cars, and the overwhelming majority of fleets agree. Almost nine out of 10 respondents to our poll believe the network isn't up to scratch. Our view is it is vitally important that the infrastructure matches the ambitions of manufacturers if autonomous vehicles are to be realised sooner rather than later.

This week's poll: Which political party do you think will best protect the interests of fleets?
fleetnews.co.uk/polls

MOST COMMENTED ONLINE

Nissan adopts Victorian-era technology to reduce smartphone distraction while driving

fleetnews.co.uk/news

UK AVERAGE FUEL PRICES

Diesel (ppl) 119.12↓
Unleaded (ppl) 117.63↓

fleetnews.co.uk/costs/fuel-cost-calculator

Expected tougher measures did not materialise in the Government's clean air consultation document

Local authorities urged to try to avoid charging for clean air zones

Diesel scrappage considered in technical report but isn't part of main plan

By Gareth Roberts

Motorists could still be charged to drive into the UK's most polluted towns and cities, but an expected diesel scrappage scheme is not central to Government plans.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), published its draft air quality plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide on Friday (May 5), after losing a High Court battle to delay its release until after the general election.

The introduction of so-called Clean Air Zones (CAZs) remains key but the Government says it would prefer local authorities not to charge motorists.

Many bodies saw charging as a key avenue of persuading drivers to ditch polluting vehicles.

"Given the potential impacts on individuals and businesses, when considering between equally effective alternatives to deliver compliance, the Government believes that if a local authority can identify measures other than charging zones that are at least as effective at reducing NO_2, those measures should be preferred," the report says. "This includes considering all equally effective alternatives to charging zones."

A proposed Clean Air Zone plan will only be approved by Government, and be considered for financial support, if it can show that it will enable nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels to reach legal compliance within the shortest time possible. It would also need to show that its impact on local residents and businesses had been assessed.

Previously, the Government had identified five cities – Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton – where CAZs would need to be introduced. It still expects these cities to have implemented schemes by 2019, with a view to achieving statutory NO_2 limits within "the shortest time possible", expected to be 2020.

"The Government seems to be passing the buck to local authorities rather than taking responsibility for this public health emergency"

James Thornton, Client Earth

However, a further 36 towns and cities, not including London, have been identified as failing to meet legal NO_2 limits by 2020 if no additional measures are introduced.

The draft said: "This evidence is subject to further analysis and Government discussions are continuing with the local authorities concerned to understand their specific local circumstances."

No mention of a diesel scrappage scheme is included in the actual air quality plan, but an accompanying technical report does consider it and views on its merits are being sought.

The technical report puts the cost of a scheme at £60 billion, based on scrapping all pre-Euro 6 diesel cars and vans in the UK in 2019 (eight million cars and two million vans, with grant levels of £6,000 and £6,500 respectively).

However, it also considers a smaller scheme open to drivers of diesel Euro 1-5 cars and drivers of petrol Euro 1-3 cars, with vehicles being replaced with pure electric vehicles (EVs).

The Government says that this could be tied in with the existing plug-in car grant scheme. The modelling assumes that 15,000 vehicles (9,000 diesel and 6,000 petrol vehicles) would be scrapped at a cost of £110m, with a grant of £8,000. The scheme would start in 2019 and be available for one year only. However, it says that it would take between 18-24 months before a scheme could be launched.

Many had expected the Government's air quality plan to include much tougher measures after the courts ruled its previous plan was "woefully inadequate".

However, apart from the potential for the number of mandated CAZs changing, Defra's new plan focuses on previous announcements, including updating Government Buying Standards for public sector fleets to take account of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and increasing the weight limit of plug-in vans that can be driven on a category B licence.

It also reiterated its intention to explore the appropriate tax treatment of diesel vehicles, with changes expected to be announced in the autumn budget.

Environmental law firm Client Earth, which forced the Government to re-think its approach to reducing NO2 for a second time in 18 months at the end of last year, accused the Government of "passing the buck".

Client Earth CEO James Thornton said: "The Government seems to be passing the buck to local authorities rather than taking responsibility for this public health emergency. It has also failed to commit to a diesel scrappage scheme and this is a crucial element of the range of measures needed to persuade motorists to move to cleaner vehicles."

The consultation will run until June 31, with the final plan due to be published by July 31.

■ **More response from the true fleet sector in fleetnews.co.uk**

No return to diesel for all-EV taxi firm with dozen Leafs on its books

Nissan car retained 70% of battery capacity after 174,000 breakdown-free miles

A trio of Leafs in C&C Taxis livery lined up outside its local Nissan dealer

By Tom Seymour

C&C Taxis is to continue with its all-electric vehicle strategy after successfully de-fleeting its first EV, a second-generation Nissan Leaf, after 174,000 miles with no breakdowns and "minimal" servicing costs.

The car was 7kw fast-charged 3,800 times and 3.3kw trickle-charged 7,000 times during its working life at the company's business in St Austell, Cornwall.

Mark Richards, C&C transport manager, was impressed that the Leaf retained 70% of its battery capacity after 174,000 miles and said that other than the maximum range, the performance of the vehicle is just as good as the day it was bought.

Richards has transitioned his entire 13-car taxi fleet from diesel to pure electric vehicle (EV) over the past four years and, while the fleet is small, it has become one of the most experienced at running EVs in the UK.

C&C has 12 Leafs and one e-NV200 seven-seater. It bought the EV it calls "Wizzy" outright in July 2013 after Richards was convinced to test drive one by reading a review in a magazine.

He said: "We're a small family-owned company and while some fleets have dabbled and will run one vehicle on a fleet of hundreds, we've fully committed to EVs as the future of our business. I can't imagine going back to diesels now."

C&C buys its EVs outright, a strategy Richards feels is justified by the fact that on average, "they become cost-neutral after two years and four months of ownership on fuel savings alone".

Wizzy had no breakdowns during its high-mileage four-year working life. Outside of scheduled annual services, the Leaf went through three sets of wipers, two sets of brake pads for the front and rear and one damper, as well as tyre replacements when necessary.

Richards said: "With an equivalent diesel taxi doing that sort of mileage you'd be looking at things like replacing a clutch and that sort of work can see the car out of the business for three days.

"For us, that length of downtime can hurt the business, but we haven't had that problem with the EVs. The service and maintenance savings are impressive."

C&C uses British Gas for its electricity on a business tariff and its depot has three 7kw DBT fast chargers and three DBT 3.3kw trickle chargers. Richards said that while managing charge points and electricity has been relatively simple to administer for the business, transitioning drivers from diesel to pure EV has not been an easy task.

All the EV taxis are tracked with a GPS system that the taxi controller keeps a close eye on to help drivers manage the number of jobs and the electric range available.

Some drivers will work in the morning, running the battery down to 20% or 30%, break for lunch and top up and then head out with 100% range for the evening. Other drivers will come back to base in their downtime to top up dependent on the flow of work on a particular day.

"There was a learning curve at the start but we are in a place where the controllers and the drivers are experienced with these vehicles and we have learned how far you can push them," explained Richards.

Drivers now prefer EVs, as they feel less fatigued after a day of driving due to the stress-free "silky smooth" nature of how they drive.

He believes the Leaf also stands up well as a used car prospect. He said: "I think we could go on indefinitely with Wizzy but we're in a position where new models are coming out with better ranges and we want nice fresh interiors and bodywork.

"I don't see why you couldn't continue to run a Leaf based on the reliability we have seen."

Richards said he is now looking to order the new 60kw Leaf with a 200-mile range which is expected to go on sale in September this year.

"They (EVs) become cost-neutral after two years and four months of ownership"

Mark Richards, C&C Taxis

Growth in van traffic outstrips all other types of vehicle on the road

Internet shopping and resultant home deliveries behind van volume increases

By Gareth Roberts

Van traffic grew more quickly than any other vehicle type, rising 4.7% from 2015 to 49.1 billion vehicle miles in 2016.

Overall, 323.7bn miles were driven on Great Britain's roads, a 2.2% increase from the previous year, according to figures released by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Car traffic grew by 2% from 2015 to 252.6bn vehicle miles – the highest annual car traffic estimate ever – and lorry traffic showed little change, having grown steadily for the previous three years.

RAC roads policy spokesman Nick Lyes said: "These figures underline the importance of having a road network that is truly fit for purpose – and a reminder to whoever forms the next Government that investment must be sustained to support further economic growth, and to provide roads that deliver safe, reliable journeys for every UK motorist."

Since the 1980s, cars have accounted for around four-fifths of all motor vehicle traffic and continue to be the main contributor to traffic changes.

"These figures underline the importance of having a road network that is truly fit for purpose"

Nick Lyes, RAC

However, vans have grown in importance, accounting for 15% of all motor vehicle traffic in 2016. In fact, there has been a 71% increase in van miles since 1996, while the number of licensed vans has risen by 74% over the same period.

Over the past 20 years, trends in van traffic have followed changes in the economy closely. As businesses were established or expanded, the van fleet grew at the same rate. But, when gross domestic product (GDP) resumed growth after the recent recession, van traffic grew even faster than GDP between 2012 and 2016.

This additional growth can be linked to a shift in the way consumers and businesses operate, including a growth in internet shopping and home deliveries.

Around £133bn was spent online with UK retailers in 2016, £18bn or 16% higher than in the previous year, according to IMRG and Capgemini.

The DfT also suggests that fewer regulations on driver training, driver's hours and roadworthiness testing for vans compared to trucks make it easier to find drivers for vans. This may encourage businesses to substitute vans for small lorries, it says.

In 2016, lorries travelled 16.6bn vehicle miles. Overall, lorry traffic remained broadly stable between 2015 and 2016 (-0.2% fall), after having risen by more than 7% between 2012 and 2015. However, the stable overall figure comprised a small rise in lorry traffic on motorways and rural 'A' roads, alongside decreases on other road types. This continues a general trend of higher growth rates on motorways and rural 'A' roads seen over the past 20 years. The 2016 figure of 7.7bn vehicle miles on motorways equals the previous high seen in 2007 and, together, motorways and rural 'A' roads carry 82% of lorry traffic.

Rural minor roads saw the largest proportional increase in van traffic (10.3%) followed by motorways (5.3%). Motorways and rural 'A' roads carried around half of all van traffic in 2016.

Meanwhile, car traffic increased on all road types between 2015 and 2016, reaching new highs on motorways and rural roads but remaining below the peak levels seen on urban roads in 2002.

The fastest growth in car traffic (in percentage terms) over the past 10 years has occurred on rural minor roads, whereas there has been an overall fall in car traffic on urban roads.

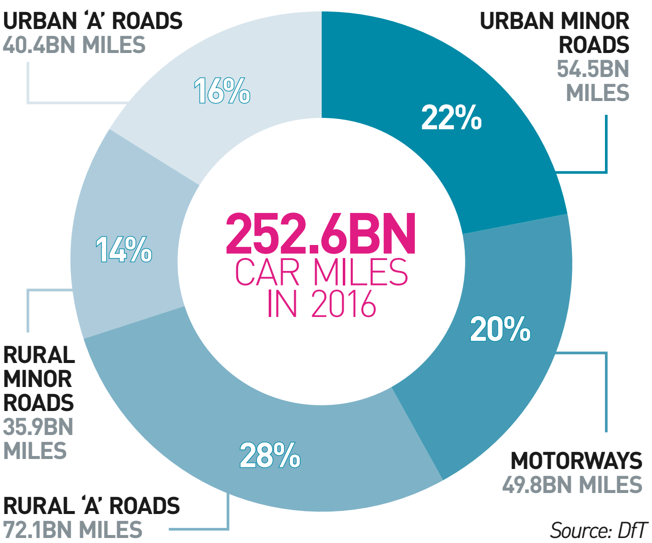
Over the longer term, car traffic has shown the most marked increase on motorways, rising by 54% between 1993 and 2016, and showing only a small and brief dip during the recent recession.

"Local roads are seeing traffic growth and many are struggling to cope with a depressing combination of congestion and potholes," said Lyes. "This is a constant source of frustration for millions of private and business motorists every day.

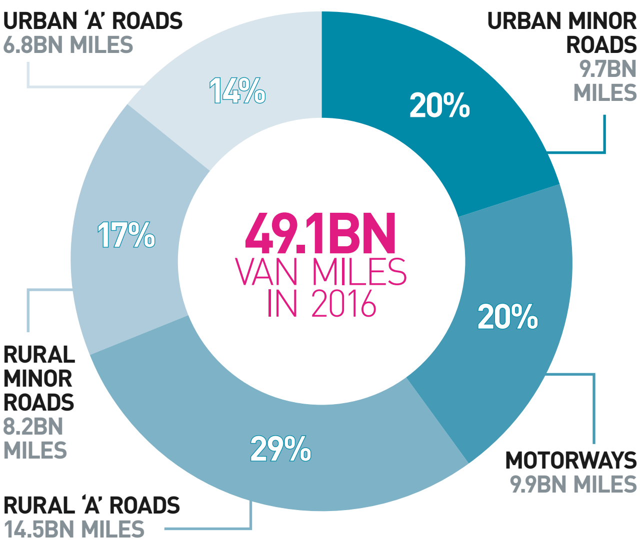
"The RAC believes that a strategic plan which includes longer term, ring-fenced funding is needed and that it recognises the vital role local roads play in moving people and goods around the country."

The largest share of personal car mileage in England was for commuting and business trips (38%), according to the National Travel Survey which was conducted in 2015.

It was followed by visiting friends and leisure trips (32%), personal business (15%), shopping (12%) and education (3%).



Source: DfT



Uber deal 'first of its kind' to help protect self-employed drivers

Meanwhile Hermes and DX are the latest 'gig economy' firms to face legal action

By Tom Seymour

Uber will help fund illness and injury cover for drivers that use its app as two further so-called 'gig economy' firms face legal action about workers' rights.

The taxi-hailing app company, which has more than 40,000 operators in the UK, has partnered with the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE) to offer sickness and injury cover up to £2,000 if drivers are unable to work for two weeks or more.

Drivers will qualify for the cover if they have completed at least 500 Uber trips and then must contribute £2 a week towards the cost. Uber will pay £6 a week on top to make up the total cost of £8 a week for the cover.

The deal also offers £300 a week for up to a year for drivers if an accident takes place during a trip or while logged into the Uber app. It said the deal is the first of its kind for the self-employed driver industry.

Away from the insurance offer, Uber continues to appeal the decision of a London employment tribunal last year which ruled that its drivers were workers and therefore entitled to holiday pay and sick leave, rather than being self-employed. The action was brought by drivers' union GMB and legal firm Leigh Day.

Maria Ludkin, GMB legal director, said: "We are pleased to see Uber has finally acknowledged they have the responsibilities of an employer in relation to their drivers, who the courts have already ruled have worker status."

However, she added: "We remain puzzled that they are continuing to appeal the employment tribunal judgement of October 2016, where this employment status was confirmed."

A spokesman for Uber told *Fleet News:* "We're still appealing the tribunal's initial decision as the majority of drivers don't want their [working] status to change."

Uber is just one of several companies facing legal challenges against the working status of gig economy drivers and couriers.

Delivery companies Hermes and DX are the latest fleets to be targeted by Leigh Day and GMB, with claims lodged on behalf of six DX workers and eight Hermes couriers.

The union is hoping the ruling against Uber and these latest actions against DX and Hermes will see companies reconsider how they classify drivers' working status.

DX describes its drivers as 'self-employed contractors', while the other claimants are viewed as 'self-employed couriers' by Hermes.

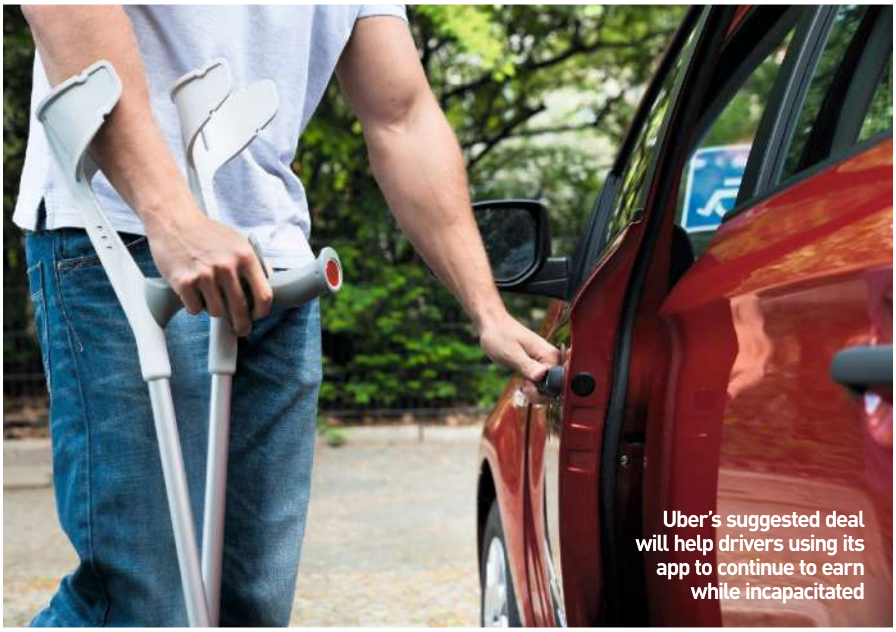
Michael Newman, partner at Leigh Day, said his firm will continue to challenge gig economy employers.

He explained: "The gig economy refers to companies operating a system where temporary positions are common and an attempt is made to label those working on short-term engagements as 'independent contractors'.

"This practice can allow both the company and individual more flexibility in the way they carry out their work.

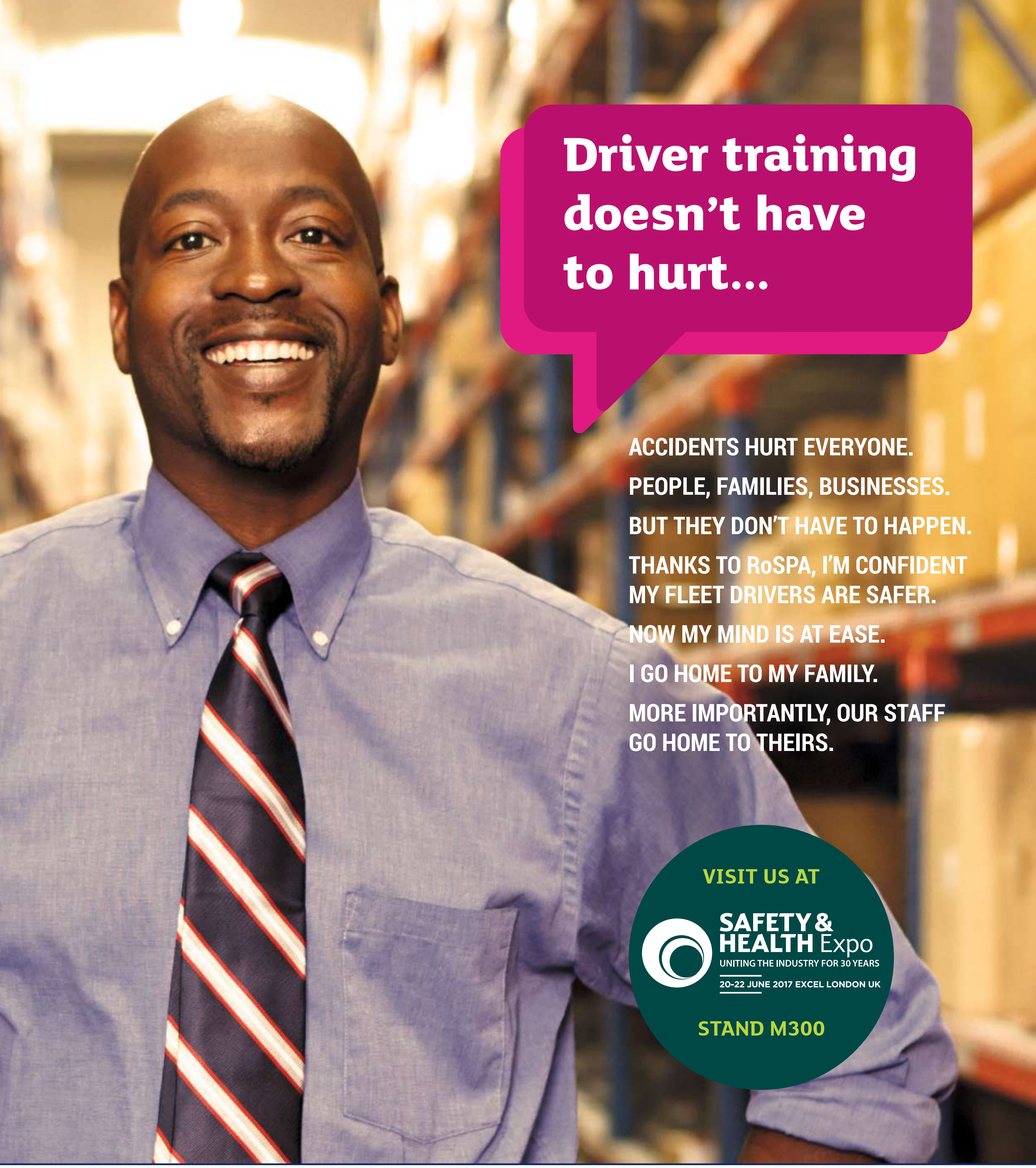
"However, this flexibility is often used as an excuse to deny individuals security and basic workers' rights. GMB is campaigning to eradicate this practice, so workers are afforded the rights to which they are entitled."

Hermes and DX were both contacted for comment. Hermes declined to do so while DX failed to respond before *Fleet News* went to press.



Uber's suggested deal will help drivers using its app to continue to earn while incapacitated

> *"Flexibility is often used as an excuse to deny individuals security and basic workers' rights"*
>
> *Michael Newman, Leigh Day*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Share data in effort to stop repeat of Zafira B fires, says TSC report

MPs' committee urges industry bodies to increase cooperation on safety issues

By Gareth Roberts

Insurers, carmakers, the fire service and industry bodies must find a better way to share data on safety defects likely to cause vehicle fires, a report by MPs suggests.

The Transport Select Committee (TSC) says it identified "gaps" in the way fires are currently reported following an inquiry into fires affecting Vauxhall Zafira B models.

Vauxhall's systems, for example, only captured a fraction of vehicle defects. It only discovered the true scale of the problem with the Zafira when a social media campaign saw reports of vehicle fires affecting the model jump from 19 to 110.

"It was clear from the evidence we heard that more could be done to share information about safety defects likely to cause fires in vehicles," says the committee's report. "There is no formal mechanism by which insurers could share information about vehicle fires with a motor manufacturer."

It has asked the Department for Transport (DfT) to convene a meeting of all interested parties and submit a report on the steps it plans to take to the committee by March 2018.

James Dalton, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) director of general insurance policy, said there were ongoing discussions within the industry over Thatcham Research using data in the Motor Insurance Anti-Fraud Theft Register to identify trends with individual models.

Insurers may not be the best or only source of better data on safety defects, says the report. Other sources could help to give an early indication of a problem or highlight patterns that require further investigation, just as the information from the London Fire Brigade did with the Zafira B fires.

Gareth Llewellyn, chief executive of Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) told the committee there was more they could do to "corral and coordinate" data from various sources to help generate a better picture of the root cause of fires and to provide information to the public.

The DVSA has also applied to the ABI for access to the Motor Industry Anti-Fraud and Theft Register. The report also suggests that better use could also be made of the knowledge held by mechanics and garages across the country about potential safety defects.

"Our inquiry exposed gaps in the system for identifying potential safety defects and dangerous repair practices"

Louise Ellman, Transport Select Committee

"Our inquiry exposed gaps in the system for identifying potential safety defects and dangerous repair practices," said Louise Ellman, chairman of the TSC.

"More needs to be done by motor manufacturers, the SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders), the Retail Motor Industry Federation and its associations, relevant trade associations, insurers and others to encourage defect reporting."

Vauxhall called for the establishment of a national vehicle fire database when it gave evidence to MPs during the inquiry (fleetnews.co.uk, February 7, 2017).

Following the report's publication, it told *Fleet News:* "We welcome the Transport Select Committee's backing for our call for greater collaboration between the automotive industry and insurers to improve the detection of faults.

"By collecting data from insurers it will be possible to gain a much more accurate picture of the number of fire cases and how they relate to specific models."

While the data will not reveal the causes of fire, it can nevertheless play an invaluable role in alerting manufacturers to potential issues much earlier than is possible at present.

Vauxhall added: "As our experience with Zafira B shows, and as the Transport Select Committee acknowledged, manufacturers have limited visibility of fires in their vehicles.

"Many Zafira B fire cases, for example, were reported to Vauxhall several years after they took place and only as a result of publicity in October 2015."

The parliamentary committee's inquiry concluded that Vauxhall was too slow to begin a full investigation into fires affecting Zafira B models and too quick to attribute them to improper and unauthorised repair (fleetnews.co.uk, April 28).

The report was also critical of the DVSA's decision not to perform independent testing as part of initial investigations.

Vauxhall said it had made improvements to the way it investigates cases of vehicle fire and strengthened its recall process to ensure vehicle safety and to minimise customer inconvenience.

It continued: "We apologise to anyone who has experienced anguish or distress as a result of this incident. Nothing is more important to us than safety.

"We go to enormous lengths to maintain the safety of our vehicles and we have strengthened these processes as a result of the learnings from Zafira B."

Hybrid van trial hopes to provide answers in quest for cleaner air

Capital-based test will evaluate practicalities and benefits of 20 Transit PHEVs

By Gareth Roberts

Fleets taking part in the Ford Transit plug-in trial are hoping that hybrid technology could help them reduce their reliance on diesel.

The project, supported by Transport for London (TfL), features a 12-month trial of 20 new Ford Transit PHEVs that aim to reduce local emissions by running solely on electric power for the majority of inner-city trips.

Equipped with range extenders, the fleet is not limited by battery range, says Ford, making them capable of the longer journeys that may be required by businesses and bluelight services.

So far, five fleets have signed up to the trial, which starts in the autumn, including the Metropolitan (Met) Police with two Transit PHEVs: one marked for second response to traffic accidents and one unmarked as a forensic support unit. TfL will also be putting two of the vans to work.

Clancy Plant, Addison Lee and British Gas have yet to confirm van numbers and usage, while Ford is also in talks with other interested fleets.

Jiggs Bharij, head of fleet services for the Met Police, said: "We're delighted to be working with Ford on this innovative PHEV Transit trial.

"Commercial vehicles form an integral part of the Met fleet and we are keen to explore the possibility of reducing our reliance on diesel fuel in this sector.

"The PHEV Transit is an important step in conducting a real-world trial of the technology and to assess the vehicle's capability."

Bharij told *Fleet News* he will be measuring their effectiveness by looking at how the vehicles perform in a demanding 24-hour response role and with the installation of additional police equipment. Running costs and emissions would also be assessed.

Andy Barratt, chairman and managing director, Ford of Britain, said: "Our customers have always been at the centre of our development, so working directly with our fleets is vital in delivering an electrified CV that adds value to the many different businesses going in and out of our cities every day."

London's Met Police will use a marked Transit as a second response vehicle for accidents

> *"We are keen to explore the possibility of reducing our reliance on diesel"*
>
> *Jiggs Bharij, Metropolitan Police*

Using a Ford telematics system, each Transit PHEV involved in the trial will collect data on the vehicles' financial, operational and environmental performance to help understand how the benefits of electrified vehicles could be maximised.

Ben Plowden, TfL director of strategy and surface planning, said that he will also be assessing their operational viability and financial performance.

Understanding how the vehicles compare to similar ones on the fleet in terms of tailpipe pollutant emissions and 'well-to-wheel' carbon emissions would also be critical, he said.

"The freight sector's transition to alternative powertrains is central to cleaning up London's toxic air," added Plowden. "TfL continues to lead by example by increasing the number of its own vehicles that are electric and will find the data from these trials an invaluable resource for the LoCity programme, which encourages the uptake of low emission commercial transport."

The Transit plug-in trial is being supported by a £4.7m grant from the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC).

The APC manages partnerships between equipment companies, suppliers and manufacturers to develop new powertrain technologies in the UK and bring them to market. The Government and industry is providing £1 billion to the programme over a 10-year period and, to date, it has funded £325 million of projects.

Its support for the London trials recognises the importance of reducing emissions in the capital, which has become a central policy area for mayor Sadiq Khan.

Commercial vehicles in London make 280,000 journeys on a typical weekday, travelling eight million miles.

Vans represent 75% of peak freight traffic, with more than 7,000 vehicles per hour driving at peak times in central London.

FleetNews PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE DO IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Fleet News magazine

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

Commercial Fleet magazine

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

Fleet events

Fleet News events are the biggest and best in the sector. Our annual awards night attracts more than 1,500 people; the FN50 Dinner sees 950 leasing, manufacturer, rental and supplier companies networking 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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THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*

The decision to call a snap General Election has thrown elements of fleet into disarray.

First, Defra sought to use it as an excuse to delay the publication of the air quality plan but that was thwarted by the courts (see page 7).

The air quality plan is critical to tackling the illegal levels of air pollution across the UK, although the report did not reveal any new announcements. The key proposal is the introduction of multiple clean-air zones, under the jurisdiction of local authorities, where drivers could be charged if their vehicles do not meet NOx emissions levels.

It has implications for fleets, particularly the emergency services and those involved in last-mile deliveries, and will need to be weaved into vehicle replacement policies.

"For now, it means fleets are once again operating in the dark"

Then, the Government removed from the Finance Bill the new benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bands, which were due to take effect three years hence (and had only been confirmed in the March budget).

The timing of the new bandings had its critics. Many believed it could hamper EV uptake in the lead-up to 2020 due to the higher level of BIK over that period, which peaks at 16% for zero emission cars in 2019 but would have fallen to 2% a year later.

The Government, realising it would have little time to push through everything before Parliament was dissolved eight days ago, sacrificed several elements. BIK was one. Only time will tell whether this is simply a postponement or it is back up for debate.

For now, it means fleets are once again operating in the dark. With average car replacement cycles at 3.5 years, and many companies running cars for four years or more, fleets have no idea what BIK and, therefore, their Class 1A National Insurance costs will be in the latter stages.

They can make estimates on costs, of course, but who wants to run their business based on guesswork?

YOUR LETTERS

MOBILE PHONES

Drive-safe mode

EDITOR'S PICK

Gordy wrote:
Having read 'Nissan adopts Victorian-era technology to reduce smartphone distraction while driving' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 3), this is one solution, agreed.

But how about all phones come with a drive-safe mode like they have flight-safe one? That way, you could disable data and alerts and just leave the phone working.

If you crash and your phone is in this Nissan-inspired Faraday cage, you would waste valuable time connecting to the phone network then ringing the emergency services. Worse still, if you're incapacitated no one can ring you to ask where/how you are.

Let's get the phone companies to develop a 'drive-safe' mode for phones. Then everyone can use it and if you don't and you're caught, well then that's your licence surrendered.

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

Derek Webb added:
I do understand that OEMs are really trying to help drivers and this (Faraday cage) is a good example, but can't we expect drivers to just switch off their phones while in their cars – or is that too simple?

Paranoid Android Auto added:
A positive step, but what we need is the few police we have left to concentrate on catching phone users who drive and for the courts to hit them really hard, as befits law-breaking behaviour which endangers life.

AMAPs

Welcoming Government review

Rob Chisholm wrote:
Having read 'Outdated tax rules on AMAP rates face Government scrutiny' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 21), I say it's not before time.

I've never been able to understand why the Government should subsidise businesses that offer an opt out from the company car, a decision they probably took to improve their financial position in the first place, only to then underpay their employees knowing full well that the Government would take up some of the slack for them. It's the same principle behind in-work benefits paid to employees who are underpaid by their employers.

Why should the rest of us who act ethically subsidise those who don't?

INSURANCE

Innocent motorists penalised

Iain wrote:
Having read 'Victims may suffer as Government bids to deter whiplash fraud' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 24), payments for whiplash claims are, in the main, an absolute joke and are simply exploited to penalise, in many cases, innocent drivers through increased premiums.

Modern vehicles have many safety features built into them and a claim for thousands of pounds after a simple, slow speed, rear-end bump cannot be justified.

It would be far better to tackle the root cause by penalising the careless driver with automatic penalty points on their licence where they are at fault.

This would automatically increase their insurance premium and not place the burden of compensation across innocent motorists.

It is, regrettably, big business.

Also the medical profession, while perhaps overworked, seems to willingly or unwittingly collude and add credence to false claims.

I deal with insurance claims every day and regularly see inflated repair and rental costs, all of which are spurred on by our legal 'profession'.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Matching location to need

Engineer wrote:
Having read 'New entrant to plug-in vehicle charging market offers next-gen technology' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 27), the trouble is the number of rapid chargers has grown, but they are still in weird places.

One of my nearest is at a garden centre away from any useful routes; another is at a hotel – again off the beaten track; and there is one in the middle of an industrial estate and so on.

Installers need to find locations just off major trunk routes where currently there are mostly slow chargers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Solar power makes sense

Stuart Patience wrote:
Having read 'Solar Carports launch EV charging products in the UK' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 2), it's a great idea to harness the sun's rays and charge the car. It makes sense, especially when the Government is encouraging us to move from diesels and into electric and the National Grid is already under strain. Charging from rapid chargers at petrol stations will not be an option due to the massive demand on the grid and the flaky grid network infrastructure, which often requires massive upgrade costs, making it financially unviable.

DIESEL

Well done, SMMT

Edward Handley wrote:
Having read 'Calls for calmer, more measured diesel debate to reflect advances' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 2), at last a bit of common sense.

Euro 6-compliant diesel cars and vans are a lot cleaner, and trucks are even better. But there are still people demanding they be banned on environmental grounds while ignoring the much more toxic emissions coming from construction plant machinery, fridges on refrigerated trucks and the like.

The thing that gets forgotten is that diesel engines are efficient and the alternative 'low pollution' engines may in fact be more polluting than the so-called dirty engines they seek to replace.

Even 'clean' electric vehicles pollute because a lot of the power used to charge them comes from fossil fuels. Well done, SMMT – let's have a bit more logic and a bit less hype.

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Fleet News is published 26 times a year by Bauer Consumer Media Ltd, registered address Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6EA. Registered number 01176085.

ISSN 0953-8526.
Printing: PCP, Telford

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Burning question:
If you could live in any TV home, which one would it be?

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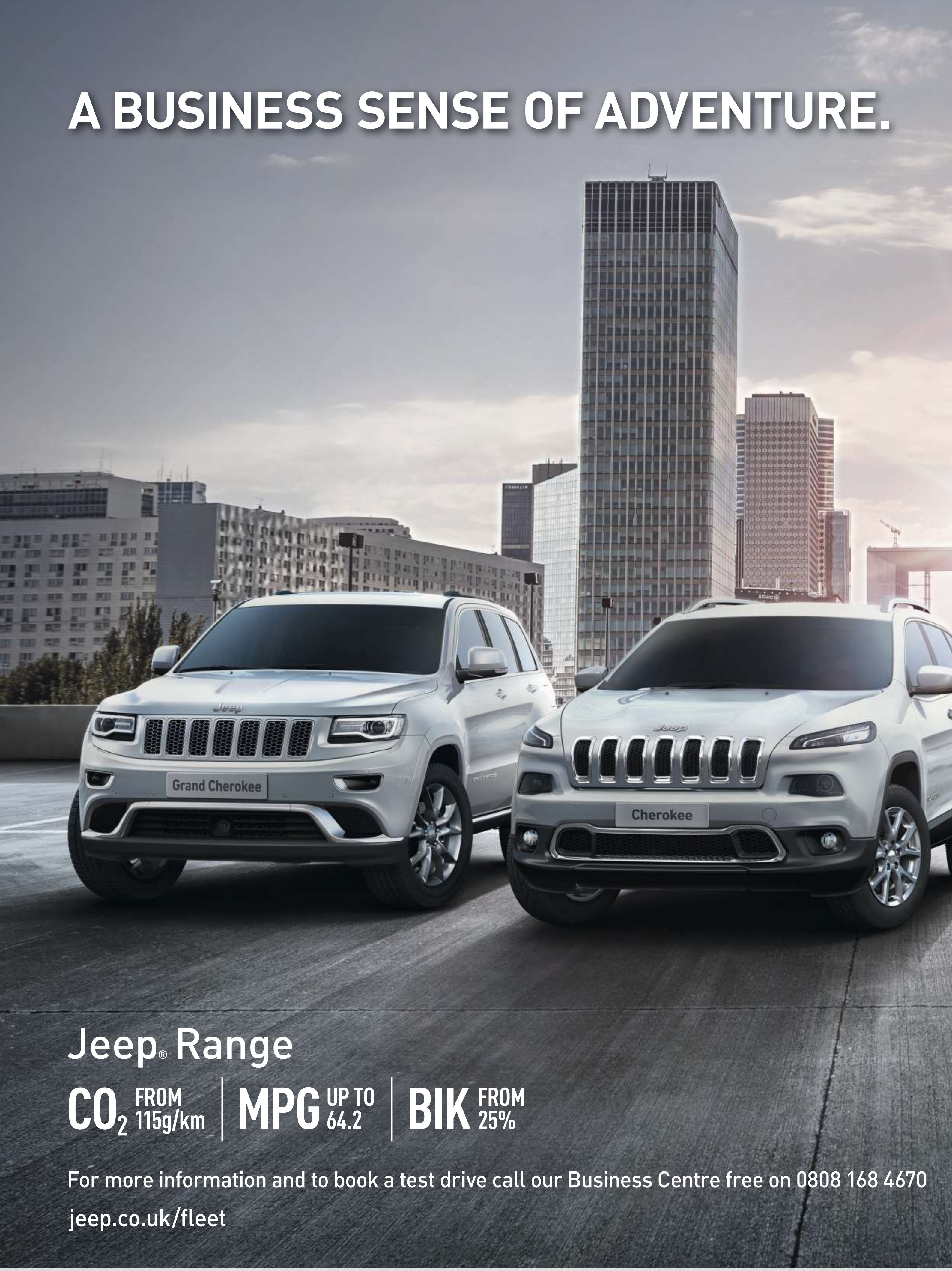
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FLEET OPINION

SALARY SACRIFICE

'Sacrifices' not that draconian

By Duncan Howell

In his Autumn Statement, Chancellor Philip Hammond announced Government plans to overhaul "unfair" salary sacrifice schemes. But confusion still reigns over exactly what this means.

The main misconception is that employees who obtain their vehicle via salary sacrifice will be significantly out of pocket as they will have to pay considerably more tax. This, in fact, is nonsense. I have analysed more than 13,000 salary sacrifice quotes and 42% of them show absolutely no increase in cost, with the remaining 58% experiencing an increase of between just £1 and £20 a month.

The bottom line is salary sacrifice continues to be an alternative to traditional car schemes.

There has been talk of a resurrection of Affinity and ECO (employee car ownership) schemes. However these do not offer the same benefits as a true salary sacrifice scheme. They do not offer the employee income tax savings, NI savings, VAT savings (dependent on the employer's VAT position) and a fully inclusive package where all you have to do is 'add the fuel'.

They also involve credit checks on the employees and there may be a large deposit to pay before delivery. They have also been criticised for being complicated to run for employers.

In essence, the proposals delivered by Hammond are not as draconian as feared. Many tax consultants who advise on the provision of employee benefits have simply not dug into the detail of the changes specifically in relation to car schemes, which has created an undue level of anxiety.

So what should employers be doing to ensure they are up to speed with the changes, and to ensure employees still get a good deal?

The key is communication. If you have any confusion speak to your salary sacrifice provider and they should be able to explain all of the changes and tailor a scheme that will suit your workforce.

In many cases, employers and employees will want to continue using salary sacrifice schemes, as the cost increases will not be significant. The message we should be spreading is that it is 'business as usual'.

"Bottom line is salary sacrifice continues to be an alternative to traditional car schemes "

Duncan Howell corporate sales manager for salary sacrifice at TCH Leasing

Johan Herrlin CEO of Ito World

For more fleet opinion from the industry, visit fleetnews.co.uk/opinion

MAAS

Data sharing vital for transport progress

By Johan Herrlin

A new report by Transport Systems Catapult (TSC) claims a lack of sharing data within the transport sector could cost the UK £15 billion by 2025. Open data, it says, is key to fuelling innovation for new mobility solutions and improving technologies such as driverless cars, journey planners and smart ticketing.

The open data movement is shown many times over to have an overwhelmingly positive ROI. For instance, McKinsey found potential benefits equivalent to 4.1% of global GDP for open data across all sectors. This is especially true when it comes to transport, since it involves inherently complicated systems. And once Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is widespread, open and accurate data will be even more important.

MaaS describes the idea that we're moving away from privately-owned modes of transportation and towards consuming transportation solutions as a service. This will be enabled by blending both public and private transportation providers across multiple modes of transportation, and providing a single-access interface for managing trips.

For MaaS to become a reality, there must be access to data that reflects real-life customer experience as closely as possible. In other words, open data is necessary but not sufficient – if a MaaS provider leverages raw open data, they will have many opportunities to create a bad user experience. Accurate, high-quality data is therefore critical.

We're at the beginning of the next big revolution in transportation. Things have remained largely static for the past 100 years since the introduction of the underground in public transport and the car in general. So any innovation represents a paradigm shift.

We are already seeing differences in the way we get around, with the rise of shared economy platforms such as Uber, and with car sharing and car club businesses. Of course, the arrival of autonomous vehicles will also greatly impact provisioning of transport services.

MaaS has the potential to transform our society by changing the way people move from place to place, but more open and more accurate data will be absolutely key to making this happen.

"There must be access to data that reflects real-life customer experience as closely as possible"

ASK NIGEL

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

DRIVING RANGE OF HYBRIDS

Q One of my drivers wants a plug-in hybrid vehicle but he does quite high mileage so it may not be suitable. The driver is convinced it will be cheaper for him to have a hybrid. What advice should I give him to ensure he's not out of pocket or we're not happy with his choice later down the line?

A From the introduction of hybrids the question of suitability and fitness for purpose has been a challenge for fleet managers. I can recall being asked by one of my younger drivers when I was at Whitbread why the Honda Civic IMA (remember those?) wasn't on the choice list. At the time my answer was "we can't be sure it will actually be practical for you, and there's no way you can hand it back if you don't like it after three months".

Well, 20 years or so on not that much has changed, other than the range of alternatively-fuelled options on offer and the difficulty of answering the question.

In the final analysis it still comes down to whether the car is fit for purpose. The latest generation of plug-in hybrids do, indeed, look attractive – particularly to drivers looking to enhance their environmental credentials or get a good deal on car tax.

However, as a fleet manager I believe your priority should be to ensure that such a vehicle is suitable for the role that the driver fulfils for the business. The driver also needs to understand that if they select one, they have to stick with it.

From the way your question is phrased I assume your current car policy is user-chooser, or that the driver in question is entitled to choose a plug-in hybrid as it appears on a choice list. If it is the latter, you should consider whether these vehicle types are appropriate for your business – ideally any cars on a choice list should be suitable for all drivers, irrespective of their mileage patterns. That avoids potential issues of drivers choosing unsuitable cars.

However, if you have a full user-chooser policy, the question is more difficult. Your driver seems convinced it will be "cheaper" – but will it really? Does the driver understand the limitations in terms of full battery range and the different way they will need to drive to maximise this? Do they also realise that, while the manufacturer may quote some extremely impressive fuel consumption figures, they may not be realistic?

For example, one popular model has 166mpg quoted but I have seen road tests reporting 43mpg. There is a growing body of evidence online from drivers of the true fuel economy of this type of vehicle, and it would be worth drawing your driver's attention to these. It is therefore important that both you and the driver get as many of the facts as possible to understand the true picture and make an informed decision.

"While the manufacturer may quote some extremely impressive fuel consumption figures, they may not be realistic"

One option may be talking to your fleet provider about measuring the cost-effectiveness and practicality of a plug-in hybrid for this driver. A number of providers now offer tools that allow you to understand this based on capturing the driver's actual mileage and running it through a model. Typically these are designed for full electric vehicles but they can work just as well for plug-in hybrids and allow you to calculate the cost to the business and the individual. If it is not cost-effective for either, you have your answer.

■ **The next Ask Nigel will be in the June 8 issue**

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

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

Trotman entered the *Fleet News* Hall of Fame in 2013.

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

Do you have a fleet challenge you would like Nigel to answer?
Visit fleetnews.co.uk/asknigel or email fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk

FLEETS INFORMED

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Fleets relying more heavily on suppliers

Delegates at the Fleets Informed roundtable discuss changes in the fleet-supplier relationship

But delegates are keen to extol virtues of companies having in-house fleet managers

By Stephen Briers

The 2017 Fleets Informed roundtable looked at how the fleet-supplier relationship is changing and how suppliers are looking to better support their customers. Delegates also assessed fleet efficiency and whether this is down to a rise in fleet professionalism or because many operations have now been outsourced to a leasing or fleet management company.

The views were varied but the ultimate conclusion is that there remains a need for a dedicated fleet manager. If nothing else, it helps the supplier to get their message across when it comes to the implementation of new cost and risk-saving initiatives.

Fleet News: How are fleet demands on suppliers changing?

Chris Thornton, DriveTech, part of The AA: Fleets are always looking for service from suppliers but we are seeing an increasing demand for innovation – what we are doing next. There is a long tail to the industry; big fleets with multiple people in the fleet team are few and far between. Others are very stretched and they are looking to us all the time for advice.

Gaynor McNicholas, Zenith: Linked to innovation is a more consultative approach to policy, legislation and compliance due to the changes within fleet and the reduction in traditional fleet managers.

Simon Hunt, DriveTech, part of The AA: Fleets want to see innovation throughout the life of the contract. We have to be more consistent in how we communicate with our customers and with procurement involvement, there is more focus on price, so that frees up others to ask for more service.

Matt Dale, ALD Automotive: There are challenges from the procurement side taking over.

Martin Evans, Jaama: If we present a new concept to a fleet manager, do they understand what we are offering or how to put pen to paper to get it approved at board level? Often fleet managers do not understand the procurement process and the requirements, especially related to software. Compliance, data protection, IT and systems – they have to be able to sell these internally.

Richard Evans, Jaama: The problem is compounded when you do not have a fleet expert to sell a new initiative within the business.

Paul Lomas, ALD Automotive: Do fleet managers even want to stick their head above the parapet?

DELEGATES

Simon Hunt
head of national sales, DriveTech, part of The AA

Chris Thornton
sales director, DriveTech, part of The AA

Matt Dale
consultancy services manager, ALD Automotive

Paul Lomas
head of sales – new business, ALD Automotive

Martin Evans
managing director, Jaama

Richard Evans
head of business development, Jaama

Stephen Giggins
relationship manager, Zenith

Gaynor McNicholas,
strategy account manager, Zenith

Chris Thornton: It is changing thanks to the availability of data. Customers demand more from suppliers because there is more to gauge their performance. But data tends to be compartmentalised into different formats from different suppliers. It's still hard for fleets to put everything into one place and analyse it.
Richard Evans: There is reams of data available but it won't tell fleets a thing if they don't ask the right questions – i.e. what changes can the business make? The goal has to be to understand the strategic challenges and implement change based on data.

FN: Are companies relying more heavily on you for fleet support?
Stephen Giggins, **Zenith:** Often we have to be their fleet department and draw time out of their busy schedule so they can understand their goals for the fleet.
Chris Thornton: Our challenge is that we are selling something that has traditionally been done internally, but how well do they measure and understand it?
Paul Lomas: There's lots that can be done around risk management, but it's more intangible to a procurement leader; they don't see the whole value. I always worry when we see a commodity manager or category leader because we already know what they are thinking – unbundle everything to save pennies. Then they realise it's complex so they re-bundle and offload to a leasing company. It can be dispiriting.

FN: How do you improve fleet or board buy-in to new ideas?
Simon Hunt: We are focused on showing return on investment within specific industries to show the pounds and pence savings and putting it into a language they understand by showing the competitive advantage they would have over their rivals. There are many tangibles that can be pulled out to change the mind-set.

"There are fewer fleet managers so their job is being done to an extent by the leasing industry"

Matt Dale,
ALD Automotive

"The ideal relationship is with someone that is engaged – and most fleet managers are now. They understand the need to embrace change"

Martin Evans, Jaama

FN: With the rise in the connected car, how are fleets tackling the data challenge?
Stephen Giggins: With data protection you almost have to ask if you can use their data for safety and compliance. Legislation puts a wall up.
Richard Evans: We have some staggering conversations with some organisations, for example information security teams. People are holding personal information on spreadsheets or internal systems that anyone can delete.
Martin Evans: All vehicles are getting more connected. You can put your phone in the glovebox, but your emails come up on the screen. That's a distraction. The manufacturers are going against risk and putting more information on the screen.

FN: With tighter sentencing for non-compliance, how are fleets introducing risk management improvements?
Stephen Giggins: Giving drivers bonuses for performing well will drive cultural change because fleets might have lower insurance premiums.
Chris Thornton: Telematics has [traditionally] been justified on knowing where drivers are; behaviour has not been part of the investment case. But gamification has now started to become available and that will make a difference.

FN: Are companies running their fleets more effectively today?
Martin Evans: There are fewer traditional fleet managers so there is a lack of people who understand fleet and risk and they are more reliant on suppliers.
Gaynor McNicholas: Outsourcing is great, but you still have to have someone that manages it.
Paul Lomas: Maybe they are run better; the industry is more professional and the range of services bolted on is vast – companies and drivers are benefiting. The onus is on us in how we set up the relationship at the outset - how we discuss KPIs, new initiatives, etc.
Matt Dale: There are fewer fleet managers so their job is being done to an extent by the leasing industry.

FN: Is this a good thing?
Stephen Giggins: When there is a fleet manager, I talk to them. When I talk to HR or/and the FD, I have a different conversation. You have a link into the board but with a fleet manager you might not get that. But you still need a fleet manager; they understand what you are talking about. We need an interface into their business although that role has changed from a doer to a facilitator.
Chris Thornton: Traditionally, the role was about driving down cost; now it's more about compliance as well. There is an opportunity for more people to understand safety and risk and engage their driver communities. And that comes full circle, because it saves them money as well as ticking the CSR box. But it has to be demonstrable to the board, so information from us will help them.
Martin Evans: The ideal relationship is with someone that is engaged – and most fleet managers are now. They are business professionals; they understand the need to embrace change or they will get left behind.

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HOW WE ROLLED THREE WAYS OF WORKING INTO ONE

All in-house, partial-outsourcing or totally outsourced – David King brought the three together to create one way of working, reports *Sarah Tooze*

How do you turn three different ways of managing fleet into one and make a multi-million pound saving in the process?

That was the challenge facing David King, group fleet director at Interserve, three years ago.

At the time, the support services and construction company didn't have a central fleet team. Instead, it had two separate fleet functions – one for the construction side of the business and one for support services. The theory was that the two teams would be better able to meet the specific fleet requirements of the different parts of the business.

The construction division favoured an in-house approach to fleet management, while support services combined an in-house team with outsourcing around 40% of the fleet activity (such as leasing, vehicle reallocation, driver telephone helpdesk) to Arval.

When Interserve acquired Initial Facilities (a subsidiary of Rentokil Initial) in 2014 it inherited a third way of managing fleet: a fully outsourced approach (to Lex Autolease).

The acquisition also swelled the fleet total from around 3,500 to 4,500 vehicles (now grown to 4,800). It also has approximately 1,500 cash allowance drivers.

That acquisition prompted the Interserve board to take a closer look at fleet and to decide a new approach was needed.

"The top table realised the size and the complexity and the opportunity with fleet and were looking for a leader to head the transformation of fleet to create a centralised outsourced fleet solution, reporting at group level as opposed to within the different divisions. I was asked to lead that transformation," King says.

King is no stranger to such projects. A pharmacist by profession, he rose through the ranks at Boots, managing various stores before joining the change management team at head office.

His first involvement with fleet came when he was asked to look at outsourcing areas of spend. He set up of a team of contract managers who managed the outsourced relationships with suppliers – everything from facilities management to record keeping, payroll and fleet.

"So my first engagement with fleet was that outsourced way of working," King says.

He then joined Nottinghamshire County Council in a procurement role before moving to Interserve in 2012 as one of the heads of procurement for systems, processes and methodologies.

"All the ways of working in procurement fell under me and part of that was fleet," he says.

After carrying out a six-month review of Interserve's fleet activity he was appointed to the newly created role of group fleet director in January 2015. The shift from fleet being managed at a divisional level to a group level also meant King reports directly to a board member (group secretary Trevor Bradbury).

That board level support has helped change to be "delivered with more pace and with more clarity", according to King.

"Having executive sponsorship is one of the key enablers to successful change because we all know how a significant number of transformation programmes do not deliver what they set out to," he says.

"It's also been invaluable in positioning us at group level. I've been able to engage with different divisions within the business in a neutral stance rather than being from one division trying to influence another.

"That's been a real benefit not only to deliver things internally but also when engaging with the external supply chain and so on. My team and I are engaging on behalf of the business, not just part of the business."

But exactly how did King go about turning Interserve's different ways of managing fleet into a single approach?

"There were a number of parallel stages," he says. "The intent was to deliver the ongoing operations while undertaking the transformational change. That's always the challenge isn't it? You can't press the pause button while you deliver strategic change, but we wanted to look at a number of items. The supply chain was one, the policies that underpin it was another and the team structure and managing the people and the resource requirement was another."

The latter resulted in a group fleet team of nine reporting to King. It includes a team manager plus two utilisation managers – one for vans, the other cars – to ensure Interserve optimises vehicle usage.

King decided what should be delivered internally and what was best outsourced to a lease partner. He determined that around 75% to 80% of the operational processes were best outsourced.

David King was tasked with supplying solutions for Interserve's complex three-way fleet management set-up

"You can't press the pause button while you deliver strategic change, but we wanted to look at a number of items"

David King, Interserve

FACTFILE

Organisation: Interserve
Group fleet director: David King
Time in role: four years
Fleet size: 2,275 cars, 2,200 vans, 1,500 cash-takers
Replacement cycle: cars – three years; vans – four years
Brands: Audi, BMW, Jaguar Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Renault, Toyota, Vauxhall, Volkswagen

That led to the appointment of LeasePlan at the end of 2014 on a four-year contract.

Having a single funding provider has "brought a level of simplicity and ease of management", according to King, compared to the previous approach where there were different funding methods, leasing companies, terms and conditions and relationships.

He acknowledges that outsourcing to a single lease provider can leave a company vulnerable to price increases but Interserve has countered this by putting benchmarking clauses in the contract "to ensure that commerciality remains sharp".

He is also keen to stress the partnership approach that Interserve benefits from by having a single provider.

The relationship is managed through daily emails and phone calls, weekly meetings, monthly and quarterly senior management meetings at which key performance indicators (KPIs) are formally reviewed, and an annual review with the executive board.

Using a single leasing provider has simplified communication. Drivers can now call one helpline rather than having multiple phone numbers and email addresses.

"One of the things we realised very early on, because of the degree of change, was that communication was massively important. So we committed to do two things. One, to make telephone engagement as simple as possible; and, two, to make the provision of information through our intranet site as up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible – that's the first 'go to' place if the telephone isn't the right answer," King says.

The fuel card provision, which is managed by Interserve's fleet team rather than LeasePlan, has also been changed from two providers to one, with a Platts-based card rather than pump price.

Interserve has more than 3,500 fuel cards and the change has enabled it to save hundreds of thousands of pounds.

"We wanted to ensure there was appropriate governance and compliance over the use of the card and also to make sure we were able to control the use of the cards through the network across the UK that best met our requirements and commercial needs," King says.

Telematics has also been simplified from five providers at the start of 2015 to a single one (Microlise), with the units now fitted in more than 2,000 commercial vehicles.

It is being used to monitor when and where vehicles are used, and how they are driven.

Already, Interserve has been able to remove around 30 vehicles from the fleet and anticipates more to follow.

It has also identified low mileage vehicles where an electric vehicle might be a better option. Interserve already has 25 Renault Kangoo ZEs, which operate in London and on sites or campuses, and King plans to order "significantly more" EVs in future.

Telematics is also being used to identify driving styles that "may not be optimal" such as harsh braking/accelerating and long periods of idling, with the intention of supporting drivers and management teams to reduce the amount of fuel used.

More than 200 managers have access to the management information portal to view the performance of their drivers and the fleet team has held a number of roadshows to help support managers' use of the portal.

A smartphone app is also being piloted to provide feedback to drivers on performance.

King has appointed a business analyst to bring together various data sources – telematics data, driving licence points an individual may have, accident management data, the amount of miles the driver undertakes, any customer complaints, wear and tear on tyres and brakes, MOT information, and fuel card information – to give a holistic view and create something meaningful the fleet team or business divisions can act on.

The business analyst has brought improved oversight of servicing and MOTs. Average repair costs from accidents have fallen 24% since 2014, while vehicle off-road time has been cut from an average of 7.8 days in 2014 to 4.5 days last year.

Interserve has service and maintenance workshops at Swansea, Wigan and Aldridge (near Walsall). The latter, and largest, also does accident repairs if they occur within a 50-mile radius.

Outside that, the vehicles go through FMG and LeasePlan.

A new driver training programme is planned which includes online assessments followed by online training and potentially an on-the-road course.

King is also working on an improved new car order process in conjunction with LeasePlan. They have identified driver 'high points' (e.g. when they order the vehicle) and potential 'low points' (when delivery is delayed) and have come up with ways to keep the driver enthusiastic while they wait for their new car.

Solutions include phone call and email updates and reminders, which also offer an opportunity for Interserve to give them practical tips about the vehicle they are returning.

In addition to improving the driver experience, King has also expanded the number of manufacturers and models on the company car lists following feedback from a driver survey.

"Traditionally we were seen as having estates and saloons and quite a boring, staid car list," King says. "We've worked hard to refresh that to put different models that may appeal to different driver types so the introduction of some crossovers and SUVs."

While he has no plans to end the cash scheme, King hopes the positive experience will tempt more cash takers back into cars.

It already appears to have had an impact – around 5% of cash takers have opted in during the past year.

INTERSERVE HITS CARBON REDUCTION GOALS

Interserve has hit its target of reducing its overall carbon by 30% (compared to its 2013 baseline) by 2016 and has set a new target of a 50% reduction by 2020.

"We have an internal programme called SustainAbilities, which has a number of elements to it, of which business travel is one," David King says.

Fleet and business travel contributes to about 65% of Interserve's total carbon emissions. Reductions have been made by refreshing the car list with lower CO_2 vehicles, supporting hybrid vehicles, using telematics to reduce fuel use and replacing ageing HGVs and minibuses.

A new Midlands regional office is being built near junction 6 of the M42. When it opens next year it will bring together employees that were previously at five locations across the West Midlands so it will reduce business travel between different offices, as well as commuting.

For more fleet profiles, visit: fleetnews.co.uk/fleetprofiles

'SANITY NOT VANITY – WE HAVE TO MAKE A LIVING'

Fringe player Suzuki is seeking to go mainstream in fleet. It's a big change from its position a decade ago, so what prompted the move, asks *Stephen Briers*

The message from management was loud and clear: we are not interested in fleet. That was Suzuki GB's position a decade ago, a time when fleet registrations accounted for less than 5% of its total UK volume.

The carmaker had publicly stated that it had little interest in the corporate sector; it was a retail-only operation targeting the most profitable area of business.

And that's the way it stayed, until 2011 when Suzuki appointed its first ever corporate sales manager, Andrew Wale, with a brief to create a fleet strategy. Wale has overseen a nine-fold increase in fleet registrations, an impressive statistic, although, put in context, the carmaker remains on the fringes.

In 2010, it registered 1,032 fleet cars for a 0.1% share of the sector; last year that had risen to 9,432 units and 0.6%, according to official figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders (SMMT). Of the household names, only Lexus, Mitsubishi and Dacia took a smaller share.

Nevertheless, fleet now accounts for almost 25% of Suzuki's annual registrations – albeit some way behind the industry average of 51% – and the carmaker has sizeable ambitions underlined by the appointment in January of former Maserati national corporate sales manager Graeme Jenkins as its first head of fleet.

So what has changed Suzuki's view of fleet?

> *"We are languishing in fleet. We want the same level of success in fleet as we have in retail"*
>
> *Dale Wyatt, Suzuki GB*

Partly product: Suzuki has expanded out of its heartland of small cars (Ignis, Swift) and 4x4s (Jimny, Vitara) into compact family cars (Baleno) and crossovers (SX-4 S-Cross) where corporate sales are more dominant.

It has also made its conventional products more appealing to user-choosers at a time when more are considering downsizing to smaller cars and turning to petrol in the face of the relentless media and Government onslaught against diesel.

But it's also about aspirations: Suzuki realises that it cannot continue to grow in the UK by ignoring more than half of the market.

However, it has decided to enter the fleet sector with gusto at a time when competition has never been fiercer. Relative newcomers such as Kia, Hyundai, Škoda and Seat are making big gains; premium brands like BMW and Audi are becoming the new mass market; and traditional players like Vauxhall and Ford are tussling for every morsel of market share.

That doesn't deter Jenkins, or Suzuki GB director Dale Wyatt. Both are convinced they have the products and the strategy to achieve their objective – to hit 20,000 fleet sales.

They are not looking for quick wins, although Suzuki has grown its Motability business from zero to 2,000 units in the past 18 months, largely on the back of Ignis and Vitara, and expects to increase it further to 3,000 over the next year. Rental is firmly not an option, though.

According to Wyatt, the approach is "sanity not vanity – we have to make a living out of it".

Wyatt explains: "We have a much greater opportunity with our latest product, such as Vitara and S-Cross and we also have technology that is more fleet-friendly. We have greater capability – our scale has gone from 20,000 to 40,000 – so we can fund more things. We are outselling other manufacturers in retail, where we are 17th, but we are languishing in fleet. We want the same level of success in fleet as we have in retail."

The first step, he adds, is to build the infrastructure by investing in the fleet team. Suzuki has appointed a cost of ownership manager and is recruiting a contract hire and leasing manager. The team also includes a marketing specialist, two fleet coordinators and two fleet administrators.

WHY SUZUKI? 'SMALL CARS AND EASE OF BUSINESS'

With so many model options for fleets and their company car drivers to choose from, why should they consider Suzuki?

The reason is two-fold, according to Graeme Jenkins. First, product: Suzuki has several small cars which are ideal for those looking to downsize, and it has efficient petrol engines to tap into the current discontent with diesel. Second, it is striving to be easy to do business with for fleets and leasing companies.

"We will have consistent pricing for the leasing industry, the right people in the field, transparent relationships and centralised invoicing and admin," says Jenkins.

"The driver experience is key – to drive it is to buy it. We have a test-drive conversion ratio of 70-80%. We call the driver experience 'smile on wheels'."

Two engines are expected to dominate fleet sales: the new 1.0-litre BoosterJet petrol engine (likely to account for two-thirds of sales) and the 1.2-litre DualJet, which will also be available as a mild hybrid.

"The BoosterJet petrol engine offers the same CO_2 benefits and economy of diesel," says Jenkins. "It is a big opportunity. But the mild hybrid is also efficient at less than 100g/km without adding huge cost."

An integrated starter motor assists the engine, enabling the car to run at zero emissions below 10mph while improving the stop-start experience in traffic. It also offers 30 seconds of extra power under full throttle – it's not just about economy.

The engine will be available from June on Swift (97g/km), Boleno (93g/km) and Ignis (97g/km).

Head of fleet for Suzuki GB Graeme Jenkins believes the manufacturer has the right products to hit 20,000 fleet sales

FACTFILE

Key personnel Dale Wyatt, director; Graeme Jenkins, head of fleet
Fleet sales (2016) 9,432
Fleet market share (2016) 0.68%
Key models Celerio, Ignis, Swift, Baleno, Jimny, Vitara, SX4 S-Cross

It is putting the foundations in place to boost its profile with key fleet stakeholders, including its own dealer network.

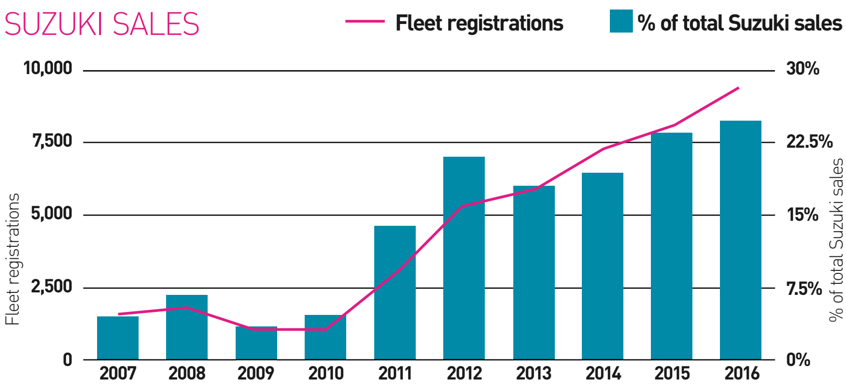
"We have dealer think tanks on fleet where we have open discussions to get our dealers engaged and excited," says Wyatt. "We are aware that we are a retailed-biased network but a lot of them are good at fleet with other brands. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities with Suzuki."

Later this year, as part of its "fleet evolution", Suzuki will introduce a fleet service programme to improve its service, maintenance and repair (SMR) proposition. It will focus on component pricing, labour rates and service expectations to ensure its after-sales proposition remains competitive.

Suzuki has identified three fleet "sweet spots" where it is prioritising its resources: Motability, leasing and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Jenkins says: "We have to gain traction with the contract hire and leasing industry to generate core fleet business. We will be avoiding short-cycle, distressing channels to concentrate on leasing and SME."

Core fleet for Suzuki is predominantly user-chooser, where success comes from creating demand for products backed-up by support for fleets and leasing companies, rather than the price-led job-need sector.



"The key is to make it easy to do business with us," says Wyatt.

Jenkins adds: "Also, leasing will give us access to the broker network indirectly, which is an incremental channel. And we see a massive opportunity in the public sector – our range fits."

Both local business and public sector sales will be facilitated through a white-label contract hire product with Lex Autolease, which is on the local government framework; it will also help Suzuki to exploit the growing trend for personal contract hire (PCH).

Jenkins is planning a major fleet launch in June where Suzuki will present its product plans and growth aspirations to the leasing sector, major end user fleets and the pricing guides.

"We will make everyone aware that we are serious about fleet," he says. "For the first time we have four or five models for fleets. We don't have to rely on just one. We are now a genuine choice."

Wyatt agrees: "We have a good model balance. Now it's about working on our channel balance."

Experts advise on keeping SMR costs under control

Wide range of providers will give decision-makers the lowdown on how to manage maintenance costs

Service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs can be the hidden 'wholelife cost killer' for any fleet as budgets are broken by unexpected garage visits. SMR is third in the hierarchy of vehicle costs, behind depreciation, which accounts for around two-thirds of spending, and fuel which is more than one-fifth.

Predicted servicing costs are typically around 11% of a vehicle's wholelife costs on key fleet models such as the Ford Focus, Vauxhall Astra and Volkswagen Golf, according to the *Fleet News* Running Costs Calculator, but without careful management, spending can soon start to rise.

Unexpected bills can come from a number of areas, although many of them can be linked to the way drivers use vehicles.

Employees can cause problems in several ways, such as ignoring service intervals that can cause breakdowns, or bad driving, which can result in premature wear on parts such as tyres and increase the chances of vehicle damage from crashes.

Fleet managers can also be at fault for failing to have effective processes in place to ensure vehicles are maintained properly by drivers and that suppliers are carrying out work correctly and to schedule.

Last year, research revealed that small businesses in the UK have to deal with vehicles being out of action for almost three working weeks on average each year, due to preventable breakdowns.

Business owners said that up to half the breakdowns could have been prevented if they had been alerted to a problem.

Once vehicles are off the road, costs can start to increase dramatically as replacement vehicles are brought in and if work takes longer than planned or additional faults are found.

At this year's Fleet Management LIVE, held on October 3-4 at the NEC in Birmingham, experts from companies in every sector will be on hand to identify how fleets can keep their SMR bills under control.

This ranges from manufacturers who focus on maximising reliability, competitive parts prices and an efficient dealer network, to fast-fit suppliers, parts providers and fleet management companies that can offer support, guidance and added value services.

Fleet Management LIVE allows visitors to review a wealth of suppliers in a single location, from leading manufacturers to more than 100 industry suppliers.

Such a wide range of suppliers gives fleet decision-makers a great overview of strategies for getting vehicles repaired, serviced and maximising on-road time.

For further information about SMR, see page 38.

More than 150 exhibitors

Fleet Management LIVE has moved to a new, larger hall at the NEC to provide fleet decision-makers with more to see and do.

This year it has grown to incorporate the Commercial Fleet Van & Truck Show to cover every area of the industry, with space for more than 150 exhibitors.

The expansion to a new 10,000 square metre home at the Birmingham exhibition centre reflects the wishes of vehicle operators, many of whom operate both cars and commercial vehicles.

Managers with a combined fleet of more than 500,000 vehicles are expected to attend this year's show.

Fleet Management LIVE has been designed for fleets by fleet experts and covers car, van and truck fleets, both large and small.

It is also designed to deliver value to managers from every area of the fleet sector, including fleet management, HR, finance, risk management, procurement and mobility management.

FLEET MANAGEMENT LIVE

Leading leasing companies join the line-up

More than 20 leasing companies, including many of the country's biggest suppliers, have signed up for this year's Fleet Management LIVE.

The leasing companies include the country's biggest leasing provider, Lex Autolease, which has a fleet of more than 330,000 vehicles, along with other key brands from the annual FN50 listing of the country's largest leasing companies.

Exhibitors will include Agility Fleet, ALD Automotive, Alphabet, Arnold Clark Vehicle Management, Arval, BT Fleet, CVM Group, Daimler Fleet Management, Enterprise Flex-E-Rent, Fourways Vehicle Solutions, Inchcape Fleet Solutions, Interactive Fleet Management, Lookers Fleet Services, Marshall Leasing, TCH Leasing, Total Motion Vehicle Management, Venson Automotive Solutions, Vindis Group Fleet, Volkswagen Financial Services and Zenith.

In total, the providers operate a combined fleet of more than a million vehicles.

Chris Lester, event director, said: "The presence of so many leading leasing companies provides a great opportunity for fleet decision-makers to compare services and also obtain a wealth of expert advice from a range of sources. Fleet Management LIVE is an essential part of the calendar for fleet operators because it provides an efficient and effective way to review industry suppliers in a single day."

Advice and guidance whatever your role in company

Best practice advice for employees in every department dealing with fleet is on offer at Fleet Management LIVE.

Fleet managers can attend a series of best practice sessions where advice and information is on offer that will drive fleet efficiencies.

Topics will include funding best practice for every vehicle type, covering cars, vans and trucks, telematics, legislation, managing drivers, risk management and corporate mobility.

In addition, there will be specialists briefing for executives in other departments at the Discover Fleet Theatres, with presentations covering procurement, HR and finance.

There will also be bespoke sessions designed for SMEs to provide them with guidance on the issues they need to consider when managing their vehicles.

For details of the added value sessions, visit the FML website at www.fleetmanagementlive.co.uk.

Exhibitor listing so far

BMW
Honda
Jaguar
Land Rover
Lexus
Mini
Seat
Toyota
Vauxhall
Volvo
Agility Fleet
AID Fuel Oils Group
ALD Automotive
Alphabet
Appy Fleet
Arnold Clark Vehicle Management
Arval
AssetWorks
Autoglass
Bott
BP Oil
BT Fleet
Carbaya
CC Keys
Chevin Fleet Solutions
CVM Fleet Management Solutions
Daimler Fleet Management
Dash Witness
Drive Software Solutions
DriveTech, part of The AA
Enterprise Flex-E-Rent
FleetCheck
Fleetcor
Fleet Evolution
FORS
Fourways Vehicles Solutions
Fuelmate
GEFCO
Inchcape Fleet Solutions
Interactive Fleet Management
Jaama
Keytracker
Lex Autolease
Licence Bureau
Lookers Leasing
Marshall Leasing
Nexus Vehicle Rental
O2
Parksafe Automotive
Probuild Transport Systems
Reflex Vans
RingGo Corporate
Scorpion Automotive
Selsia Vehicle Accident Centres
Sortimo
TCH Leasing
Telogis
The AA
Total Motion Vehicle Management
Venson Automotive Solutions
vGroup International
Vindis Group Fleet
Volkswagen Financial Services | Fleet
Zenith

SERVICE GUARANTEED?

Many manufacturers make a number of aftersales promises through fleet charters. But what do they cover? *Christopher Smith* reports

For the fleet manager and driver alike, making sure things run smoothly when service or maintenance is required is crucial. As independent servicing networks continue to up their game and focus ever more on the fleet sector, a number of manufacturers have developed initiatives to keep cars in their dealer networks by improving customer service and reducing complexity.

Enter the 'fleet charter' – a concept introduced by several manufacturers as a document that gives both fleet managers and drivers an idea of what they should expect during service, maintenance and repair (SMR) interactions.

The cross section of brands offering some form of document is broad and includes BMW, Mini, Hyundai and Mazda.

Here we answer some of the questions a fleet manager should ask about fleet charters.

Should I care about a fleet charter?

A fleet charter tends to be of most use if vehicles are owned and managed in-house. They may also be useful to local, smaller fleets who operate a sole supply or restricted choice and who use franchised dealers.

Also they show that a manufacturer takes fleet seriously which could influence their choice of brands.

"A fleet charter should give confidence to smaller fleets that dealerships are going the extra mile to support them," says Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group (FIAG).

"Fleet charters only appear to promise what fleet customers would be expecting from their partners – a focus on service and quality."

John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators association ACFO, believes that, charter or not, with a conversation, fleets can achieve most of their benefits.

They should be used as a starting point when arranging a service level agreement, and their success depends heavily on the buy-in of the manufacturer's fleet team and their dealer network.

He adds: "The majority of fleets should able to obtain, at a minimum, what the fleet charters set out to offer, simply by asking. Leasing and fleet management companies will have their own agreements in place, which may well be over and above those offered within the fleet charters."

However, the charters may also be used by a manufacturer to increase its credibility to fleet customers.

"We set up our charter to provide a level of assurance to the leasing industry and company car drivers that we have a network that values them," says Steve Tomlinson, head of fleet at Mazda.

"We recognised that drivers needed to feel they would receive great local service, even if the car wasn't bought through a particular dealer and their fleet didn't have a relationship in place on that local level."

Customer confidence in the brand and its product was also a key driver for the introduction of Hyundai's programme, says fleet director Guy Pigounakis.

"When you combine the fleet charter and our five-year warranty, we think the impact that has on customer confidence is immense," he adds. "We hope it lays to rest any concerns or questions a customer may have about the quality of our products and service."

What should a fleet manager look for when applying the charter?

Franchised dealers need to be able to demonstrate that the promises made in the fleet charter are deliverable to a consistently high standard.

Fleets can benchmark customer service levels by finding out how franchised dealer brands rank in driver surveys from leasing companies and the research companies such as Experte11ye.

Peter Eldridge, director of fleet training body ICFM, believes the network on the ground is the best indicator of a charter's success. "There must be consistency on the part of the dealer network with such elements as service booking lead time, parts availability and a genuine desire to promote reduced vehicle downtime," he says.

Are the policies followed?

"Fleet charters are 'created' by marketing people and there must be belief and commitment to what is in the document from the managing director downwards," says Bray.

He believes that buy-in is crucial for a charter to work well, and the manufacturer needs to ensure the policies and procedures set out are regularly followed.

"It is critical that fleet charters are bench-tested and regular checks are carried out to ensure they deliver what's promised," adds Bray.

"If that does not happen, and customers identify they are not benefiting from what was promised, then reputational harm could be caused to both the manufacturer and the dealer network."

Graham Burton, fleet aftersales manager at Hyundai, who is part of the team which introduced charter in 2014, says: "If something has not gone quite right, our fleet support team is the first port of call when any issues arise. It will raise the issue with the dealership and get it resolved without the fleet having to chase. We don't get a great deal of negative feedback, which is a positive. So when we do get issues, it's important we sort them as soon as possible."

It is also worth checking the participating dealers for any charter. Tomlinson says a small number of Mazda dealers have not signed up to the scheme, but that it is often for a minor reason.

"Some sites are unable to offer reliable customer Wi-Fi, so are not listed as partners, but they will often be able to meet many of the other criteria in the charter," he adds.

"We set up our charter to provide a level of assurance to the leasing industry and company car drivers that we have a network that values them"

Steve Tomlinson, Mazda

What does a fleet charter usually cover?

The specifics of a fleet charter will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer but, while the details may change, there are usually a few constant themes.

Appointment booking

Guaranteed appointment timescales are a mainstay of the fleet charter, generally with two options – one allowing for the supply of a courtesy car, and a shorter timescale if a replacement loan vehicle is not required.

The ability to fast-track safety-critical or urgent repairs for fleet customers is a high priority, and a charter formalises this.

Burton explains that as Hyundai's fleet vehicle parc began to grow several years ago, the network had to adapt to the faster turnarounds required by the sector.

"We now specify a 'fleet core stock' of parts in every dealer, that are frequently used by fleet vehicles, so the customer does not have to wait for the spare to arrive," he says.

"It means vehicles can get the extra little jobs found during servicing done the same day, reducing downtime and getting the driver mobile again more quickly.

"While we provide courtesy cars, we know it's no substitute to getting the driver back in their own vehicle, suited to their job, as soon as possible."

Onward mobility

Whether it is a courtesy car, the provision of a vehicle collection and delivery service, or a service to provide a lift for a driver into the office, the majority of charters include an obligation for helping reach a destination or get home when a vehicle is in for scheduled work.

Customer facilities

Adequate facilities for a customer to work during a visit to a dealership are often high on the agenda, with free Wi-Fi, complimentary tea and coffee, and comfortable seating all regular features.

Vehicle cleaning

A wash and vacuum is a standard offering for many manufacturers today, regardless of a fleet charter – but its inclusion as a promise ensures drivers feel like their vehicle has been cared for upon its return.

Burton says it is often one of the most appreciated elements of Hyundai's fleet charter.

"The wash and vacuum is a big thing for many of the drivers – we get a lot of positive comments about this," he adds.

Fixed-price fleet servicing

With vehicles based across the country, it can be difficult for fleet managers and leasing companies to budget accurately for SMR-related costs. Many manufacturers, even those without customer-facing fleet charters, operate some form of fleet pricing structure (see panel opposite).

Pryor says that any national pricing structure has probably already been accounted for earlier in the purchase process.

"Repair costs are important, but they should already have been factored into vehicle wholelife cost calculations when choice lists were being compiled," he adds.

Burton says that Hyundai operates a capped rate system – its national fleet pricing is a maximum rate. "If they have a particularly important fleet customer in the area, they have the ability to improve the rates if they choose to," he adds.

Free fitting of consumables

The fitment of items such as wiper blades and bulbs for no additional labour cost is a regular charter feature, alongside free top-ups of liquid consumables like washer fluid.

Issuing a word of caution, Pryor adds: "Fleets should be aware when working in partnership with a franchised dealer how it handles SMR work in respect of items such as MOTs and tyre and exhaust replacement. Many outsource that work to a third party, but build in a profit margin."

Vehicle health checks

With the advent of longer servicing intervals, it could be up to two years in some cases between regular full services.

The fleet charter will guarantee the option to take a free vehicle health check in the interim to ensure critical safety issues are not missed. "This provides a traffic light report on the essential wear and tear elements of a vehicle, ensuring it is safe even between services," adds Burton.

Extended warranty coverage and goodwill

Some charters will extend their warranties and offer goodwill for certain repairs more easily for fleet vehicles.

BMW, for example, extends its three-year/60,000-mile warranty to unlimited miles for corporate customers, while Škoda promises to look more favourably on goodwill requests for fleet vehicles, as long as the car has been maintained within its own network.

Software updates

Software updates will be completed without labour charge while a vehicle is in for other SMR work under many charters. As vehicles become ever more reliant on software for safety, connectivity and essential functions, keeping vehicles updated is crucial.

Systems integration

Several charters mention integration with the 1link national SMR booking network, so the process for booking in and invoicing is no different to that of a tyre change.

"We do an annual health check on our dealer's integrations with the 1link platform to make sure that runs as smoothly as possible," says Burton.

"Our menu pricing goes live on the system shortly, too, to avoid dealership keying-in errors. We try to ensure our dealers are up to speed with the charters and have all the systems working and available, to deal with fleets in one place."

Dedicated support

If things go wrong, or additional support is needed, a fleet charter guarantees the support and assistance of a central aftersales team at the manufacturer, dedicated to corporate and fleet customers.

Henry Williams, head of fleet at Škoda, says its aftersales team plays a vital role in ensuring the job is completed correctly. "We follow-up directly with the fleet manager or driver within three working days of the work being completed to ensure complete satisfaction," he says.

> *"We now specify a 'fleet core stock' of parts in every dealer, so the customer does not have to wait for the spare to arrive"*

Graham Burton, Hyundai

PRICE FIXING AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

A number of brands who do not have aftersales charters or fleet specific SLAs will operate a fleet pricing structure for maintenance.

Key to providing solid SMR figures for leasing companies' wholelife costs, these national cost tables are also available direct to fleets in most cases.

Ford operates the Fleet National Pricing programme, designed for fleets of 25 vehicles or more, which provides maximum costs for a number of specific repair jobs, in addition to major and minor servicing pricing.

Volkswagen offers a fleet package pricing structure, which provides price bands for tasks like servicing and MOT tests on a regional basis, accounting for variations to labour rates.

Vauxhall's menu pricing system offers online booking, four labour pricing bands, again dependent on dealership location, and national parts pricing. Fleets of any size are able to take advantage of the programme, which is supported by centralised billing.

BMW and Mini approach fixed price maintenance by encouraging fleet and retail customers alike to take out a discounted package across the life of the vehicle, to cover routine servicing.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Kirsty Richardson and Tom Bradley,
Flora Tec Ltd

FleetNews AWARDS 2017

WINNER: SWANSWAY GROUP

Customer experience is major priority for 'control freak' firm

The reference is an informal one but the business of ensuring total end-user satisfaction is serious for leading fleet dealer

"Our team can take the new model to the end-user to assess. Saving people time sells cars"

Sarah Eccles, Swansway Group Fleet

FACTFILE

Portfolio 14 brands sold from 18 sites, plus through a dedicated fleet centre at group headquarters in Crewe
Leasing company business 42%
End-user fleet business 58%
Average delivery customer handover experience score 96%
Average response to quotation time 20 minutes
Deliveries-to-complaints ratio less than 1:100

By Jeremy Bennett

The changing characteristics of fleet business means Swansway Group will not be resting on its laurels following a year of volume growth, contract wins and inward investment which saw the company win its first Fleet News Award.

The blurring of lines between what defines fleet and retail business, changing end-user expectations and the influence of the internet on selection decisions are three key areas of consideration for Swansway Group Fleet sales director Sarah Eccles.

Several years ago awareness of the changes led to considerable investment in the business's fleet services and innovation in the way it wins and retains customers.

Eccles formally refers to the need for "total control of the customer experience" – informally she says Crewe-based Swansway Group Fleet is a control freak.

For example, Swansway formed two online brokerage businesses – Uchoose and Stable Contracts – to prevent losing profit to a third party and attract company car drivers using the net to 'shop'; all vehicles are supplied direct from Swansway dealerships.

As another example, in 2015, £500,000 was spent on a new group fleet centre, home to the fleet sales team, key account and administration teams, brand specialists, five-ramp PDI team, a logistics operation, 350-vehicle storage and automated car-wash and valeting team.

The centre has contributed to vehicle turnaround time, reducing it from four days to less than two.

Swansway has its own fleet service KPIs, to ensure it gives all its customers the highest level of service "above and beyond the requirements of their individual service level agreements". Its delivery customer handover experience scores have to be a minimum 90%. Currently, the overall score is 96%.

"We benchmark ourselves on the scores the end-user driver gives to our delivery driver," Eccles says.

"We are looking for at least nine out of 10. We do this because many leasing companies do not measure their service level agreement scores. But we want to make sure our service level is excellent to all customers."

Fleet News: How do you ensure you are meeting a fleet manager's requirements?

Sarah Eccles: Going back to basics. So, delivering what you say you will do, turning vehicles around as quickly as possible and having brand specialists available to the managers in our account management team, as opposed to one or two people knowing a little about each brand. Also, being flexible on what we can provide to meet a manager's needs. So, for example, P11D information from us as well as from the leasing companies and when a mid-term car is being passed to another driver, we pick it up, do a health check and deliver it 'as new' to them, with a full handover ensuring a fleet's duty of care commitments are fulfilled. Swansway also offers extended test drives of more than 72 hours (compared to the normal 48 hours) to allow fleet managers to appraise the vehicle as well as end-users to ensure it is practical for them.

FN: What do you do to ensure Swansway retains all servicing work on vehicles you supply?

SE: If there is ever a problem with a car it comes back to Swansway; we own it to ensure it's resolved properly. We encourage fleets to call us rather than a service department. Very often we will provide a driver with a temporary vehicle in the event of a problem and transport their car back to the fleet centre – or one of our dealers – for repair.

Sarah Eccles received the award from *Automotive Management* associate editor Jeremy Bennett

Swansway Group Fleet sales director Sarah Eccles (seated, centre) with members of her team

FN: You've mentioned the increasing power of the end-user to chose their vehicle. How are their demands and expectations impacting on your service delivery?

SE: Every interaction we have with a driver has to add value to their experience of Swansway. For example, we provide vehicle handover videos so they have a permanent record they can refer to for details of the car, vehicles are delivered at an agreed time, long-term demos are available, as are our brand specialists to answer questions on their car choices.

And before our delivery driver leaves the end-user, the final question our driver asks is always, 'Is there anything more I can tell you or question I can answer?' as we need to know they are going to drive safely from the off.

For every car we deliver we must have three happy customers: the leasing company and the fleet manager – which we are representing – and the driver.

FN: How does Swansway ensure optimum care is delivered throughout the lease period, and not just at handover and immediately afterwards?

SE: For our leasing partners it's down to daily communication, ensuring our SLAs are at their maximum. For our end-users and local business customers we let them know we're always available for often the small jobs such as picking up and delivering service cars. I constantly encourage the local business development team to work as service collection drivers from time-to-time. As the time approaches for a driver to choose their next car, our team can take the new model to the end-user to assess. It's a much more valuable, convenient experience than coming to a showroom. Saving people time sells cars.

On our brokerage side we send out six-monthly emails to ensure drivers are happy; every 12 months we check to ensure vehicle mileages are on track and we make a phone call at 18 months. The touchpoints ensure our name is known, drivers are happy. As we approach change, they are more likely to take our call, stopping them going out to the open market for their next car.

FN: Ho do you plan to maintain your reputation, to stay ahead of the competition?

SE: We realised several years ago leasing was changing; there was a blurring of the lines between fleet and retail business for example in personal contract hire which is still classed as fleet registration for most of our brands; the emergence of the internet as research or shopping channel for drivers; increase in the risk of brokers taking some of our profit and the need to get a 100% grip on the customer to ensure the service standards we expected, to win new business, but, as importantly, retain our customers.

Facing these challenges has led us to where we are now. Our future lies in maintaining our three-pronged attack: excel in leasing, where we'll always want to grow; further our supply to local businesses and finally expand our brokerage businesses.

The innovative spirit has seen Swansway Group Fleet not only adopt video walkarounds, but also use video for team member introductions, a more personalised approach than an email.

And now, Swansway Group Fleet has its own drone to add to the professionalism of static reviews, moving on from the shaky hand-held video.

"We must excel in every avenue a driver would take to choose a company car – this fosters a spirit of innovation and drive for professionalism in all parts of the business," Eccles says.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Swansway has invested heavily in fleet with a standalone group fleet centre which has reduced vehicle turnaround times. It sets high customer satisfaction standards for vehicle handover. It has strong partnerships with leasing companies and fleet sales director Sarah Eccles is involved with of a number of working parties.

CLEANEST CARS IN FLEET FEATURED AT CCIA

Launch of special EV/hybrid zone reflects fleets' growing interest in plug-in cars

Manufacturers that are leading the way in supporting the shift to ultra-low emission fleets will be showcasing their latest models during Company Car in Action next month.

Some of the cleanest cars on the market will be on show at the EV/Hybrid Review Zone where the focus will be on plug-in cars that can slash emissions and running costs for switched-on fleet managers.

The zone will feature models from manufacturers that are at the forefront of plug-in technology, including BMW, Citroën, Ford, Kia, Nissan, Renault, Tesla, Toyota, Volkswagen and Volvo.

Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) on show will include the new Mini Cooper S E Countryman All4, the brand's first plug-in hybrid, the Tesla Model X, known as much for its falcon wing doors as its zero-emissions capability, and the Volvo XC90 T8 twin engine, one of the most powerful and efficient SUVs on the market.

What all the models have in common is the ability to progress fleet operators throughout the country to a new stage in business motoring.

In addition to the latest ultra-low emission cars, there will be a number of industry experts available to discuss the vehicles, the technology behind them and the benefits they could bring to fleets.

The launch of the zone comes as increasing numbers of companies and drivers investigate the potential benefits of plug-in vehicles.

In the past year, zone sponsor Chargemaster has reported 300% growth in its customer base as drivers switch to electric power.

Chargemaster operates the Polar network of 5,000 recharging points throughout the country, which serves around 50,000 customers.

It is at the forefront of innovations in the network, including the development of wireless charging and new payment methods, such as contactless cards.

At the zone, it will be able to brief fleets on its charging systems, including its smallest rapid charging point that can be installed without the need for planning permission.

Chargemaster recently won the contract to launch the EV Experience Centre, a multi-brand showroom in Milton Keynes, to spread the message about ULEVs.

At Company Car in Action, the EV/Hybrid Review Zone is part of a range of added-value benefits that will enhance the experience for fleet operators attending the event, which is held at Millbrook Proving Ground on June 13-14.

This includes a series of industry debates which will look at the key issues that matter to fleet operators, covering future fleet fuels and introducing new technology without compromising safety.

Vehicles on show at the EV/Hybrid Review Zone

MINI COOPER S E COUNTRYMAN ALL4

KIA OPTIMA PHEV

NISSAN LEAF TEKNA 30KWH

FORD MONDEO HYBRID TITANIUM

VOLVO XC90 T8 TWIN ENGINE

VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT GTE

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Connected cars in focus during great debate

Over the next decade, millions of connected cars will be sold to companies throughout the UK, but what will their arrival mean for fleet managers?

That is the focus of an industry debate taking place during CCIA, which will look at the risks and rewards of connected technology.

The 'Great Debate: Technology and safety – managing connected cars and autonomy', will ask how fleet policies need to adapt to cover the universal use of smartphones, the growing use of connected cars and increasing availability of autonomous technologies.

The challenge for fleets is to obtain the benefits from accessing data available from modern vehicles, while ensuring that this does not cause any safety-related issues such as driver distraction or breaches of data security.

Recently, automotive technology consultancy SBD Automotive warned that the industry could lose out if it didn't fully utilise connected cars, despite ongoing concerns.

The debate will include a presentation from Adam Jefferson, specialist – cross car, at SBD Automotive, to look at the benefits of connected cars.

However, safety campaigners have raised concerns that drivers are facing increasing levels of distraction at the wheel and this could undermine risk management efforts.

The debate will assess how fleets can ensure they are controlling risk while making the best use of technology.

A second debate will look at the fuel choices fleets are now facing and the pros and cons surrounding the future of diesel.

The Great Debate at CCIA takes place at 10.30am each day in the main exhibition area.

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LAND ROVER DISCOVERY

A significant step up in comfort, refinement and efficiency over predecessor

NEED TO KNOW

- Improved efficiency of 171g/km CO_2 and 43.5mpg
- Eight-speed automatic gearbox
- Longer, narrower and lower than previous model

By Andrew Ryan

Land Rover's move upmarket and away from the utilitarian models of its past has continued with the new Discovery, its plushest vehicle yet.

With plenty of room for seven adults, the fifth-generation large SUV is a noticeable step up in comfort and refinement over its predecessor.

It is also significantly more efficient. At the end of its life, the previous Discovery was available with only one engine, a 3.0-litre SDV6 with CO_2 emissions of 213g/km and an official combined fuel economy of 35.3mpg.

The new model is available with Jaguar Land Rover's 2.0-litre SD4 diesel Ingenium engine for the first time, and the 240PS (500Nm of torque) unit provides efficiency figures of 171g/km and 43.5mpg.

£7,076
is the company car tax bill in the 33% BIK tax band

For full running costs, visit fleetnews.co.uk/running-costs


A luxurious cabin gives a sense of occasion behind the wheel

In SE trim (P11D price: £49,140), its emissions hand a 40% taxpayer an annual company car tax bill of £7,076 as it sits in the 36% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band. However, in reality, while emissions are much lower than its predecessor, BIK isn't as the top band is 37%.

The Discovery fares much worse than its Audi Q7 rival under the new Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rules. Due to its emissions, it incurs a first year rate of £800 compared to the Q7's £200. Both are £140 a year after that.

For those potential Discovery customers who want more power, a 3.0 TD6 engine with 258PS and 600Nm of torque is also available, as is a supercharged petrol 3.0 Si6, which produces 240PS and 450Nm.

The 3.0 TD6 offers 189g/km and 39.2mpg, with the 3.0 Si6 producing 254g/km and an official combined fuel economy of 26mpg.

For most drivers, the 2.0 SD4 model will provide more than ample performance. It delivers its power smoothly through an eight-speed automatic gearbox, the only transmission available across the range.

Performance is aided by the increased use of aluminium in the structure, which has helped reduce the new Discovery's weight by up to 480kg compared to its predecessor.

However, it still weighs 2,105kg, and at 4,970mm long, 2,220mm wide and 1,846mm tall, it is 141mm longer, but narrower and lower than before.

On the road there is no disguising the fact that the Discovery is a big, heavy car. Its ride is set up to cosset rather than entertain with sporty handling and this means it doesn't feel particularly agile. However, it is extremely comfortable and its high levels of refinement match the character of its luxurious cabin perfectly. There is a real sense of occasion when you get behind the wheel.

The driving position is commanding, while its three rows of seats provide plenty of room for seven people: Discovery continues with its predecessor's 'stadium seating' arrangement, which sees each row positioned higher than the one in front, improving passenger visibility.

Headroom for passengers in the third row is also optimised by the latest Discovery retaining the stepped roofline of its predecessors.

Those seeking the traditional off-road capabilities of Land Rover will not be disappointed

Boot space with the third row of seats folded down is 1,137 litres, rising to 2,406 litres with the second row folded as well.

The Discovery has four trim levels: S, SE, HSE and HSE Luxury. All models feature cruise control, an InControl Touch infotainment system with digital radio, air suspension, autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, and heated windscreen and door mirrors.

SE adds LED automatic headlights, power fold mirrors, leather interior, heated front seats, and front and rear parking sensors.

Standard equipment on HSE includes a panoramic roof, heated rear seats, keyless entry, rear view camera and blind spot monitor, while range-topping HSE Luxury adds a surround camera system, opening sun roof, four zone climate control and Terrain Response 2, which adapts the drivetrain to various conditions.

The Discovery is also available with a number of options. These include a head-up display (£1,035), adaptive cruise control with queue assist (£1,475), and Intelligent Seat Fold (£415) which folds the second and third rows of fleets flat via a smartphone app.

Despite its move upmarket – a further sign of this is that no commercial version is planned – the Discovery continues to be outstandingly capable off-road.

Its air suspension can increase the ride height by 40mm at speeds up to 50mph or 75mm at below 31mph, to create 283mm of ground clearance and a 900mm wading depth, while a range of technologies provide it with excellent traction in difficult conditions and terrain. This means the Discovery is a hugely impressive package. Those who want the traditional off-road abilities of a Land Rover will not be disappointed, while its blend of practicality, comfort, quality and technology gives it plenty of appeal to luxury large SUV drivers too.

"Despite its move upmarket the Discovery continues to be outstandingly capable off-road"

COSTS

P11D price	£49,140
BIK tax band (2016/17)	36%
Annual BIK tax (40%)	£7,076
Class 1A NIC	£2,441
Annual VED	£800 then £140
RV (4yr/80K)	£19,350/39%
Fuel cost (ppm)	12.49
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80K)	55.89ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	240/500
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	171
Top speed (mph)	121
0-62mph (sec)	8.3
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	43.5

KEY RIVAL

Audi Q7 3.0 TDI 218 SE	
P11D price:	£49,305
BIK tax band (2016/17)	32%
Annual BIK tax (40%)	£6,311
Class 1A NIC	£2,177
Annual VED	£200 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£17,200/35%
Fuel cost (ppm)	11.16ppm
AFR (ppm)	13
Running cost (4yr/80k)	57.74ppm

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

THINKING CAP

By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

cap hpi

Monday/Tuesday Flew from Farnborough to Grosseto in Tuscany to drive the all-new Kia Picanto. Although it is the same length as the current car, the clever designers and engineers have managed to get more cabin and boot space.

It is available with either a 1.0-litre or 1.25-litre petrol engine, and both are pretty good, even going up some of the hills in Northern Italy. It is well put together, has a high level of quality and as expected with a Kia, the standard equipment list is fairly extensive.

The Picanto, like Tuscany, is pretty and should appeal to many who want a good small city car, but with plenty of room. Prices from £9,450 to £13,950 (see page 51).

"Aston has had many owners and none has really made any money out of it"

Wednesday Went to see a large leasing company and, as is becoming the norm in conversations, the subject was diesel and its future. I have no real answer, but it is a bit of a mess. The Government needs to reduce CO_2 but local authorities have to improve air quality. The debate will simmer for some time, and with no real winners, except maybe the makers of petrol engines.

Thursday Down to the Gaydon HQ of Aston Martin for a meeting and a drive around Warwickshire in the magnificent DB11.

Aston Martin was founded in 1913 and it is now using this date in its publicity material to shout about its history and heritage.

Aston has had many owners, and none has really made any money out of it.

But the current owners are serious about making the best cars, investing heavily and making a profit. The DB11's comfort level is extremely good and I found it great to drive. The DB11 won't appear on many fleet lists, but if it did, and you kept it long enough, you are sure to get your money back, and a bit more, too.


"THE TEAM AT FLEET NEWS BUYING GROUP HAVE BEEN A GREAT HELP. WE MANAGED TO SAVE OVER £6,000 OFF OUR LATEST VEHICLE PURCHASE"
Richard Green and Russell Sidebottom, Give the dog a bone

1.0 2

KIA PICANTO

Third-generation city car has bolder styling, a bigger boot and a wealth of options

Pop Orange is one of 11 paint options available on the Picanto

NEED TO KNOW

- **Bolder looking Picanto comes with new tech**
- **Autonomous emergency braking available**
- **GT Line offers sporty styling**

By Simon Harris

The launch of the Picanto in 2004 was the first evidence of Kia's move from being a budget to a mainstream car manufacturer.

Three years before the launch of the Europe-built Ceed, the Picanto showed that in the price-conscious city car (A-sector), it could produce a model that was more practical than a Ford Ka and had more pleasing looks and driver appeal than a Vauxhall Agila.

The second-generation Picanto, with sharper looks and improved quality, had even broader appeal. Now this third-generation car, launched in April, is even more distinctive, especially when chosen with the new GT Line top equipment grade with red accents in the styling kit.

The Picanto looks similar to its predecessor, but benefits from bolder styling. Its wheelbase is slightly longer so it's roomier inside and, despite being the same overall length, the new Picanto has a bigger boot – 255 litres minimum.

The interior is neat, modern and simple, with a seven-inch touchscreen in the dashboard centre on higher-grade models, moving some of the controls closer to the driver's line of vision. There are hard plastics on the doors and dashboard as is common in the city car sector, and the Picanto feels every bit as robust inside as a Volkswagen Up.

Entry-level grade 1 models feature standard electric front windows, remote central locking, auxiliary and USB ports, tilt-adjustable steering, automatic headlights, 60:40 split folding rear seats and six airbags.

Grade 2 adds air conditioning, electric rear windows, electric heated door mirrors, Bluetooth, a leather-trimmed steering wheel and gear-lever, plus 14-inch alloy wheels.

COSTS

P11D price	£10,555
BIK tax band (2016/17)	19%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£401
Class 1A NIC	£277
Annual VED	££140
RV (4yr/80K)	£2,550/24%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.32
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80K)	21.2ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	67/71
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	101
Top speed (mph)	100
0-62mph (sec)	14.3
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	67.3

KEY RIVAL

Ford Ka+ 1.2 70 Zetec	
P11D price:	£10,330
BIK tax band (2016/17)	21%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£434
Class 1A NIC	£299
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£2,900/28%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.46
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	22.19ppm

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

Higher grade models include a seven-inch touchscreen

Step up to 3 for standard autonomous emergency braking, automatic air conditioning, cruise control with a speed limiter, a seven-inch dashboard-mounted touchscreen with sat-nav and full connectivity, Bluetooth with voice recognition, digital radio, a rear parking camera and sensors, and chromed exterior door handles. AEB is an option on the lower grades.

GT Line adds the exterior styling kit, but does without the dashboard touchscreen, while the GT Line S includes the screen with sat-nav as well as a wireless phone charger.

We spent most time in the 67PS 1.0-litre, which is the most frugal of the engines on offer, and likely pool car material. It would work well in urban areas, but struggles to maintain momentum heading into the hills at higher speeds.

If regular high-speed driving is likely, the 84PS 1.2-litre might work out just as cheap on fuel in the real world, as it would be working less hard than the 1.0-litre.

New to the Picanto, but not available until later in the year, is a turbocharged version of the 1.0-litre engine – the 100PS 1.0 T-GDI. This would certainly give the new GT Line cars the performance to match their looks.

1.9TD UTAH DOUBLE CAB

ISUZU D-MAX

Improved standard specification aimed at increasing sales in lifestyle sector

The D-Max has downsized its engine without reducing payload or pulling power

NEED TO KNOW

- New 1.9-litre 164PS engine
- 3.5-tonne towing capacity
- More equipment and greater refinement

By Matt de Prez

Isuzu has updated its D-Max pick-up truck for 2017 and the highlight is a new engine promising lower emissions and improved refinement. The facelifted truck joins a competitive market which, following strong growth, is predicted to achieve a record 50,000 registrations in 2017.

To compete with big players like the market-leading Ford Ranger and Nissan Navara, Isuzu has upped the standard specification on the D-Max and improved its roadholding.

Traditionally the D-Max appealed to more utilitarian customers but with higher spec Yukon and Blade models the brand wants to increase sales in the lifestyle sector.

The core Utility spec model is priced from £15,749 (ex VAT) and gets LED daytime lights, Bluetooth and Hill Descent Control with Hill Assist. It is available in single, extended and double cab bodies. At the launch we tested the £24,149 Utah and the range-topping £27,999 Blade Automatic. Both are only available in double cab.

Keyless entry, leather seats and sat-nav feature on both while the Blade gets parking sensors, a bigger nine-inch infotainment screen and the choice of a canopy or roller cover.

Inside the D-Max feels robust and well made. The layout is simple and there are plenty of storage pockets. We were impressed by the seats, but limited steering column adjustment made it difficult to achieve a comfortable driving position.

All D-Max models use the same 1.9-litre turbodiesel engine which develops 164PS and 360Nm of torque.

It's quieter than the outgoing 2.4-litre unit but still makes itself known at idle and on the road. Despite downsizing its engine the D-Max can still carry a one tonne payload and tow a 3.5-tonne trailer.

COSTS

P11D price	£23,864
BIK tax band (2017/2018)	N/A
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£646
Class 1A NIC	£445
Annual VED	£240
RV (4yr/80K)	20.89ppm
Fuel cost (ppm)	13.45
SMR (ppm)	5.92
Running cost (4yr/80K)	40.26ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	164/360
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	183
Top speed (mph)	N/A
0-62mph (sec)	12.7
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	40

KEY RIVAL

Mitsubishi L200 Double Cab Warrior	
P11D price:	£23,549
BIK tax band (2017/2018)	N/A
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£646
Class 1A NIC	£445
Annual VED	£240
RV (4yr/80k)	20.56ppm
Fuel cost (ppm)	13.66
SMR (ppm)	8.04
Running cost (4yr/80k)	42.66ppm

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


Steering column adjustment is limited

It also uses less fuel than the old model returning up to 45.6mpg (4x2 Utility Single Cab). The top spec Blade Automatic is the least efficient but still returns 36.2mpg and does without the need for AdBlue.

Torque is increased across all six gears thanks to new ratios and the D-Max offers adequate performance with acceleration from 0-60mph taking 12.7 seconds.

The improvements in handling are noticeable but the D-Max still lacks the finesse of more car-like rivals, mainly due to its unresponsive steering.

With an unladen weight of 1,959kg the D-Max is not subjected to commercial vehicle speed restrictions (60mph on dual carriageways and 50mph on single) unlike the heavier double cab Toyota Hilux and Ford Ranger models.

It does, however, qualify for commercial vehicle tax status so benefit-in-kind tax is fixed for the range at £646 per year for 20% taxpayers and £1,292 for 40% taxpayers. Those taking fuel will pay an additional £122 per year (£244 – 40%).

Its key rivals are the Mitsubishi L200 Warrior (£23,549) and the Ford Ranger Limited (£24,991). The L200 is slightly more costly to operate (42ppm) owing to its higher SMR costs, but all three offer identical fuel consumption (40mpg) and similar depreciation of 21ppm.

Changes to the exterior such as the re-styled bumpers are most noticeable

1.5 HYBRID E-CVT ICON TECH

TOYOTA YARIS

Mid-life facelift likely to appeal to the head more than the heart

NEED TO KNOW

- New 1.5-litre petrol engine completes range
- Hybrid models receive boost in refinement
- Lacks 'fun factor' of rivals

By Matt de Prez

Toyota has given the Yaris a mid-life facelift which brings a new engine and revised trim levels, but waves off the diesel engine and three-door shell.

Exterior changes are minimal, but the most noticeable. They include re-styled bumpers and a new tailgate with larger rear lights.

Inside the same dash is carried over with the same scratchy plastics, but the instrument cluster has been refreshed with a 4.2-inch colour trip computer display.

The 1.0-litre petrol and 1.5-litre hybrid engines remain but are joined by a new 1.5-litre petrol engine.

Hybrid models carry the lowest CO_2 emissions figure of 75g/km, while the 1.0-litre emits 99g/km. The new engine is more efficient than the outgoing 1.33-litre unit at 109g/km for the manual or 105g/km for the automatic.

Prices for the new Yaris start at £12,995 for the Active trim rising to £19,295 for the Excel Hybrid. Icon models, which start at £14,495, are expected to be the best sellers with almost half being hybrids.

All three powertrains offer low running costs for fleet customers with the Hybrid attracting the lowest company car tax thanks to its 13% benefit-in-kind banding. It also returns the best fuel consumption.

Getting the most from the hybrid is easier said than done. If drivers are unaware of how the vehicles must be driven to achieve the best balance of electric and petrol propulsion, then they are likely to fall short of the official 85.6mpg.

However, Toyota says the system is able to operate a 40/60 split in favour of petrol, proving clean and silent running in towns and when driving at speeds up to around 35mph.

Hybrid models also benefit from extra sound-deadening and different suspension settings, giving a more refined ride.

COSTS

P11D price £18,075
BIK tax band (2016/17) 13%
Annual BIK tax (20%) £469
Class 1A NIC £324.26
Annual VED £15 then £130
RV (4yr/80K) n/a
Fuel cost (ppm) 6.24
AFR (ppm) 14
Running cost (4yr/80K) n/a

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm) 98/n/a
CO_2 emissions (g/km) 75
Top speed (mph) 103
0-62mph (sec) 11.8
Fuel efficiency (mpg) 85.6

KEY RIVAL

Nissan Micra 0.9T N-Connecta Bose Vision +
P11D price: £16,990
BIK tax band (2016/17) 18%
Annual BIK tax (20%) £612
Class 1A NIC £422
Annual VED £120 then £140
RV (4yr/80k) £4,150
Fuel cost (ppm) 8.32
AFR (ppm) 11
Running cost (4yr/80k) 27.21ppm

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


A 4.2-inch colour trip computer display has been added

The three-cylinder 1.0-litre unit is the most 'raw' and despite a leisurely 0-60mph time of 15 seconds, it feels surprisingly eager and has no problem cruising at motorway speeds.

The fastest Yaris is the new 1.5-litre model which develops 110PS. It reaches 60mph in 12 seconds but lacks the revvy charm of the smaller engine. It also sounds strained at higher revs but offers more low-down torque.

Headline stats for the new engine aren't ground-breaking with combined economy reported as 58.9mpg and CO_2 emissions of 109g/km but this unit has been developed to excel in the upcoming real-world emissions tests.

Our pick of the range would still be the Hybrid. Although its CVT gearbox makes hard acceleration a painful experience, the increased refinement and low emissions make it ideal for company car drivers who do a lot of city driving.

In any guise the Yaris is pretty uneventful to drive, but as a tool it functions well. Against rivals like the Suzuki Swift, Nissan Micra and upcoming Seat Ibiza the Yaris just doesn't feel special. Its chassis lacks the agility of the Swift and the Micra has a far better interior.

However the Yaris is still the only car in the sector to offer a full-hybrid powertrain and comes with a five-year 100,000 mile warranty. It's a car you choose with your head rather than your heart.

2.0 TDI 150

ŠKODA OCTAVIA SCOUT

Estate car practicality combines with all-wheel drive and off-road capability

The revamped Octavia Scout has a new look front end

NEED TO KNOW

- Scout 4x4 benefits from Škoda Octavia updates
- New safety features including blindspot warning
- Pedestrian detection added to forward collision avoidance

By Simon Harris

A car's typical lifecycle of six years can seem like an eternity when we look at the changes in technology and elsewhere. Six years ago this month the iPhone 4 was current (we're now on the iPhone 7), the Boeing 787 Dreamliner was yet to make its first commercial flight, and I had never watched *Mrs Brown's Boys* or heard of Ed Sheeran. Bliss.

It's just three years since Škoda launched the third-generation Octavia and, while it was a very competent and capable fleet car at the time, it has now undergone a series of updates and improvements, as well as a new look front end.

Like its Volkswagen Group lower-medium car cousins, the Audi A3, the Volkswagen Golf and the Seat Leon, the Octavia is benefiting from new features, and the latest model we've tried is the Scout.

Based on the Octavia estate, the Scout offers raised ground clearance with under-body protection and four-wheel drive, and in the UK is a diesel-only model, with either a manual 150PS 2.0 TDI or a DSG automatic 184PS 2.0 TDI.

Much loved by bluelight fleets as a paramedic first responder vehicle, or a police car able to reach remote areas crossing rough terrain, the Scout hides a plush interior behind the rugged exterior styling, and has user-chooser appeal for those who need the practicality of an estate car, the security of all-wheel drive and some off-road capability, but don't want an SUV.

The seats combine Alcantara fabric and leather. It has an eight-inch touchscreen display with navigation and infotainment functions, full LED headlamps, lane-keeping assistance, heated front seats and multi-function steering wheel.

COSTS

P11D price	£26,470
BIK tax band (2016/17)	28%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,482
Class 1A NIC	£1,023
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80K)	£6,450/24%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.62
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80K)	38.88ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	150/251
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	130
Top speed (mph)	132
0-62mph (sec)	8.6
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	61.4

KEY RIVAL

Volkswagen Golf Alltrack TDI 150	
P11D price:	£28,520
BIK tax band (2016/17)	28%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,597
Class 1A NIC	£1,102
Annual VED	£200 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,050/28%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.81
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	39.58ppm

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

A multi-function steering wheel is standard on the Octavia Scout

New features for 2017 include the availability of 'trailer assist', which automatically controls the steering when reversing with a trailer, blindspot alert and rear cross traffic alert which warns of approaching vehicles from the rear.

Škoda Connect is also new and has two levels: Infotainment Online services provide additional information such as weather reports and parking space availability, along with real-time navigation details; Care Connect provides remote access as well as assistance. A year's subscription to Infotainment online is available as an option.

The diesel engines in the Scout are the same as when this model was launched in 2014, with the 150PS version producing CO_2 of 130/km, while the 184PS DSG falls into the same BIK tax band at 133g/km.

The Scout is smooth, rapid and well balanced on the road, with its higher centre of gravity over a standard Octavia estate almost unnoticeable in the way it performs.

Four-wheel drive rivals for this car are scarce unless you look within the VW Group, where you'll find the Seat Leon Xperience and the Volkswagen Golf Alltrack. The Octavia Scout seems to be the pick of the bunch, with all of the ability, more space and lower costs.

FORD S-MAX 2.0 TDCI AWD TITANIUM

Manufacturers rightly laud the amount of advanced safety equipment fitted to their vehicles, but one important factor often overlooked is driver visibility.

Fortunately for me, this is an area our Ford S-Max long-termer excels in. The driver sits at a height close to that in a mid-sized SUV which gives a commanding view, and this is improved through the vast expanse of glass used in the seven-seat MPV.

The deep windscreen means forward visibility is excellent, while a combination of thin pillars and tall side windows mean that over-the-shoulder checks are both quick to do and revealing.

It was only when I temporarily swapped into another vehicle that I began to fully appreciate just how much I could see from the S-Max.

Andrew Ryan

FIAT TIPO 1.6 MULTIJET

Had the Tipo been launched five years ago it would have been a credible contender with some of the best the C-segment has to offer.

But other models have developed at a much faster pace, leaving the Tipo on the back foot.

It's not that the car is low-spec, it's just a bit dated. The infotainment system is the best example. It's impressive on paper: a five-inch screen with Bluetooth, TomTom navigation and connected services. But the display is far too small, especially for a touchscreen, the resolution is poor and the digital radio only has four pre-sets.

Fiat doesn't ask for a lot of money in return for all the equipment, even if it is a bit 'last-year'. Compared to rivals it's cheaper and bigger – it's just not one for the Apple generation.

Matt de Prez

Classy styling and a host of technology make the Megane a welcome long-termer

RENAULT MEGANE 1.5DCI DYNAMIQUE S NAV

Impressive Megane has grown into strong competitor

COSTS

P11D price	£21,165
BIK tax band	21%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£889
Class 1A NIC	£613
Annual VED	£120 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£5,000
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.11
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (ppm)	30.80ppm

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,461
Power (PS)	110
Torque (Nm)	260
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	96
Manufacturer mpg	76.4
Real-world mpg*	47.1
Test mpg	52
Max speed (mph)	116
0-62mph (sec)	11.3
Current mileage	3,000

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

By Matt de Prez

Renault launched the first-generation Megane some 22 years ago when the C sector was flourishing. Today more and more drivers are opting for larger SUV vehicles forcing the segment, which includes big players like the Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra, to up their game.

The Megane is no different. Our new long-termer has classy styling and a host of technology that would only have appeared on the most prestige models back when the original was launched.

Ours is a mid-spec Dynamique S Nav, costing £22,715. It comes well equipped with 17-inch alloy wheels, climate control, keyless entry and start and a digital instrument cluster.

We opted for the £500 Parking Premium Pack which includes hands-free parking, 360-degree parking sensors and blind spot warning. We also added the £400 Safety Pack Premium which has adaptive cruise control and autonomous emergency braking.

Under the bonnet is a 1.5-litre DCi diesel engine, which develops 110PS and 260Nm of torque. It's the most efficient unit in the range with CO_2 emissions of 96g/km and combined fuel consumption of 76.4mpg.

First impressions are very positive. The last Megane was pretty forgettable on looks but this new car has sharp lines which are enhanced by large LED light signatures at the front and rear.

The interior's quality is a marked improvement over the rest of the Renault range. There is a good blend of soft-touch plastics and aluminium trim. The interior also gets an LED light signature, illuminating the centre console and door panels.

Taking centre stage on the dash is the R-Link 2 infotainment system which uses an 8.7-inch touchscreen display. The system, which appears to draw inspiration from that in the Tesla Model S or Volvo XC90, controls the radio, navigation, Bluetooth and vehicle settings.

I've already put the Megane through its paces, clocking up 3,000 miles. It's yet to put a foot wrong and impresses me more and more with each drive.

Economy-wise it's returning an average 52mpg (24mpg below the official fuel economy figure).

> *"This car has sharp lines which are enhanced by large LED light signatures"*

TEST TIMELINE

Start End

SEAT ATECA SE NAV 1.6 TDI ECOMOTIVE 115PS

Well worth the wait for this SUV sector latecomer

Agile for its size – the Seat Ateca

COSTS

P11D price	£22,905
BIK tax band	4%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,099
Class 1A NIC	£759
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,550/37%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.27
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (ppm)	29.86ppm

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,598
Power (PS)	115
Torque (Nm)	250
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	113
Manufacturer mpg	65.7
Real-world mpg*	51.2
Test mpg	44.3
Max speed (mph)	114
0-62mph (sec)	11.5
Current mileage	9,796

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

By Gareth Roberts

The Ateca has quickly established itself as a fleet favourite and, after putting it through its paces over the past six months, it is easy to see why.

The version on test – an SE Nav 1.6 TDi Ecomotive 115PS – has a P11D price of less than £23,000, with a residual value forecast of £8,550 after four years and 80,000 miles, equating to a 37% return come defleet time.

It features in a model-line-up which includes both two-wheel and all-wheel drive versions, and a choice of two petrol turbo and three turbodiesel engines across a power range of 115PS to 190PS.

According to engine, fleets can also choose between six-speed manual and an automatic transmission.

Our test car has emissions of 113g/km, giving it a benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band of 24%, and a claimed combined fuel economy of 65.7mpg. However, real-world fuel economy has struggled to get beyond 50mpg.

Company car drivers would probably do better opting for the larger diesel engine if they want to ensure a better balance between power and fuel economy.

But whatever they choose, they will get a car which feels surprisingly agile given its size and is great fun to drive. The ride is firm and it feels relatively balanced when cornering.

It is also a very safe car to drive. Advanced safety systems are fitted as standard, such as autonomous emergency braking (AEB), which helped the manufacturer achieve five stars in Euro NCAP crash-testing.

It was also crowned the best mid-size SUV at this year's Fleet News Awards and has helped Seat grow its true fleet sales by 86% in Q1 compared to the first three months of last year.

Seat may have been late to the SUV party, but the Ateca was definitely worth the wait and looks set to continue to help drive the manufacturer's fleet registrations in the future.

TEST TIMELINE

Start End

LAND ROVER DISCOVERY SPORT

On previous tests, we've always been conscious the mpg figure shown by the trip computer is usually well short of the actual fuel consumed.

So how does our Discovery Sport fare? Over a 237-mile journey, measuring brim-to-brim, pretty well is the answer. The trip computer's 41.7mpg claim was only 2.5mpg higher than the real 39.2mpg figure.

Of course, while it is reassuring that the technology Land Rover uses to measure fuel consumption is reasonably accurate, it still leaves us trailing in the wake of the NEDC official figure of 57.7mpg.

However, our real-world calculation, provided by Equa Index, is 39.5mpg – so we're bang on that.

The Discovery Sport is an outstanding family car, capable of accommodating five with ample leg and headroom for all, plus generous boot space for luggage. The ride can be a little lumpy on undulating roads, with the suspension taking a moment to settle, but the chassis does quash most of the pits.

The interior is quality throughout, while the centrepiece eight-inch touchscreen has excellent graphics and is logical to use. Quick access buttons ensure the key functions – sat-nav, radio, car settings, air-con, etc. - are within reach at all times.

The navigation can take a few moments to warm up from a cold-start, and displays an annoying circulating symbol to, presumably, encourage patience. It doesn't.

If you can live with the sluggish software, and I can, the infotainment system is excellent. The sat-nav itself offers one of the most precise journey time predictions of any car I've tested, with congestion often accurate to within metres.

For once, you really can plan your journey with complete confidence.

Stephen Briers

AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET

Vauxhall Zafira Tourer Sri Nav 1.6CDTi

WiFi to connect up to seven devices but only one USB charging point.

Mazda6 2.2D 150 SE-L Nav

The boot is generous (480 litres), however the opening is narrow so bulkier items simply don't fit.

Mini Clubman Cooper 2.0D 150

Three driving modes available (green, mid and sport) but it defaults to mid at start of every journey.

STUART BERMAN

MANAGING DIRECTOR AT TELETRAC NAVMAN

This would-be Gunner might care to fire a few salvos at bigots and those guilty of injustice. Or perhaps he would just settle for aiming at friends who request he sorts out their technology

I'd tell my 18-year-old self to: always be sceptical; don't be impatient to move up the ladder; get yourself a mentor; never take advice from someone trying to sell you something; the 'recall' button on email will never work properly; read *Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki; learn to ski when young; never break a promise you make to yourself.

The most pivotal moment in my life was deciding to go to business school . It was an excellent move. I learnt all the principles of good business, met my wife there and also completely changed the direction of my career.

Away from the office I relish the opportunity to explore photography and love loud rock music. I'm also an avid fan of Arsenal FC.

My first memory associated with a car was when my younger sister hit me over the head with a toy car – truly blessed.

If I was Prime Minister for the day I would hold a second referendum on Brexit, given what we know now.

If I had a garage (in London) big enough for three cars I would sell them and convert the garage into a rental apartment. I would never want or need three cars. I find it a great effort owning one. I'm looking forward to the day when I can rent a vehicle only for the 1% of time I actually need it.

My favourite films would have to be something like *Erin Brockovich*, *Slum Dog Millionaire*, *Hidden Figures* or the *Blind Side*. I seem to enjoy celebrating the fight for justice and against bigotry or inequality.

The books I would recommend are *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey.

I honestly don't mind how I will be remembered, as long as I know I made a difference and did the best I could.

My pet hates are cliffhangers in end-of-season TV shows and friends who ask me to fix their tech.

First fleet role My first role in this industry was when I joined Trafficmaster back in 2001. Even then I am not sure you could describe that as being in fleet. I'm really a tech guy who has been camping out in the GPS tracking world for 20 years.

Career goals at Teletrac Navman I'm excited to see the transition from tracking drivers to tracking self-driving vehicles. I think that's going to be a huge change in the industry.

Biggest achievement in business Picking three explosive growth industries in a row to work in: internet, video streaming, vehicle telematics.

Biggest career influence Probably Cliff Stanford, the founder of Demon internet. He gave me a chance to be a senior leader in the UK's first internet service provider. From then on I have been addicted to high growth tech companies.

Biggest mistake in business At a job interview I was once asked 'Has anyone ever caused you so much stress that you were unable to function?'. That was a warning which I really should have heeded. I have learned not to ignore these kinds of indirect signals that people give.

Leadership style My leadership style is very human, it's a combination of trust and transparency, with a bold, inclusive approach – I aim to get the best out of people and drive productivity, loyalty and motivation.

If I wasn't in fleet With a passion for nature, travel and adventure, I would have liked to have been a wildlife photographer – a mix of art and science.

Childhood ambition Like every other child in my class, becoming a professional footballer was the dream – in my case, playing for my team, Arsenal, the Gunners.

Next issue: Tony Povey, director, Fleetsauce

Advertisement feature

Stylish and tougher – that's the all-new Ford Fiesta

Fiesta steels itself for enhanced safety features

The all-new Ford Fiesta is the first Ford in Europe to benefit from computer simulation crash tests of a complete vehicle using advanced new final element analysis technology, enabling more effective optimisation of safety features from airbags to body structure reinforcements.

The Fiesta body features 36% more boron steel for greater strength in key areas. Redesigned door cross-sections further protect occupants against side impacts and the doors also now contain pressure sensors that enable restraint systems to be activated several milliseconds sooner.

A locking seatbelt tongue helps prevent belt slippage during an accident and eliminates the need for a driver's knee airbag. Rear outer seats now feature load limiters and pre-tensioners to further restrain passengers.

A wider front passenger airbag covers the whole of the passenger side instrument panel to prevent contact with floating screens. Side airbags are designed to lift the occupant's arm away from an impact zone.

There are five distinctive variants of the all-new Fiesta, which has the most sophisticated range of driver assistance technologies and connectivity features ever in a volume small car in Europe.

The stylish Fiesta Titanium, Ford Performance-inspired Fiesta ST-Line and upscale Fiesta Vignale will be joined in 2018 by an all-new version of the Fiesta ST and Fiesta Active crossover, the first in a line-up of Active vehicles.

Cutting-edge powertrains include Ford's multi-award winning 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine offering up to 140PS, and a 1.5-litre 120PS TDCi – the first high-power diesel Fiesta powertrain. Ford anticipates CO_2 emissions from 82g/km, supported by an all-new six-speed transmission and less frequent service intervals of 18,000 miles or two years.

INSIDE AND OUT THE INNOVATIONS ARE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE

Three- and five-door Fiestas feature a stylish new exterior and revolutionary interior with more personalisation options than ever.

The interior reflects Ford's new global interior design philosophy – improving quality through enhanced specifications and innovative engineering.

Class-leading driver-assist features include enhanced pedestrian detection

that for the first time can identify and prevent potential collisions at night; and the first Ford Active Park Assist system that can deliver brake interventions to prevent low-speed bumps when parking hands-free.

Fiesta is the first Ford vehicle to feature an exclusive, premium B&O PLAY sound system, and for the first time offers an openable panoramic glass roof.

For further information on any Ford Fleet products or services call the Ford Business Centre on 03457 23 23 23, email flinform@ford.com, or visit ford.co.uk/fordfleet

Go Further

JAGUAR XE

POWERFUL PERFORMANCE

Model shown: XE Saloon 2.0D 180PS R-Sport with optional Firenze Red metallic paint, optional 19" 5 Split-Spoke 'Style 5031' with Diamond Turned Finish and optional Sliding panoramic roof.

THE ATTRACTION OF POWER

XE's power runs deeper than its assertive looks. Touch the start button and the promise of the car's looks is delivered as the turbocharged engine leaps to life.

The Lightweight Aluminium frame allows for impeccable handling and a distinctively sporty drive, while optional features of AWD and Adaptive Dynamics marshal the XE's formidable power through tight turns and on uneven roads.

It is an unmistakably exhilarating driver experience. This is a Jaguar from tip to tailpipe.

POWER AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Built with the business user in mind, the Jaguar XE keeps you at the centre of power with with state of the art infotainment system. Manage your business whilst out of the office and keep you and your XE linked to the wider world – all of the power is yours.*

With power comes responsibility and the Jaguar XE makes a convincing safety case. Driver assistance features like Lane Departure Warning keep you in line if attention drifts and the multiple awards plus 5-star Euro NCAP rating speak for the car's impressive safety profile.

Jaguar Business Centre 0845 600 2214.

*All in car features should be used by drivers only when it is safe for them to do so. Drivers must ensure they are in full control of the vehicle at all times.