News

# BUDGET EMISSIONS RULES GROSSLY UNFAIR SAY FLEETS


# FleetNews

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# 2018: A YEAR OF BIG BANGS?

That's the experts' view. Find out their other predictions for the fleet sector inside

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**Mercedes-Benz E-Class All Terrain**

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## NEWS



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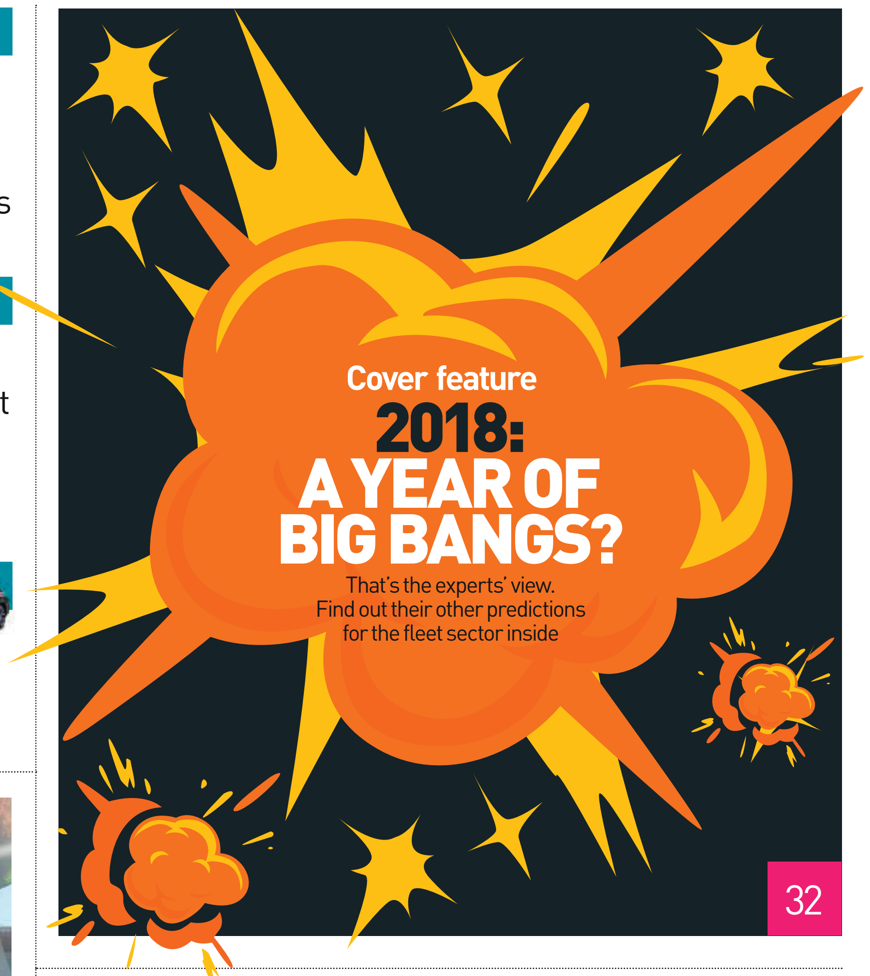








**Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all our readers!**

This is our last *Fleet News* of 2017; we're back with the January 11, 2018, issue. Until then, stay up-to-date with the latest news on our website: **fleetnews.co.uk**

For the latest news, visit: fleetnews.co.uk/news www

# Budget emissions measures 'grossly unfair' claims ACFO

## Chancellor Hammond targets diesel company cars with two-pronged attack

**By Gareth Roberts**

Diesel company cars could fall foul of emission standards for clean air zones (CAZs) if local authorities decide to follow the Chancellor's lead.

Philip Hammond launched a two-pronged attack on diesel cars in the Budget based on a version of Euro 6 which is not due to be introduced until 2020.

Diesel cars that do not meet the new standard by next April, called Real Driving Emissions Step 2 (RDE2), face an increase in vehicle excise duty (VED) and benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax.

RDE2 is the second phase of a series of real-world emissions tests; the first stage was introduced in September, replacing laboratory tests with a real-world element.

However, manufacturers are in the early stages of developing the technology required to achieve the tougher standard and, even if cars do meet the required emissions limits, the certification for RDE2 does not yet exist, making it impossible to prove a car is exempt.

Its use by the Chancellor was labelled "grossly unfair" by fleet representative body ACFO and has left some concerned that local authorities could similarly use the RDE2 standard as a threshold for CAZs.

Christopher Snelling, head of national policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA), said: "With the first clean air zones due to be implemented from April 2019, FTA firmly believes that Euro VI/6 will remain the requirement for the initial phase."

However, it expects the standard for all CAZs to be reviewed once reliable data is available about the impact of the first zones.

Snelling is concerned about this second phase of the CAZ programme. "Our main worry is that councils may decide to implement much more stringent standards, such as RDE2, without giving operators time to adapt," he said. "This would, in effect, force the majority of diesel vehicles out of urban areas."

Chris Chandler, principal consultant at Lex Autolease, added: "There is a logic which suggests it (RDE2) could be factored in, because it's a measure the Government is now looking at."

But, whatever measure local authorities decide to use, Chandler said it was imperative fleets were given early notice and there was consistency across the country.

In addition to London, which will launch its ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) from April 2019, there are five other cities – Birmingham, Derby, Leeds, Nottingham and Southampton – which will have to introduce CAZs by 2019.

The Government has also identified a further 23 local authorities in its air quality plan where CAZs could be introduced to drive down emissions.

A CAZ framework, published in May, suggests Euro 4 petrol/Euro 6 diesel for cars and vans, and Euro VI for trucks as minimum standards, with local authorities needing to set out their initial plans by the end of March.

Leeds became the first local authority to give details on its proposed CAZ last week. It has ruled out charging diesel car and van drivers, choosing instead to penalise older buses, lorries and taxis.

Lucinda Yeardon, Leeds City Council executive board member for the environment, said the council had examined the likely impact of charging diesel cars and found it would improve air quality "but the cost economically and socially of doing that would have been significant".

The council is consulting on a charging system covering the area inside the outer ring road, with trucks, buses and coaches not meeting the latest emission standards facing charges of up to £100 a day. Taxis would be charged up to £12.50, with only hybrid and fully electric exempt.

In contrast, London's ULEZ, which will replace the new £10 toxicity charge (T-charge), will target cars. It will cover the same central area as the T-charge, alongside and on top of the congestion charge, but will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

*"The measure penalises drivers for a choice they made with the best of intentions"*

Caroline Sandall, ACFO

### Daily charges

The daily charge for non-compliant vehicles will increase from £10 to £12.50 (for cars, vans and motorbikes) and £100 (buses, coaches and lorries).

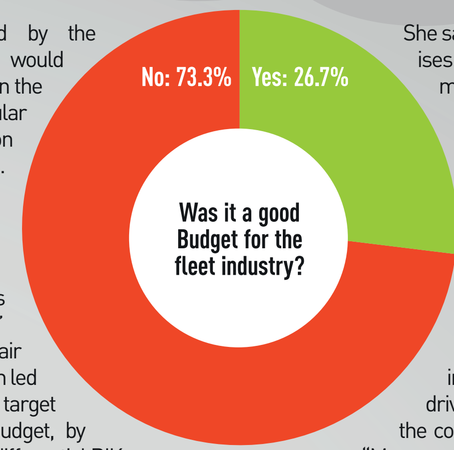
A Transport for London (TfL) spokesman confirmed the existing Euro 6 standard will be used when the ULEZ is enforced from April 8, 2019. However, a tightening of the emission rules will be inevitable as it aims to employ a zero emission zone in central London by 2025 and a London-wide zero emissions zone by 2050.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan is currently consulting on expanding the ULEZ in 2021, which could affect 100,000 cars, 35,000 vans and 3,000 lorries a day.

The area covered by the expanded ULEZ would include all roads within the north and south circular roads. The consultation closes on February 28.

Khan said: "I am determined to take the bold action needed to protect the public from London's poisonous, deadly air."

It is those same air quality concerns which led the Chancellor to target diesel cars in the Budget, by increasing the diesel differential BIK tax rate from 3% to 4% from April 6 next year for cars that do not meet the RDE2 standard. The move is estimated to cost around 800,000 company car drivers an extra £70m in total a year.




### VED for the band above

He also introduced a VED supplement that will apply to new diesel cars first registered from next April, so their first year rate will be calculated as if they were in the VED band above.

For example, a Ford Focus diesel ($CO_2$ emissions 91-100g/km) will now be subject to an additional £20 in the first year, a Volkswagen Golf ($CO_2$ emissions 111-130g/km) an additional £40, a Vauxhall Mokka ($CO_2$ emissions 131-150g/km) £300 and a Land Rover Discovery ($CO_2$ emissions 171-190g/km) £400, according to Government figures.

A survey from CLM Fleet Management reported that 59% of respondents said they were less likely or much less likely to buy or choose a diesel as their next new car as a result of the rise in VED.

Almost three-quarters (73.3%) of respondents to a *Fleet News* poll said that it was not a good Budget for the fleet industry.

ACFO deputy chairman Caroline Sandall suggested that fleet decision-makers should look at bringing forward diesel company car replacement cycles as soon as RDE2 models become available to enable drivers to reduce BIK tax bills and employers to potentially save on Class 1A National Insurance contributions.

She said: "The measure penalises drivers for a choice they made with the best of intentions, which is bad news for drivers and bad for the concept of company cars, which are newer and cleaner than many other vehicles on the roads."

Sandall urged fleets to communicate the impact of the tax rise on drivers and, ideally, illustrate the cost on an individual basis.

"Managers should study the impact on their own fleets, particularly as the increase will impact the most on higher emissions cars," she said. "It is another trigger to encourage fleets to go down the low $CO_2$ route."

Colin Tourick, professor of automotive management at the University of Buckingham business school, was similarly unimpressed with the Chancellor. He told *Fleet News* that the announcement around BIK was probably the most unfair tax-raising measure he had seen.

"If you chose a new diesel-engined 99g/km $CO_2$ company car a year ago you knew your BIK tax bill would rise by 9.5% next April," Tourick said. "That's now going to be 14.3%, a jump of more than 50% in the increase you were expecting.

"This reverses the long-term arrangement of drivers knowing what tax they would be paying before they chose their car. At a time when wages are rising more slowly than inflation this just makes people poorer. It's outrageous."

However, while Chandler was surprised by the Chancellor's move, he suggested it was "logical" as diesel emissions were key.

He also believes RDE2 could actually bolster the credentials of diesel. "Once we can demonstrate in real world driving that diesels are clean, the supplement and VED increase will actually go," he said. "It gives us the definition of a clean diesel which is potentially a good thing."

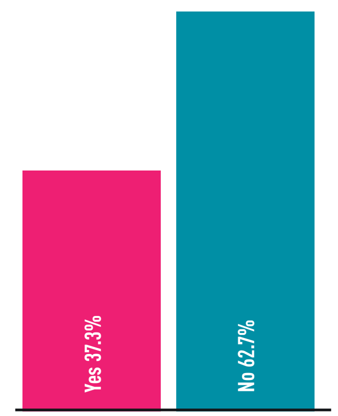
**■ For VED and BIK tables, go to fleetnews.co.uk/costs/**

**■ Government's 'complete ignorance' – editor's view on page 18**

## FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

### OPINION POLL

**Do you have workplace charging for electric vehicles?**




**FleetNews view:**
**The Chancellor announced in the Budget there will be no benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax on electricity provided by employers to charge employees' electric vehicles. Yet our poll shows that almost two-thirds of employees do not have access to workplace charging. *Fleet News* believes employers should consider installing charge points to help drive the adoption of plug-in vehicles.**

This week's poll: Will the decision to leave the European Union increase fleet costs?
*fleetnews.co.uk/polls*

### MOST COMMENTED ONLINE

A third of VW Group cars with 'defeat devices' still not fixed

*fleetnews.co.uk/news*

### UK AVERAGE FUEL PRICES

**Diesel (ppl) 120.78 ↓**
**Unleaded (ppl) 118.53 ↓**

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

# Government investment 'does not go far enough' to prepare for 2040

## Zero emissions-capable deadline only allows for six fleet replacement cycles

**By Tom Seymour**

The fleet industry has welcomed further investment to boost plug-in vehicle adoption but has said it does not go far enough to prepare for a 2040 deadline switch to zero emissions-capable vehicles.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond's Budget announced a £100 million top-up for the plug-in car grant and confirmed it would continue until at least 2020. The Government will practice what it preaches with a commitment of having a quarter of all central department fleets as plug-in vehicles by 2022.

He also said the Government would put forward £200m, to be matched by private investment, for a £400m injection into a new Charging Investment Infrastructure Fund.

A further £40m has been offered to boost research and development in charging technology.

Hammond confirmed the HMRC will clarify the law so that from April 2018 people who charge their electric vehicles at work will not face a benefit-in-kind (BIK) charge from next year.

Simon Hill, Total Motion managing director, welcomed the clarification on BIK for charging at work and the extra funding.

However, he said: "While £400m sounds like a lot, it is no way near enough. It needs to be that level of investment annually.

"Our own estimates show it's going to take around £20 billion of investment to get the UK's vehicle charging infrastructure to the point where it will support a mass market for the Government's 2040 target."

John Webb, principal consultant at Lex Autolease, said fleet managers are increasingly looking at switching to EVs but they won't commit if they can't be confident in the charging infrastructure.

He said: "The investment announced is a good start, but far more will need to be done if we're going to achieve the 2040 ambition. There are only six fleet cycles to go (based on five to three-year cycles).

"Joined up thinking involving Treasury, HMRC and local government needs to consider long-term tax and regulatory incentives. Other countries have found that considering electric vehicle uptake in road planning and transport infrastructure developments is critical in building a viable urban mobility system."

The plug-in car grant is being topped up and will continue until 2020

> *"The £40m R&D funding is a drop in the ocean"*
>
> *Simon Hill, Total Motion*

The plug-in car grant has added 120,780 eligible vehicles to UK roads since it launched in January 2011. Data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) shows steady growth for cars eligible for funding, rising from a base of just 812 annually to more than 40,000 a year now.

The £100m top up is specifically for the plug-in car grant, rather than to be used to fund vans or infrastructure.

The Department for Transport (DfT) declined to comment on how much money was left in the previous grant pot for cars or for vans and said: "We don't share plug-in grant budgets publicly".

However, a DfT spokeswoman told *Fleet News:* "The plug-in van grant will be maintained at the current rate until March 2018 or when 5,000 vans have been ordered, whichever comes first.

"A review of the plug-in van grant will then be undertaken. Around 4,000 vans have currently been ordered through the scheme."

There is no guarantee the plug-in car grant will continue after 2020 but the DfT said it would continue to review funding at regular intervals and future plans will be included in the upcoming zero emissions road transport strategy.

Chargemaster predicts there will be at least 200,000 plug-in cars on UK roads before the end of next year, estimating around 70,000 annual registrations. Of those, between 25% and 30% are expected to be pure electric cars, while the remainder will be plug-in hybrids and range extenders.

A Chargemaster spokesman said: "We hope some of this funding will be directed towards preparing network connections and reinforcing the electricity grid where required, as having sufficient suitable sites at which to install infrastructure, particularly rapid chargers, will help speed up the growth of the public charging network."

Hill said infrastructure needs to be focused on solutions for the home, at work and at fuel stations. "The £40m R&D funding is a drop in the ocean," he said.

Webb said it is vital the infrastructure funding is used to roll out more rapid charging points.

### PLUG-IN CAR REGISTRATION TOTALS 2011-2017

*Data source: SMMT*

| Vehicle type | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | YTD October 2017 | Totals January 2011-October 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plug-in pure electric | 837 | 1,262 | 2,512 | 6,697 | 9934 | 10,264 | 11,799 | 31,506 |
| Plug-in other electric | 665 | 992 | 1,074 | 7,821 | 18,770 | 26,643 | 27,040 | 55,965 |
| Hybrid petrol electric | 13,538 | 23,616 | 26,015 | 34,494 | 40,187 | 50,261 | 62,646 | 188,111 |
| Hybrid diesel electric | 0 | 1,284 | 3,144 | 2,721 | 3,873 | 1,741 | 850 | 12,763 |
| Cars eligible for the plug-in car grant | 812 | 2,240 | 3,586 | 14,498 | 26,970 | 35,447 | 37,227 | 120,780 |

# Diesel will lose its most popular fuel crown next year, says BVRLA

## Leasing firms report diesel registrations decline and change in EV perceptions

By Sarah Tooze

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) predicts that 2018 will be the year diesel loses its position as the most popular fuel for new fleet registrations.

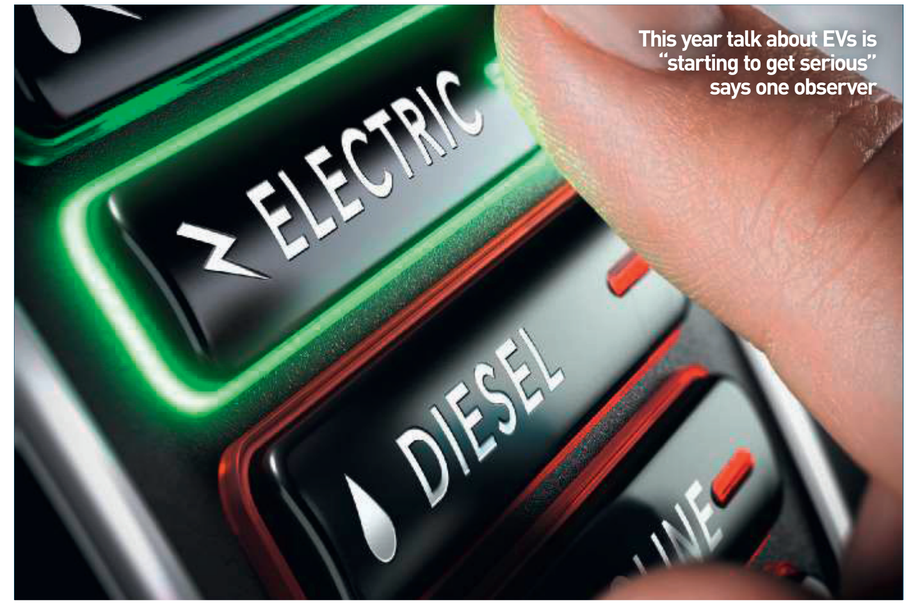
It told delegates at its Industry Outlook Conference that the fuel type will be overtaken by petrol, as more company car drivers, particularly non-essential users, make the switch to petrol and hybrid.

In the year to November, diesel share of fleet standards at just over 53%, compared to 61% in 2016. Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, number nine in this year's FN50, has seen its diesel registrations drop from around 70% to 50% this year.

"That amount of change is phenomenal," said managing director Jon Lawes. "I know it's the same sort of trends across our industry so how do we cope with that significant amount of change?

"I'm worried about the pace of change but actually I think it's the right thing and the best way to deal with change is embrace it and get on with it."

Lawes predicts Hitachi will "at least double" the size of its electric vehicle (EV) fleet next year and that hybrids will be "a lot more than that".



This year talk about EVs is "starting to get serious" says one observer

*"The best way to deal with change is embrace it and get on with it"*

*John Lawes, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions*

"I've seen the most significant amount of change in perception of electric vehicles, more so in hybrid, in the past eight months," he said.

"We've talked about EVs for five, six, seven years, but actually it's probably only this year where it's starting to get serious. Before it was probably a more of a token effort, now it's much more serious."

Tim Porter, managing director of Lex Autolease, is also predicting a surge in electric and hybrid numbers over the next 18 months, although he points out that this is from "a very low base".

He expects the number of pure EVs on Lex Autolease's fleet to rise 10-fold from "probably a couple of hundred" to "a couple of thousand".

Porter believes the news coverage around diesel is pushing more people to look at alternatives, but the "critical driver" is more pure EVs becoming available with a greater range in the £25,000-£30,000 bracket.

Pure EVs in the £50,000-£70,000 bracket are "interesting and attractive to the top end of the personal market – the directors in firms", he said.

Meanwhile, Porter envisages the number of hybrids on Lex Autolease's fleet rising from 15,000 to 20,000-25,000 in the next 12-to-18 months.

What impact will the move away from diesel have on future values? Andrew Mee, senior forecasting editor, cars, at Cap HPI, paints an optimistic picture for the next five years.

"For diesel cars, what is going to happen will vary by sector; there will be a different outcome for small vehicles compared to large SUV or towing vehicles," he said.

"It will also vary by time over that five-year period but, overall, we think that level of year-on-year change, on average, is going to be pretty much as diesels have behaved for the past few years."

Mee also believes that any decrease in demand for used diesels, as clean air zones start to bite, will be offset by fewer used diesels coming back into the market as fewer cars are registered.

# Fleets urged to contest charges as council parking 'profits' hit £819m

## Kelly Communications has saved £2.7m since 2011 by overturning tickets

By Gareth Roberts

Fleets are being urged to proactively manage parking infringements after it was reported that English councils made a record £819 million from their parking operations in the past financial year.

The figure for 2016-17 is 10% higher than the £744m for the previous financial year and is 40% higher than the £587m in 2012-13. It is also £37m more than councils had forecast for 2016-17.

The findings come from analysis for the RAC Foundation by transport consultant David Leibling of the official returns that councils make annually to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

It comes after separate research, also from the RAC Foundation, showed councils dish out a parking charge every four seconds, on average, in the UK, with some eight million tickets issued annually (*Fleet News*, November 9).

Meanwhile, FN50 data reveals that the number of parking charges handed by the UK's biggest leasing companies increased year-on-year by almost 50,000 to top 254,000. The average charge also increased, by more than £5 to £45.

> *"Give drivers the information they need and the necessary back-up"*
>
> *Terry Moore, Kelly Communications*

However, fleets should not simply accept all parking charges. Kelly Communications employs specialised staff to deal with its parking infringements and has successfully cancelled tickets worth £2.7m since 2011, when it set up the dedicated resource.

This year alone, the company has avoided paying £277,000 in parking charges incurred by its 1,800-strong fleet, with 63% of tickets overturned. Kelly, which pays some £10,000 per week on pay and display tickets, has a dedicated line for drivers to call, so it can be informed of any penalties at the earliest opportunity.

Parking manager Terry Moore explained: "We want to get them at the discounted rate so if we cannot appeal it, we're at least not paying the higher rate. However, drivers can also call the designated number if they simply want advice on where's best to park and their options."

Moore says fleets need to support their drivers. "Give drivers the information they need and the necessary back-up," he said.

The RAC Foundation research shows that in 2016-17, the 353 local authorities in England had a total income from on- and off-street parking activities of £1.5 billion – up 6% year-on-year. This comprised both parking charges (fees and permits) and penalty income.

At the same time, the councils spent £763m on running their parking operations – up 2%.

The difference between income and expenditure – £819m – is the surplus or 'profit' available to be spent on transport locally. Although most councils made a surplus on their parking activities, 46 (13%) reported negative numbers.

The largest surpluses were seen in London with the 33 London boroughs making £379m between them – 46% of the English total.

Westminster topped the table at £73.2m, up 31% on the previous year. Kensington and Chelsea came second with £32.2m (down 6%) and Camden with £26.8m (up 6%).

The biggest profits outside of London were reported by Brighton & Hove (£21.2m), and Milton Keynes and Birmingham (£11.1m each).

Cllr Martin Tett, Local Government Association transport spokesman said: "Income raised through on-street parking charges is spent on running parking services and any surplus is only spent on essential transport projects, such as tackling our national £12bn roads repair backlog and creating new parking spaces."


Councils hand out a parking charge every four seconds on average

# Taking a lead on mobility is one of four 'grand challenges' UK faces

## Government strategy to be global leader will be published within next 12 months

By Gareth Roberts

The Government believes the UK can build on its long history of transport innovation by taking a global lead in shaping the future of mobility.

It is one of four 'grand challenges' revealed in its industrial strategy – Building a Britain Fit for the Future – published last month.

The four grand challenges, which also include artificial intelligence and big data, clean growth, and meeting the needs of an aging society, have been identified by the Government as areas of strategic importance, where the UK has the opportunity to play a leading role in the so-called fourth industrial revolution.

It is inviting business and academia to work together to innovate and develop new technologies and industries and, in terms of mobility, is promising to publish a 'Future of Urban Mobility' strategy within the next 12 months.

The white paper says: "We are on the cusp of a profound change in how we move people, goods and services around our towns, cities and countryside.

"New market entrants and new business models, such as ride-hailing services, ride sharing and 'mobility as a service', are challenging our assumptions about how we travel."

The Government believes these technologies have the power to transform public transport. "The UK's road and rail network could dramatically reduce carbon emissions and other pollutants, congestion could be reduced through higher-density use of road space enabled by automated vehicles, and mobility could be available when we want it, where we want it and how we want it," it said.

In addition to the mobility strategy, the Government says the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) will launch a new innovation prize to determine how future roadbuilding should adapt to supporting self-driving cars, with the West Midlands, a UK centre of expertise on connected and autonomous vehicles, being a key testing location for the best entries.

It is also investing £5 million from the 5G Testbeds and Trials programme for an initial trial, starting in 2018, of 5G applications and deployment on roads, including helping to test how the UK can maximise future productivity benefits from self-driving cars.

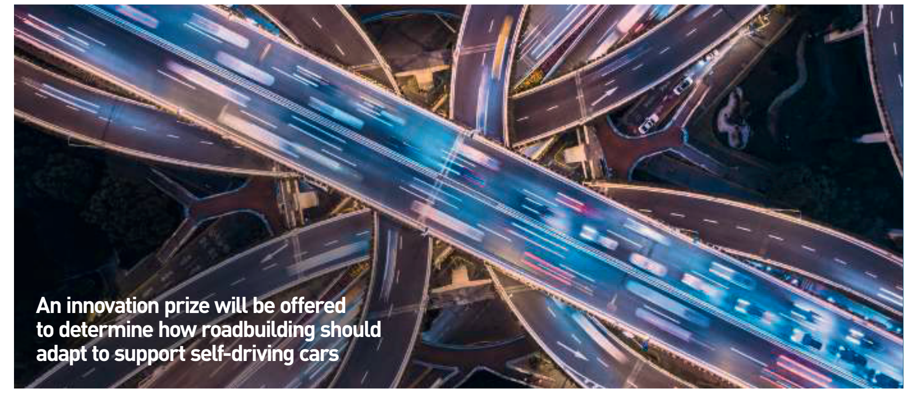
The Transport Systems Catapult (TSC) welcomed the inclusion of mobility as a key challenge. Its CEO Paul Campion said: "The way we travel and move goods will change dramatically in the next decade. The industrial strategy is an opportunity to make sure the UK is at the forefront of this revolution, rather than being mere passengers – with the economic rewards going overseas."

Part of a network of not-for-profit technology and innovation centres, TSC specialises in intelligent mobility. It says it is already seeing a number of high profile projects testing new connected and autonomous vehicle technology in the UK, including the UK Autodrive project which began trialling multiple vehicles on open public roads in Coventry, last month (fleetnews.co.uk, November 17).

"We are also seeing a large number of new businesses being created around the use of data to improve transport infrastructure, planning and customer experience," said Campion.

TSC's own, newly created Intelligent Mobility Accelerator programme has found no shortage of applicants looking to develop new transport technologies in the UK.

"With this background we are confident that increased investment in future mobility can lead to high quality jobs, innovation and growth in the UK economy – even as we compete on the world stage with the likes of China and the US," concluded Campion.



An innovation prize will be offered to determine how roadbuilding should adapt to support self-driving cars

*"The way we travel and move goods will change dramatically in the next decade"*

*Paul Campion, Transport Systems Catapult*

# THE BIG PICTURE

**By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News***

Once again, the Government has shown complete ignorance when it comes to the fleet sector; ministers are either unwilling or incapable of understanding even the basics.

How else do you explain Chancellor Philip Hammond's Budget? Not only has he confused the language on diesel (focusing his statements on RDE – real driving emissions – tests rather than compliance with Euro 6), he has raised the benefit-in-kind (BIK) diesel supplement from 3% to 4% and moved diesel cars up a band for first-year VED if they do not conform to RDE2.

As RDE2 measures NOx levels rather than $CO_2$ (compliant cars will be Euro 6d), he is effectively adding a new emissions element to company car tax.

*"Hammond is trying to influence buying decisions with an impossible solution"*

One problem: RDE2 isn't mandatory until 2020/21 and, at the moment, no cars meet the standard. Hammond is trying to influence buying decisions with an impossible solution.

The Government has also broken a promise – that it would give at least three years' notice before changing company car tax.

This increase will hit 800,000 drivers. How can they, and companies setting fleet policies, plan ahead when the Government makes knee-jerk, punitive decisions?

Even worse, this decision will have no impact on air quality: company cars are the cleanest vehicles on the roads; many are less than two years old. The main urban polluters are Euro 5 and Euro 4 diesel cars, plus old vans, trucks, taxis and buses – the Chancellor should be looking at ways to incentive operators into greener vehicles.

He is prioritising Treasury revenue, using company car drivers as his cash cow. Supporting that view is his future forecasts over tax take which will rise significantly in 2021, suggesting new WLTP testing rules will be applied without first re-setting BIK to take the higher $CO_2$ emissions into consideration.

What will the Government do for funds when it has taxed everyone out of their cars?

# YOUR LETTERS

AUTUMN BUDGET

## Tax measures 'counter-productive' to air quality

EDITOR'S PICK

**Sage and Onion wrote:**
Having read 'Diesel company car tax increase 'grossly unfair', says ACFO' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 23), this latest move by the Chancellor, in conjunction with his other brainless idea to increase VED on high value ULEVs in his previous budget, is going to be counter-productive to improving local air quality.

I will be reviewing our fleet policy and will probably look more seriously at the cash vs car option which will only drive employees into older, cheaper and dirtier cars, as the article has suggested.

I hate the idea of introducing grey fleet, too, but it seems we have to consider it now. If we advise drivers their tax is going to increase by more than it already was going to, then we will get them wanting to change their cars and, when they are on a lease contract, that's just not feasible.

We also can't really turn the policy to favour petrol models because the Government can't be trusted not to penalise petrol and petrol hybrids when they discover the greenhouse effect of higher $CO_2$ levels starts getting out of control, too.

We are see-sawing to a place where nobody will want a company car or where drivers may start asking for 4x4 double cab pick-ups and pay the flat-rate BIK for vans, and these pollute more than their existing cars.

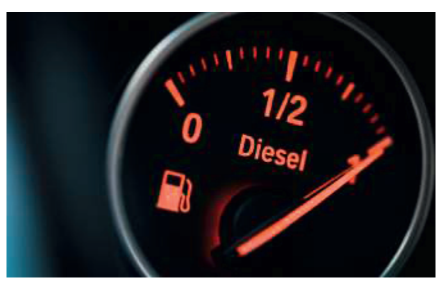
Madness really. It makes you wonder who advises the Chancellor and other ministers and shows how out of touch they are with company car drivers.

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

AUTUMN BUDGET

## What's the alternative to diesel?

**Nigel Boyle wrote:**
Having read 'Autumn Budget tax change deters drivers from diesel, says CLM' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 29), this would be true if there was an alternative. Petrol at a far higher cost or electric with hours waiting on the motorway for it to charge. Rock or hard place comes to mind.



AIR QUALITY

## Ease up! A relaxed driving style pays off for my high-mileage hybrid

**The Engineer wrote:**
Having read 'Used plug-in vehicle volumes double at Aston Barclay' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 24), there is a myth that things like the Outlander PHEV are a terrible choice for higher mileage drivers.

I have a relaxed style of driving which, while it may add 10-15 minutes to long trip, is safer, less stressful and nets 40mpg from my PHEV. There are many diesel large SUVs on our roads not doing any better.

I also gain hugely on shorter trips using mostly cheap electric miles and all local private use is the same, plus I have the pleasure of a fully warmed (or cooled) and defrosted car each morning activated remotely from my phone.

It all comes down to the mind-set. Many drivers I see appear to hate being in the car and drive like it's an annoyance to be got over with as soon as possible. And, with the dire traffic now, that usually means a lot of fuel burn for little gain.

Not all PHEV drivers are just benefit-in-kind (BIK) dodgers, some are BIK dodgers that also make the car work for them.

AIR QUALITY

## UK 'free' to relax air quality standards

**Patriot wrote:**
Having read 'Carmakers brand European $CO_2$ reduction targets as aggressive' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 28), although the targets would technically remain in UK law, having been enshrined through Air Quality Standards Regulation, the EU would no longer have a role in enforcement and the UK would be free to repeal the laws.

An EU exit would allow the UK to relax air quality standards and review any deadlines for meeting them.

The UK is currently subject to EU infraction proceedings, so exiting will also remove the threat of fines for non-compliance.

AUTONOMOUS CARS

## Matching the human brain

**Buckets wrote:**
Having read 'Driverless cars will be on UK roads by 2021, says Chancellor' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 20), I'm left wondering how are these systems going to enable a driverless car to deal with a blowout, a blowout in a vehicle in front, a loose wheel coming towards it from the other carriageway or a vehicle out of control about to cross the central reservation into its path?

No software is going to be able to process hazards like the human brain.

ROAD SAFETY

## Road signs shouldn't become a distraction

**Ben wrote:**
Having read 'Insurance company to trial 'fag-packet approach' speed limit signs' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 20), we don't need signs that take your attention off the road.

The whole purpose of a sign is to convey the information quickly without distraction and this doesn't do that.

**Edward Handley added:**
Speed awareness courses are not, and never were, intended to be a deterrent. They are about education – improving knowledge and comprehension of the dangers of speeding, and the research shows they work far better than the deterrent of fines and points which does not work well at all.

The new idea of fag packet-type warning photographs on signs is interesting and it might even work. Let's give it a chance and see what happens.

**HAVE YOUR SAY** Email: fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk Comment online: fleetnews.co.uk
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**Burning question:**
**What are you most looking forward to in 2018?**


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# BellissiMORE

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# FLEET OPINION

CUSTOMER CONTACT

## Gauging satisfaction without ever meeting

By Paul Turner

The UK now has the second highest average online spend per person in the world, and online retail sales reached £133 billion in 2016, a 16% rise on 2015 and a figure which is forecast to grow again in 2017.

And, with tens of thousands of new cars being supplied by online brokers or by leasing companies directly to companies and consumers, the online revolution has well and truly reached the automotive sector.

One thing all online sales have in common is that the vast majority of sales are undertaken remotely and the supplier never gets to meet the customer.

Customers like Nationwide Vehicle Contracts, Total Motion and GoGreen Leasing all experienced this challenge until they adopted an online customer satisfaction survey product.

For those service providers, the first face-to-face contact with a customer is the driver that delivers their car. If, for example, the delivery is late or the handover process is poor, then it could impact adversely on their brand's reputation. The answer is to gather that feedback on the vehicle handover experience at that time using tools like a smart app, or within 24 hours via a personalised customer feedback invitation email linked to an online questionnaire.

The availability of rapid customer feedback can also directly influence the choice of supply chain partners, with dealers being replaced if they don't adhere to handover processes.

Determining feedback on the sales experience given to the customer and enabling them to determine whether it adhered to their Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) obligations of selling a car on finance (if selling PCP or PCH in the regulated market) are also both key. After all, retaining a good relationship with the FCA and adhering to its guidelines is essential for any leasing provider or broker.

My advice is to never limit customer contact to just delivery. Check at least once a year throughout the contract term with your remote customers to retain ownership of the relationship and encourage repeat and additional business.

Online selling is the future. Make sure you ask customers for their opinion. Listen to their feedback and you will breed an army of advocates.

*"Check at least once a year throughout the contract term with your remote customers"*

Paul Turner, APD Global Research chairman

Martin Evans, managing director, Jaama, and director of ICFM

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

FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

## Data-keeping must move with times

By Martin Evans

At the start of the millennium fleet managers had to manually record virtually every single piece of fleet-relevant information.

That was not only time consuming and administratively cumbersome, but could be prone to mistakes. Additionally, the way data was stored meant it was difficult to monitor, measure and compare and contrast the performance of individual drivers and vehicles effectively.

A decade ago, I wrote that IT-literate fleet decision-makers were waking up to the fact that hi-tech fleet management systems could seamlessly interact with other internal and external software to dramatically improve operating effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, sophisticated web-based software developments meant fleet operators no longer needed to manually input every item of information.

However, as fleets start to embrace the arrival of the 'connected car' and with fully autonomous vehicles to be on UK roads from 2021, says the Government, it is apparent the fleet decision-makers' technology journey has slowed.

Many fleet decision-makers remain too reliant on hard copy documents. That is a considerable administration burden and, more importantly, means delays in processing information and the identification of potential costs and compliance requirements.

Furthermore, the Government and its agencies' digitalisation of vehicle and driver/employee records is a journey that is now well underway.

Data information feeds from suppliers can instantly update individual vehicle and driver information held by fleets.

So-called 'big data' is not imminent; it is here. Hugely improved decision-making relating to driver behaviour, vehicle performance and utilisation can be achieved with 'big data' as fleet managers are better informed.

It is therefore vital that businesses have in place good systems that will take vehicle and driver information and digest it. In turn, that will enable fleet managers to make better informed decisions as they will have a holistic picture. The age of paper documents is over and should be confined to the waste bin.

*"Age of paper documents is over and should be confined to the waste bin"*

# Preparing for your electric future

## Go Ultra Low Fleet Summit aims to answer questions of the curious and the committed

According to monthly figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) approximately two-thirds of new electric vehicles (EVs) are registered to public and private sector organisations, meaning there are many UK businesses currently realising the benefits electric motoring brings.

However, we know companies still have questions about making the switch.

The **2018 Go Ultra Low Fleet Summit** aims to give some answers. **'Preparing for Your Electric Future'** takes place on January 10, 2018 at the SMMT offices in London, and Go Ultra Low is inviting fleet operators and decision-makers to join.

The Summit will be an opportunity to discuss EV technology with Government representatives and industry experts, and share experiences with peers.

Two streams will run concurrently: one for fleet operators who are thinking about adding EVs to their fleet, and a second for those who already operate EVs on their fleet but would like to look at ways to grow the number.

Some of the key issues around EV fleet uptake to be discussed include:

**Financial support** – understanding the Government incentives available to purchase EVs and install home and workplace chargepoints
**Choice** – getting to know the 45 plug-in models available in the UK, offering something for every business and company car driver
**Charging** – understanding how the charging infrastructure grows constantly with more than 12,000 chargepoints in over 4,500 public locations across the UK including rapid chargers at 96% of motorway service stations
**Wholelife costs** – how looking beyond the monthly rental costs can mean significant annual savings
**Education** – helping company car drivers to understand the tax incentives available, as well as making sure they understand how to run an EV efficiently
**Etiquette** – ensuring workplace chargepoints are used efficiently, and that fully-charged vehicles do not take up valuable charging space
**Mileage reimbursement** – details on how fleets can reimburse 'fuel' used by EVs at a pence per mile rate, calculated to closely reflect actual cost
**Service, maintenance and repair** – understanding that EVs have fewer moving parts, so require less SMR, which could result in a significant cost reduction
**Light commercial vehicles** – why fleets should consider the range of electric vans available
**Corporate reputation** – how you can join the Go Ultra Low Companies scheme and be recognised as a business leading the way in the electric revolution

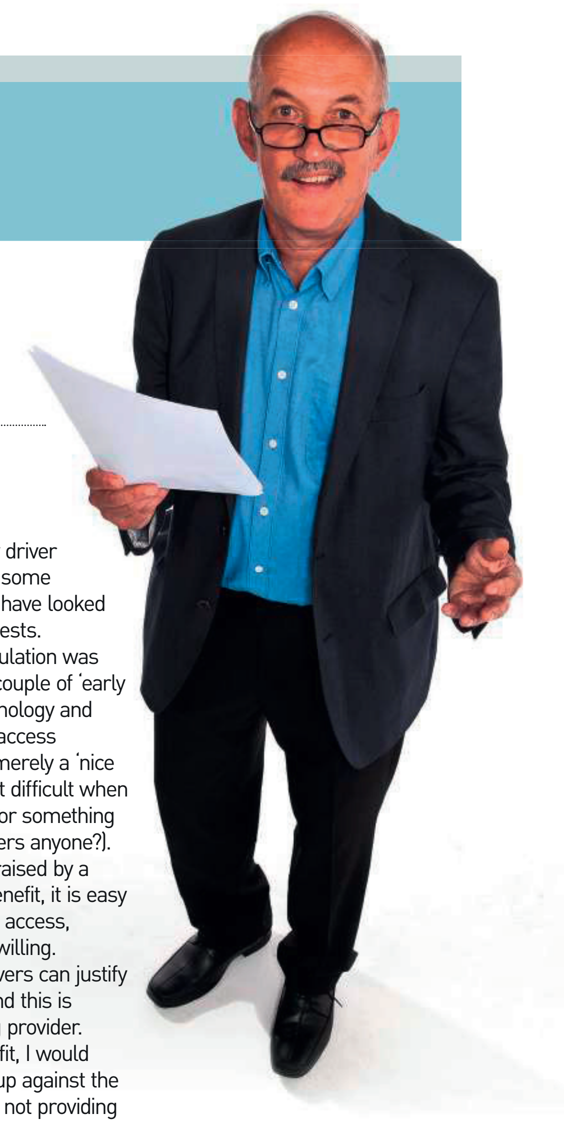
Getting to grips with these key issues should be a priority for any fleet operator looking at their EV options, and that's where the Go Ultra Low Fleet Summit plays an important role. It helps attendees reach a better understanding of EV ownership while giving practical guidance and tips on running an electric fleet.

Go Ultra Low

If you'd like to register your interest in attending the 2018 Go Ultra Low Fleet Summit, please email goultralow@smmt.co.uk. For more information about EVs, including easy-to-use cost calculators, visit the Go Ultra Low website (www.goultralow.com/fleet).

COMMENT

# 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.

## CONNECTED CARS

**Q Several of my company car drivers want connected car services but my leasing provider says they won't enable them because of data protection. The provider is also concerned the manufacturer may get control of where the vehicle is serviced as the driver could be prompted to take the vehicle to a franchised dealer. I understand their concerns but I have some very dissatisfied drivers. What is the best way to handle this? Should I stay out of it and refer the drivers to the leasing company?**

**A** Your question illustrates just how far the world of fleet management has changed. When I first managed company cars, the idea of a car being capable of collecting and storing information about where it had travelled and being connected to some sort of external network would have seemed like science fiction – yet now here it is.

There is no simple answer, not least because the industry itself still seems uncertain of how to deal with this data. As your question illustrates, the manufacturer may direct servicing to a franchised dealership, while the leasing company wants to use its own network, which may not be the same. This, I believe, is one of the reasons they have decided to make it 'difficult'.

*"The bigger challenge comes if your drivers can justify the technology as a business benefit"*

I always tried to put the interests of my driver population first (provided there was also some business benefit). If faced by this I would have looked to understand what was behind the requests.

First, what proportion of my driver population was serious about this subject? Is this just a couple of 'early adopters' who want to play with the technology and show off? Are their reasons for wanting access potentially beneficial to the business, or merely a 'nice to have'? In the past drivers often found it difficult when challenged to find a real business need for something which they said was essential (rear spoilers anyone?).

Obviously, if the question is only being raised by a minority and there is no real business benefit, it is easy to provide reasons why they cannot have access, particularly if your leasing provider is unwilling.

The bigger challenge comes if your drivers can justify the technology as a business benefit – and this is where I would be questioning my leasing provider.

Provided there was a quantifiable benefit, I would want to understand how this measured up against the reasons given by my leasing provider for not providing access and any potential loss to them.

If they fell back on the broad data protection response, I would be asking exactly how providing access to these services would in their view represent a risk, particularly in the context of the upcoming changes in this area. I have yet to see any evidence the industry has fully understood the implications in the context of the connected car.

I believe if you are seen to listen to your drivers and act accordingly you will not go far wrong. You may also prompt your leasing provider to think more deeply about this subject, about which I believe there is still a huge debate to be had.

**The next Ask Nigel will be in the January 25 issue.**

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

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

**Formerly he was secretary of ACFO Midlands and was an 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**

ROUND TABLE FleetNews

# Fleet chiefs debate the pros and cons of switching to flexi-lease

## Business uncertainty increases desire to be able to send back vehicles without penalty

**By Elizabeth Howlett**

Many fleet operators view flexi-lease as a commitment-free route that allows them to keep options exciting for drivers and van options flexible to respond to work contract changes.

The vehicles available to company car drivers usually depend on the business objectives. While some fleets aim to retain top sales staff with an interchangeable and broad range of company cars, others simply need fit-for-purpose vehicles.

With a broader selection of 'affordable' retail options, decision-makers can become torn between fixed-term contract hires and rolling flexible (flexi-lease) leasing options.

Attendees at the recent *Fleet News* roundtable, sponsored by Shell, discussed the effectiveness and usefulness of flexi-rent options within their fleets, including some of the reasons it may or may not work.

**Is anyone currently using flexi-lease within their fleet?**

**Paul Holden, fleet manager at Yesss Electrical:** We are currently using a 28-day-plus flexi-hire option. Around 300 vehicles in our fleet are flexi-hire and we have found it to be very cost-effective. We recently ordered 27 BMW B30s that costs us around £450 a month with maintenance included.

We can swap cars around as frequently or infrequently as we like, and the only reason we would use contract hire now is if a driver wanted an exact specification or something that flexi-lease cannot provide.

I don't understand why people would use contract hire. Flexi-lease will be the future. I don't think there is a place for contract hire now.

We find it works really well but it depends what you want to achieve, ours is driver satisfaction, staff retention and keeping them excited.

**Graham Telfer, fleet manager, Gateshead Council:** We have been running about 250 vans on flexi for three years now. We pay less than £50 a week for a Transit. There are no damage returns because the margins on the van side are so minimal now.

**Paul Brown, head of group fleet, Freedom Group:** We went with the flexi-lease option for our vans three years ago. This means if a contract ends prematurely, we can send vehicles back instead of them rusting in a car park and costing money.

Anyone not doing a flexi now is wasting money. Fixed four-year leases you are locked into will soon be a thing of the past, and it has got considerably cheaper as it has become more popular. Flexi is the way forward, but you have to decide how 'flex' you want to be.

**Monica Guise, sustainable logistics manager, University of Birmingham:** Fleet managers need to consider the bigger picture. If it is important to your company to retain the top-selling people and ensure your sales force know they are valued then it is beneficial. In different industries, there are different aims.

**Paul Holden:** We got 88 plug-in hybrids for our drivers to trial, and if they don't agree with them we can simply swap them for something else.

There seems to be a change in standards when it comes to fuel types every month, and I cannot plan around industry changes over the next three years, which I would have to if I were locked into a contract hire agreement. If you have flexi-leasing you can move with the times.

**Is anyone using contract hire options instead?**

**Caroline Hicks, strategic procurement manager, UTC Aerospace Systems:** We are locked in to several contracts at the moment due to end next year, so I would be interested to understand how easy it is to move from contract hire to flexi. We are changing constantly, especially our seniors. We are a massive business, we are hoping to implement something soon.

**Suzanne O'Neill, account manager, Shell:** We have just upgraded from a three-year contract hire to four years.

**Paul Holden:** We initially had a policy on our flexible lease vehicles whereby we wouldn't change a vehicle for two years. We found our drivers wanted to change their vehicles more frequently so we scrapped the two-year policy.

**Lorna King, fleet specialist, Premier Business Services:** Our sales people are on the road a lot to maintain the business relationships, and when they visit a client, they want to be turning up in a nice car. One of the major things for our drivers is how the car fits with their personal life.

**Graham Telfer:** Company cars are so much more than an office now.

**Are there any disadvantages to flexi-lease?**

**Paul Holden:** The trouble with flexi is you have to be very proactive with it. It is not like contract hire because deals are constantly coming in and changing. You have to ensure each department is able to manage moves and swaps.

**Graham Telfer:** The only problem is that in 12 to 15 months, we have to return the vehicles. This means there are regular changeovers happening across the van fleet but they are usually managed by the hire company. There is no such thing as long-term contract anymore because the market is so competitive. Another drawback is companies tend to want their van stock returned so they can get the residuals.

**Jeanette Gillespie-Evans, expenses and fleet team manager, Premier Business Services:** Some drivers can be very precious about their vehicles, so I am not sure if flexi-leasing would be the best choice.

**Paul Brown:** Paul Holden and I have had discussions around this table on flexi-lease for years. We are at opposite ends of the spectrum, as my drivers do not care about what kind of company vehicle they get.

They are not bothered if it is a BMW 5 Series or a VW Golf estate; it is, essentially, a toolbox on wheels.

We are quite lucky because we just need to make sure the car is fit for purpose and that the least amount of tax is paid against it, as it will be treated like a van but with four seats. Paul [Holden] wants to keep staff working for him and ensure they do not go to competitors.

**Graham Telfer:** They want the stock back so they can get the residuals, that is the only drawback of it. The rates you pay now, if anyone is paying £100 a week for a van, they are paying well over the odds. The flexi industry has come a long way, compared to how it was.

**Is switching from contract to flexi straightforward?**

**Paul Brown:** The process is the same as you would do with any leasing company. You simply find the suppliers and beat them down on price, get the best deal and and get the contract in place. They are all willing to negotiate and compete. Very few companies do not offer flexi options.

**How flexible can companies be on returns, is there a fixed term?**

**Paul Holden:** We would usually keep a car for two years, but we can send them back or keep them as often or as little as we would like. In the early days, a lot of flexi hire cars were on a fixed six-month contract.

We had to find a provider prepared to let us keep the cars. We have simplified our deal and the price is not based on a sliding yearly rate. We are not taking advantage of the service. Our suppliers know what our business requirements are.

**300**
**vehicles in the Yesss Electrical fleet are flexi-hire**

*"Anyone not doing a flexi now is wasting money. Flexi is the way forward, but you have to decide how 'flex' you want to be"*

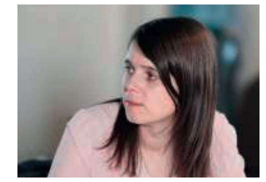
*Paul Brown, Freedom Group*



### DELEGATES

**Paul Brown**
Head of group fleet, Freedom Group

**Graham Telfer**
Fleet manager, Gateshead Council



**Lianne Farr**
Fleet and motor support manager, Hermes

**Edmund Chapman**
Category lead, HMRC

**Simon Binks**
Fleet manager, Innserve

**Paul Holden**
Fleet manager, Yesss Electrical

**Lorna King**
Fleet specialist, Premier Business Services

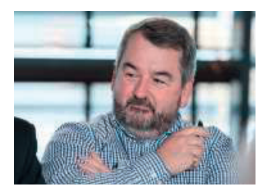
**Jeanette Gillespie-Evans**
Expenses and fleet manager, Premier Business Services

**Don Porter**
Group fleet manager, Synseal Group

**Monica Guise**
Sustainable logistics manager, University of Birmingham

**Caroline Hicks**
Strategic procurement manager, UTC Aerospace Systems

**Eric Bristow**
Fleet and asset manager, NIC Services Group



**Ian Leonard**
Head of fleet operations, Yodel

**Suzanne O'Neill**
Account manager, Shell

**Hayley Arckless**
Account manager, Shell

# 'INCENTIVISE SAFETY TO BEAT EPIDEMIC DISEASE'

## Mobileye director Gil Ayalon believes governments, insurers and fleets have major parts to play in the uptake of safety systems. *Stephen Briers* reports

Gil Ayalon has a clear message for legislators, insurers and fleets alike: "You shouldn't be allowed to buy or operate vehicles in the UK that are not safe. Safety shouldn't be optional."

The territory director EMEA at Mobileye, the driver assistance and autonomous systems technology company, believes the Government should regulate and incentivise manufacturers, fleets and drivers to encourage the uptake of safety systems.

"The regulator must step in to provide a cure for this epidemic disease," Ayalon says. "There should be incentives for safety like the BIK (benefit-in-kind) incentives for $CO_2$."

He points to the situation in Israel, Mobileye's home market, where the Government legislated for safety four years ago. Today, many advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) are free.

The Israeli Government's solution was simple: create a safety grade where incentives are offered to manufacturers on a scale of zero to eight dependent on how many preventive systems they have in the car.

"We're not talking about ABS or airbags, we're talking about preventatives like forward collision warning, autonomous emergency braking (AEB) and pedestrian detection systems. But also simple sensors," Ayalon says. "It started in 2013 and it's led to high infiltration so in 2018 (in Israel) you won't be able to buy a new car without forward collision warning as a minimum. If you are selling a safer car you're getting some incentives."

He adds: "They (the Israeli Government) understand that by reducing accidents we are increasing the gross domestic product through cheaper and more productive generated working.

"There are beds in hospital, there's social security, less health costs, fewer traffic jams etc."

However, fleets should not wait for the legislators; Ayalon believes they should be prioritising safety equipment as standard in their company vehicle fleets.

"People would rather buy a new iPhone or 4D television than ADAS yet the Mobileye 6 Series only costs €150 (£134) to install," he says. "In the UK, people prefer to record the accident rather than prevent it – why?"

> *"In the UK, people prefer to record the accident rather than prevent it – why?"*
>
> *Gil Ayalon, Mobileye*

Over-confidence is a likely explanation: people believe they are good drivers and subscribe to the 'it'll never happen to me' theory.

It's one reason why Mobileye focuses on the corporate fleet sector as companies tend to have a better appreciation of health and safety. They understand that safe drivers contribute directly to the bottom line of the business by reducing cost and improving their image.

Mobileye was conceived in a small basement on the outskirts of Jerusalem in 1999 with a clear objective: to find a cure for road accidents. It targeted manufacturers to pilot its camera and sensor-based technology before using that knowledge to develop aftermarket devices.

It was a long process; Mobileye didn't sell its first system until 2006.

"This is after investing a lot of money in the company without getting one cent in," Ayalon says. "It demonstrates how confident and committed we were, and how brave also."

The company now works with around 25 manufacturers and has fitted its systems to more than 21 million vehicles worldwide.

Its two main ADAS products are the 6 Series forward-facing vision sensor for cars and vans, which alerts operators to potential collisions, and the Shield+ collision avoidance system for trucks and buses which has multiple vision sensors for visual and audible alerts of cyclists, pedestrians and motorcycles.

The cameras and sensors are linked to a computer – a System on Chip (SoC) - which understands, interprets and classifies the scene of the road, identifying that vehicles are vehicles, lanes are lanes, cyclists are cyclists and people are people.

"If a driver gets two seconds of warning, they can avoid most accidents," Ayalon says. "And accidents cost the company, society and the Government. We are changing driver behaviour and culture by teaching them to drive less aggressively – drive by the law and it will also reduce fuel consumption and improve tyre and brake life."

Encouraging the fitment of ADAS systems should not only be targeted at manufacturers and fleets purchasing a new car; retrofit is also an important consideration.

Here, Ayalon believes insurance companies have a key role to play in publicly promoting premium discounts and other incentives.

"They do this in Israel already; they pay around £320 to the vehicle based on a discount on the annual registration fee for fitting safety equipment. This is in addition to an insurance discount," he says.

"Insurance companies have to demand that cars are safer.

"But they also have to understand ADAS better and how it can be integrated into their products; how they can make revenue from it in order to be ready for the autonomous car that is coming and the new business models."

Mobileye is now moving deeper into autonomous technology with its manufacturer partners. Its investment plans were given a considerable boost earlier this year after the American multinational giant Intel acquired the company.

It was the biggest IPO for an Israeli company and saw Intel's own autonomous division integrate within Mobileye's base of 650 employees. Within three years, the business expects to be employing more than 3,000.

"It will speed up the development of our product, giving us more R&D and logistics resources," says Ayalon. "Intel and Mobileye joined forces to be the eyes and the brains for the autonomous car."

He adds: "We have now shifted to be an enabler of autonomous technology which leads us to be a mapping company."

This shift is happening in parallel with further investment in its core ADAS products, improving the algorithms and adding features such as pedestrian protection and night and animal detection.

Traffic light detection will be launched within the next 12 months.

"We can capture information on objects that are relevant – landmarks, traffic signs, lanes – to an accuracy of 10cm," Ayalon says.

"We are starting to do this using the ADAS cameras that are already fitted and fleets can be part of this process. How? They will have to contact us to find out."

### AUTONOMOUS CARS – THE FUTURE, NOT NOW

**As a developer of autonomous systems working in close partnership with motor manufacturers, you might expect Gil Ayalon to be bullish about the introduction of a fully autonomous car. Not so.**

**"Although you can hear announcements about autonomous cars, and we will have one in 2021, they will be in insignificant numbers," he says. "It will be a long time before they are rolled out – more time than people think. It will be more than a decade."**

**Delays will not be caused by the actual technology; it's everything else surrounding it such as infrastructure and legislation.**

**However, as more autonomous systems are added to cars, fleets need to ensure their drivers have access to and understand the safety options.**

**Ayalon counsels fleet decision-makers: "You need to make sure your workers have the safest car to get back home to their families. It's not as expensive as everyone thinks and it exists now – so why wait?"**


Gil Ayalon is looking for fleets to help Mobileye capture information on road layouts and signs as part of its mapping process

**FACTFILE**

**Company** Mobileye
**Formed** 1999
**Parent** Intel
**EMEA territory manager** Gil Ayalon
**Global installations** 21 million vehicles
**Key products** 6 Series, Shield+

FLEETS INFORMED
Brought to you by FleetNews
RISK MANAGEMENT

By David Richards, head of marketing, DriveTech

What do fleet, health & safety and HR managers all have in common?

In my experience, they all have a really good understanding of the benefits of adopting a strategic approach to road safety and fleet risk management and driver training in particular.

In fact, I've spoken at quite a few fleet and health & safety conferences and another thing these professionals agree on is the challenge of persuading their leadership of the benefits of running an occupational road risk reduction programme.

Perhaps, leadership sees vehicle damage as a 'cost of doing business these days' or collisions as an unfortunate consequence of more traffic on the roads. Perhaps, their view is – as long as their drivers have a licence, job done.

Putting to one side the European Transport Safety Council's research in July 2017 that "up to 40% of road deaths in Europe are work-related", there are clear financial benefits leadership can gain by just putting the business cost of road collisions higher up on the board agenda.

DriveTech recently analysed one of its customer's pre- and post-training collision costs for high risk drivers. Initial results found a 77% reduction in the number of collisions in the year post-training, the cost per collision reduced by 27% and there was an overall collision cost reduction of more than 80%. Great training also improves fuel efficiency and lowers service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs.

Driver training works and can make a difference to your organisation's bottom line.

Go to www.drivetech.co.uk/news-and-information to download our free white papers to see how.

> "Initial results found a 77% reduction in the number of collisions in the year post-training"

DriveTech
Part of the AA

FLEETS INFORMED
Brought to you by FleetNews
TELEMATICS

By Rhys Harrhy, telematics product manager, ALD Automotive

Over 2017 we've seen that telematics is increasingly becoming a mainstay of fleets as the opportunities it brings become more widely known. More and more businesses are realising the benefits go far beyond simply protecting the bottom line and actually play a vital role in helping them achieve a range of fleet objectives, from managing risk to reducing $CO_2$ emissions and improving driver well-being.

With 2018 on the horizon, we expect the role of telematics will become more diverse for fleets.

As we move into an increasingly connected world, fleet managers will have more data than ever at their fingertips. It's an exciting time but not without its challenges – processing the volume of information available can be daunting and businesses may lack the time and resource to dedicate to it.

This is where telematics technology will be invaluable, allowing managers to spot trends and extract real insight that will help them make better-informed decisions.

Equally, as the Government looks to improve air quality through Clean Air Zones and other measures, telematics will play a crucial role in helping fleets manage fuel consumption and reduce their overall $CO_2$ emissions.

Fleets looking to integrate telematics software should work with providers that adopt a consultative approach and really get under the skin of their business to understand where the value of the technology truly lies.

Creating clear objectives and goals will make it easier to measure success and providers should offer ongoing support to improve and refine the solution in line with the business' changing needs.

To learn more visit ukinfo@aldautomotive.com or contact 0370 001 1181.

> "More and more businesses are realising the benefits go far beyond simply protecting the bottom line"

ALD Automotive

FLEETS INFORMED
Brought to you by FleetNews
COMPLIANCE

By Martin Evans, managing director, Jaama

Jaama is the UK's leading fleet and asset management software provider and continues to push the technological and functionality boundaries to ensure the ever-increasing raft of legislation and all best practice and compliance objectives are met.

Fleet innovation-focused Jaama has at its core its multi-award-winning Key2 software, providing businesses with a comprehensive system covering all aspects of car and commercial vehicle operations as well as grey fleet and driver management.

Key2 delivers to fleet decision-makers a smart customer-facing solution with a self-help focus that, crucially, eliminates the requirement for regular manual intervention and the risk of errors and compliance weaknesses in the monitoring of vehicles and drivers

Fleet management software is exceptionally fast-moving and that's why Jaama is the sector's most recommended provider as continuous investment in new solutions totalling some £2 million a year ensures the company's technology is at the cutting-edge.

This year has seen the launch of My Vehicle App, (highly commended in Commercial Fleet Awards Best New Product). It's a genuine game-changer which delivers benefits to fleet managers thanks to 'auto-triggering', as well as simplifying tasks for drivers.

Separately, growing digitalisation enables the electronic storage of vehicle and driver documents – or online accessibility – such as driver licences, vehicle V5C registration records, P11D reporting and grey fleet insurance, MOT and vehicle servicing records.

For further information visit www.jaama.com, email enquiries@Jaama.co.uk, or call 0844 8484 333.

> "Key2 delivers to fleet decision-makers a smart customer-facing solution with a self-help focus"

jaama
fleet, leasing and hire software innovators

FLEETS INFORMED
Brought to you by FleetNews
FUNDING

By Claire Evans, head of fleet consultancy, Zenith

It's been great to be involved in the Fleets Informed programme again this year.

Funding has continued to be a huge topic and we've been able to share our experience and provide guidance on how a flexible approach can deliver savings.

We know there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all fleet, however, we hope that the range of topics we've covered has been helpful and provided guidance on the areas that you need to be looking at and the questions you need to ask of your provider.

Over the year we've looked at diverse topics from the upcoming taxation changes, impacts of OpRA, to the new lease accounting rules that come into force in 2019 and bring contract hire assets onto balance sheet.

A key theme to driving cost efficiencies is getting the right funding mechanism and policy for each section of fleet, from perk to business needs, and having a long-term plan that aligns with the government agenda to transition into low-emitting vehicles over the next five years.

One example of this is how salary sacrifice schemes (where an employee sacrifices a proportion of salary in return for a company car) have grown in popularity in recent years. It's great to get the green light on these schemes post-OpRA and to see how they will continue to be popular.

Fuel-efficient cars with low $CO_2$ can be the cheapest option for employees, aligning with the government's clean air agenda and driving greener fleets.

For more information about Zenith go to zenith.co.uk, email fleet@zenith.co.uk or call 0344 848 9327

> "We hope that the range of topics we've covered has been helpful and provided guidance"

Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

# 2018: A YEAR WITH PLENTY OF BIG BANGS?

ICFM's Paul Hollick thinks so, but what do other industry experts think the forthcoming year has in store for the fleet sector? *Andrew Ryan* reports

What will 2018 have in store for fleets? "Big bangs aplenty," says Paul Hollick, chairman of the ICFM.

He adds: "In recent years, fleets have broadly continued to 'do what they have always done' because there has been no 'big bang', but that changes in 2018.

"There is no single challenge, but a plethora of major issues that must be tackled by fleet decision-makers to ensure company car and commercial vehicle operations remain cost-effective and operationally efficient.

"I believe 2018 will be a watershed year in the history of fleet."

His view is supported by John Pryor, chairman of fleet operators' association ACFO, who adds: "The pace of change we are witnessing across the fleet industry is unprecedented in my almost 30 years as a fleet manager and the number of challenges confronting me and my peers in 2018 continues to escalate."

Both Hollick and Pryor identified the Government's ongoing consultation on the taxation of benefits-in-kind (BIK) and employee expenses that includes an examination of approved mileage allowance payments (AMAPs) made to employees that drive their own cars on business journeys as a challenge facing fleets in 2018.

Hollick also says the recent Budget announcements mean fleets must:

- Review whether diesel remains a fleet favourite or petrol, hybrid and plug-in options have a home with a more 'balanced' approach to powertrain choice likely.
- Tackle the impact on company car choice lists and vehicle-related taxation of the Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) as more information becomes available.

"The Government's ill-informed 'all diesels are dirty' obsession – today's Euro 6 emissions cars produce more power and torque with lower $CO_2$ rates when compared with traditional petrol-based engines – will filter down through to local authorities," says Hollick.

> *"Perhaps the biggest trend over the next 12 months will be if employers and employees stay loyal to the popularity of the company car"*
>
> *John Pryor, ACFO*

"This could mean an avalanche of local diesel surcharge parking schemes to boost council coffers as well as clean air zones (CAZs) and getting to grips with the April 2019 introduction of London's Ultra-low Emission Zone (ULEZ)."

Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group (FIAG) adds: "How fleets adapt to the Government's and local authorities' approach to managing vehicle pollution is a challenge and that brings in the viability of all fuel options.

"As FIAG always says, businesses must match vehicle wholelife costs to operating viability and fitness for purpose.

"Equally, while the Government is pushing the case for plug-in vehicles, the size and reliability of the recharging network is far from meeting fleet requirements and recharging speed is also an issue.

"Nevertheless, in some niche fleet operating requirements, plug-in vehicles undoubtedly have a place."

Other issues include fleet mobility, fuel prices, the lease accounting standards that are effective from 2019 and the May introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which "promises to be another minefield for employers and fleets", says Hollick.

Pryor adds: "I cannot recall such a multitude of issues. As a result, perhaps the biggest trend over the next 12 months will be if employers and employees stay loyal to the popularity of the company car or decide that it is getting all too complex and the tax burden too great, and switch to offering cash allowances, which triggers a multitude of other challenges."

In this feature, industry experts offer their predictions for the year ahead in a number of key areas.

## TAXES

**RACHEL LANE, FLEET CONSULTANT AT ZENITH**

**There are a number of tax changes that will impact fleets over the next year, all of which have the same Government goals of reducing $CO_2$ emissions and moving fleets into cleaner powertrains.**

**April 2018 sees the change to capital allowances where the $CO_2$ threshold for being able to claim at the main rate of 18% reduces to 110g/km, leading to a typical cost increase of approximately £6 per month.**

**Fleet managers could consider introducing 110g/km $CO_2$ thresholds in order to avoid any cost increases and plan a review of choice lists when their leasing company puts the changes into quotes, possibly January.**

**The Autumn Budget 2017 saw the announcement of changes to first-year vehicle excise duty (VED) for diesel cars whereby the rates applied will rise by one band.**

**The cost increase for typical diesel cars will be minimal, for example, an Audi A3 in $CO_2$ band 101-110 will incur an increase of 42p per month over a typical four-year term.**

**In addition to this, the Chancellor also announced that the diesel supplement will increase by one percentage point from April 2018 for company car tax.**

**Manufacturers are being incentivised to continue to advance the development of cleaner diesel engines with the confirmation that the diesel supplement will be removed entirely for vehicles that meet the Real Driving Emissions step 2 standard (RDE2), bringing these vehicles in-line with their petrol equivalents.**

**Currently, no cars meet this standard and this is likely to be the case until around 2020.**

**These changes to the taxation of diesel vehicles will further support the trend towards increasing numbers of petrol and alternatively-fuelled vehicles being included in company car policies in 2018.**

**Fleet operators will need to increasingly consider the profile of their driver population when planning what fuel type most suits the needs of their drivers, balancing this with what is most financially beneficial.**

**There is clearly a lot of work to be done in this area in terms of modelling the most efficient mix of fleet for any business and I would advise fleets of all sizes to consult experts on the subject.**

> "Car clubs are also fast becoming a primary option for business travellers who need access and flexibility"
>
> Adrian Bewley, Enterprise Rent-A-Car

> "It is vital that the van sector continues its success in improving safety standards"
>
> Mark Cartwright, Freight Transport Association

## MOBILITY

**ADRIAN BEWLEY, HEAD OF BUSINESS MOBILITY UK & IRELAND AT ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR**

Flexible, cost-effective access to mobility will be the number one corporate requirement in 2018.

Providers are going to have to prove they have the range of vehicles, breadth and depth of offerings, analytics and detailed reporting to provide the perfect fit to a company's needs.

We're going to see more senior decision-makers getting involved in mobility decisions, as this will continue to be vital to business success.

They'll want to see proof that employee needs are being met with the best mobility option available at the time.

Fleets will require on-demand access points and solutions for every type of trip and increment of time, from an electric vehicle for an hour,to a car for a month, to a specialist van or truck for five years or more.

Car clubs are also fast becoming a primary option for business travellers who need access and flexibility.

This will grow to complement other forms of travel and allow organisations to easily move away from the unmanaged grey fleet.

Both private and public sectors will get more savvy about grey fleet thanks to better tools for identifying which journeys can be better met with a car club or a rental.

Interest in multi-modal travel strategies will grow to embrace all travel types under one umbrella, while tablet and app-based systems will provide greater flexibility, transparency and choice.

In fact, technology will enable mobility providers to work more closely with employers and drivers to provide better service.

Calibre of service will clearly be an increasing differentiator over the coming months.

## ALTERNATIVE FUELS

**STUART THOMAS, DIRECTOR OF FLEET AND SME SERVICES AT THE AA**

Alternative fuels will be a priority for fleets in 2018 as the Government continues its focus on reducing emissions in UK cities.

From the introduction of clean air zones (CAZs) and increased taxes for diesel cars, there is a much greater focus on the environmental impact of vehicles, and businesses need to take action to future-proof their fleets.

Our recent report, produced in collaboration with BT Fleet Solutions, showed that 95% of fleets are currently made up of diesel or petrol-fuelled vehicles yet, in five years' time, 63% of them expect to be using alternative fuels.

With many businesses still cautious about how to incorporate electric and other alternatively fuelled vehicles into their fleet, it is important that they work with strategic partners to help them make informed choices about how to reduce their emissions.

At the recent Fleet200 roundtable, driver education and creating a safety culture were at the top of the list for the biggest challenges for fleets next year.

We think that connected car technology has a bigger role to play in this area.

For example, our Operational Fleet Insight report revealed that 74% of fleets containing 100-plus vehicles are now using telematics, yet only 33% of them primarily use it to reduce accident rates.

Therefore, fleets could be making much better use of the insight gained by technology to help them educate drivers and improve road safety.

As the use of connected car technology continues to evolve, more fleets will use it to help with ongoing management, e.g. alerting them when a vehicle requires servicing or upgrades.

## BREXIT

**GEOFFREY BRAY, CHAIRMAN OF FLEET INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP**

Fleet decision-makers are fearful of the outcome of Brexit. But what a world will look like with the UK outside the European Union and, specifically, the impact on vehicle pricing and in-life vehicle costs, is unknown.

However, I am optimistic and, while I cannot predict the future, Brexit is already weighing on the decision-making process within some fleets.

Nevertheless, fleet decision-makers must acknowledge the fact that the UK is not an isolated market as far as the automotive industry is concerned.

The UK is a small market in a global economy and when the automotive industry is making marketing, including pricing, decisions they are made invariably in a worldwide context.

The internet has changed the world and, while there are pluses and minuses, generally international businesses are thriving as can be seen from the level of stock markets in London and globally.

It is a challenging and changing world and Brexit will have an impact, but it will also present major opportunities. Businesses must be nimble and alert – and that includes within the fleet arena – and move forward as opportunities occur.

March 29, 2019 is when the UK is scheduled to withdraw from the European Union. That date is a long way off and the reality is that Brexit negotiations are likely to be protracted and could continue much longer than the Government's two-year forecast in terms of having new trade agreements in place.

Therefore, fleets must continue to operate against a background of what is known and manage their assets effectively and efficiently. That means continuing to evolve because standing still awaiting the outcome of Brexit, which will take many months and even years, simply means costs will escalate.

## VANS

**MARK CARTWRIGHT, HEAD OF VANS AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL VEHICLES AT THE FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION**

It's hard to predict how poor economic growth and pressure on consumer spending will affect businesses on a day-to-day level.

Registrations of new vans continue to grow, but FTA research suggests the dramatic increase in ownership of recent years is slowing.

There are also indications that van fleet investment for 2018 will be lower than previous years. It's not clear yet whether these changes mark the start of more modest, steady growth or a significant realignment in the sector.

Managing fuel costs will continue to pose a challenge. While November's Budget saw another freeze in fuel duty, petrol and diesel prices are rising.

Uptake of electric vehicles in the UK has been slow in comparison to cars. This is likely to change as towns and cities become increasingly keen to penalise or ban older and more polluting vehicles. Van users will need to plan their fleets to ensure business impact of these new restrictions is minimised.

Van MOT failure rates are at their lowest since the 2008 recession, but the Government has expressed concern that they remain too high, particularly for class 7 vehicles which display very poor standards of roadworthiness.

Many operators still see the MOT test as a 'diagnostic tool' which will pinpoint where repairs need to be made.

It's vital that the van sector continues its success in improving safety standards or it is possible legislators will act to impose a more stringent compliance framework.

The Van Excellence scheme, managed by FTA, aims to address the challenge of improving operating standards, providing leadership and a demanding benchmark for the van community.

## TWO THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2018

### 1 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (2018)

GDPR, which takes effect on May 25, 2018, will shake up the way personal data is collected, stored and used.

It builds on existing data protection legislation with a particular focus on digitalisation and technology.

Breach GDPR rules and the maximum penalty is a €20 million (£17.9m) fine or 4% of total global turnover for the previous year, whichever is highest.

"GDPR will fundamentally change the way we interact with our employees," says Caroline Sandall, deputy chairman of ACFO and director of ESE Consulting.

"I think GDPR has perhaps been a little underplayed in terms of its impact on fleet.

"A lot of news items have focused on telematics data and the more obvious data things, when actually what is really critical is making sure you can absolutely prove that drivers understand what is happening to their data and that you maintain a robust audit trail to show this.

"The magnitude of this is not to be underestimated."

■ For more on GDPR and how it affects fleet management, see a special insight in the January 11 issue of *Fleet News*.

> "What is really critical is making sure you can absolutely prove that drivers understand what is happening to their data"
>
> Caroline Sandall, ACFO

### 2 RESIDUAL VALUES

Residual values in 2018 will be impacted by a number of known factors as well as some "known unknowns", says Martin Potter, group operations director at Aston Barclay.

These include:

- Brexit arrangements
- The effect of ULEZ and T-Charges on used diesel desirability
- Any potential diesel scrappage scheme
- A continued fall in new car registrations
- The November 2017 interest rate rise and expected further increases in 2018.

Potter expects January to start strongly with buyers looking to replenish stock after Christmas trading and expects it to remain buoyant until the traditional Easter registration plate change.

FleetNews AWARDS 2017

### WINNER: ŠKODA SUPERB

# Škoda seeks fleet growth for its SUVs after Superb success

Superb and Octavia account for three-quarters of the brand's fleet sales but the picture looks set to change

*"Superb estate in true fleet became the number three car in its segment this year. We are one of the few brands growing in that marketplace"*

*Henry Williams, Škoda*

**By Sarah Tooze**

With the award-winning third-generation Superb already firmly established on fleet choice lists Škoda chose to switch to a new SUV offensive this year with its first seven-seat model, the Kodiaq.

But it is the brand's new Yeti replacement, the Karoq, which recently opened for ordering, that head of fleet Henry Williams is most excited about.

He believes the Karoq is "much more tuned into the true fleet market" than the Kodiaq, which is aimed more at retail and small business customers (around a quarter of its sales have gone to true fleet).

"Seven-seat SUVs always give you some appeal and it's great as a halo product, but where we're really seeing a lot of gain is through Karoq," Williams says. "Yeti was very good for us but what Karoq gives us is a car positioned in a similar way price-wise but something slightly bigger. The design is much more contemporary and aligned with Škoda's design philosophy and we're bringing into that some petrol engines alongside the diesels, which are really very economical. Then we layer on the new technology and the connected car part to it and we've got a really strong proposition."

Williams won't reveal his sales expectations for Karoq, except to say that he plans to "grow the volume above what Yeti achieved" (last year it peaked at 13,689).

The Karoq isn't in the UK yet (we drove the car on the international launch, see *Fleet News*, November 9) but last month fleets were able to experience it virtually through Škoda's new digital showroom, Škoda Live Tour (fleetnews.co.uk, November 13).

Škoda Live Tour is a live video stream with a fleet product 'host' who is able to explain the model in detail and answer questions in real time. It is a first for the brand and for the Volkswagen Group.

**Fleet News: Where did the idea for Škoda Live Tour come from?**

**Henry Williams:** It came from us thinking about how do we get a car to people who have time pressures? We know most car research is done in the evenings when people get home from work so what can we do to make customers' time more efficient? It's a no pressure sales environment where people who know a lot about the product show it in the best way. We did a soft launch in the middle of the year and we've been gradually ramping it up.

**FN: What feedback have you had from fleet managers and company car drivers?**

**HW:** It really works for them, the idea that you can get this level of information and detail, view the car and it's not just a static camera looking at the car, each of the product gurus [hosts] has a smartphone with them. It's a very interactive experience which is different to anything else you see, apart from going to a car showroom and looking at a car. This is as good as a one-to-one.

**FN: Will the Škoda Live Tour be available for all future launches?**

**HW:** It will become a mainstream part of what we do. We can get three cars in there at any one time so at the moment it's the Octavia vRS, Kodiaq Edition and Superb L&K and then we rotate models every few months.

**FN: Your fleet sales have continued to grow this year, what's been driving that?**

**HW:** The biggest growth by a long way is through my team of corporate sales managers who are looking after our big corporates. That has grown from 8,000 cars last year to more than 9,000 this. We've grown our customer base by about 20% in the past year in that marketplace and we intend to keep growing. If we look back over the past two years, [new] Superb came in which is a really good success for us, we facelifted Octavia earlier this year, we launched the SE Technology range of cars about 18 months ago and added petrol models onto those recently, again to cater for the fleet market.

**FN: Are you seeing a drop in diesel sales?**

**HW:** Yes as a brand. The gap between petrol and diesel from an efficiency perspective has closed quite a lot. Of course there is a general stir in the market, we're seeing from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) figures that diesel sales as a percentage of the total are falling and petrol sales are gaining at the same time, but we've seen that over quite a long time. On Octavia the petrol engines are really refined, really punchy, nicer to drive, lower upfront cost and residual values now on petrols have caught up with diesels so, unless you are doing a lot of miles, there really is no need [to take diesel].

Henry Williams (holding the trophy) celebrates with his team

**FN: What part has the Superb played in your fleet sales success this year?**

**HW:** We do about three-quarters of our business through Octavia and Superb. Octavia is pretty flat year-on-year and Superb is where we've managed to grow the business. Superb estate in true fleet became the number three car in its segment this year (up from fifth in 2016). The only two cars ahead of it are the Audi A4 and the Volkswagen Passat and then you have the BMW 3 Series below it. This is a market dominated by premiums and yet we are one of the few brands growing in that marketplace. That's not to say we want to be a premium brand, that's not us. We want to offer a quality car that is great value for money.

**FN: Karoq is going to be your 'most connected' car. Where does Škoda stand on the debate with leasing companies over access to data?**

**HW:** We're working closely with all of the major leasing companies. There is some useful information in those cars for them so we're trying to work out how can we provide that to a leasing company on a regular basis and what format they need that in. There is lots of development time [needed] to do that so we're a few years away from being able to do it.

**FN: But what of their concerns about drivers being prompted to visit a franchised dealer for servicing?**

**HW:** We're well aware that aftersales direction is a key issue for leasing companies so, even before we launched any connected cars in the middle of this year, we were working on making sure that if a leasing company doesn't want it [the SMR prompt] to happen we have a plan that ensures it doesn't happen. It is part of the car that it will do servicing but we can centrally change that. We liaise with all leasing companies on an individual basis to understand their concerns and work to resolve them.

**FN: How are you targeting small businesses?**

**HW:** We've set up SME Direct recently, which is our 'no worries' approach to local business. We know the SME market is booming, more and more people are taking contract hire, but the challenge that a lot of SMEs have if they are running a few cars is they will sign an individual agreement for each car, they won't be able to pool the mileage so, if a car goes over mileage they can't offset it with another. They'll get a financial statement for each car – it won't be pulled into one account, they won't have access to fuel cards so it's quite laborious especially for a small business owner who doesn't have a lot of people and whose time is best spent on the business. So SME Direct is focused on those people who want a package and we partner with Volkswagen Financial Services for that.

**FN: How much of your retail network offers SME Direct?**

**HW:** Anybody can sell it, but predominantly it's going to be through the LBDMs (local business development managers) because those are the guys we've trained to be able to deal with local business in the right way.

**FN: You were originally hoping to have 45 LBDMs by the end of this year, how many do you have now?**

**HW:** We've got 30. They are employed by our dealers but my team and I recruit them. We put them through assessment centres, mentor them, train them and bring them together at regular intervals to build a community spirit. Also we mystery shop them to check all is working well. We think there is scope for more, but 45 may be too many. We've realised 35 is probably where we need to get to.

Škoda's true fleet sales are up 6% on 2016 (as at the end of November) and Williams anticipates maintaining that for the full year, which, in a market which is expected to be down 5%, will give Škoda a relative performance of 11%.

He anticipates Škoda's fleet sales volumes being "fairly static" in 2018, which should see the brand gain market share if the fleet market is down again next year.

"We're not the type of brand to push the volume," Williams says. "We'll do it in the right way, we'll do it in the right channels to the right types of customer and not take any distressful action."

Superb is where Škoda has managed to grow the business

### FACTFILE

**Organisation:** Škoda
**Head of fleet:** Henry Williams
**True fleet sales YTD (end of November):** 18,352
**Best-selling fleet models:** Superb, Octavia

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

**Pound-for-pound the Superb is one of the best cars on the road today. Unbelievable running costs, strong residuals, the most space in class, attractive looks, good build quality and very reliable, the Superb is the stand-out car in this category.**

E350D

# MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS ALL TERRAIN

## It's not an SUV but latest addition to estate range will rise to the occasion

All Terrain by name and nature – the latest estate is equally happy away from the road

**By Maurice Glover**

Business motorists who continue to resist the swing to sport utility vehicles (SUVs) are expected to fuel a further boost in sales of Mercedes-Benz estate cars with the arrival of a new addition to the E-Class range.

In the wake of a 62% jump in registrations of its upmarket load luggers, the German firm has made an extra-capability model available in the line-up to cater for the needs of drivers with more adventurous lifestyles.

Standing taller than its stablemates, riding on adjustable air suspension and decked out with SUV-style trappings like skid plates and plastic bodywork protection, the All Terrain is a tougher-looking workhorse that has the ability to cope with life away from the Tarmac.

"Not everyone wants to drive a sport utility and there are some fleet customers who don't have the opportunity to take a full-size SUV, so I rate this as a compelling proposition for these drivers," said Mercedes-Benz Cars head of fleet Rob East. "It could be a particularly attractive alternative for people who need to carry equipment for sporting activities and we think it holds the prospect of further incremental volume. Our regular estate has achieved 1,911 fleet and business registrations in the past 10 months – 62% up on last year – so this is a welcome extra model at a time when premium segment customers have more choice than ever."

East added: "Our research shows more people living in semi-rural areas want premium transport with occasional off-road ability and we're already getting interest in this car from end users who have a relatively open policy."

Based on the standard car in AMG trim, the All Terrain is a plush affair that lacks nothing by way of luxury and convenience features. With boot space ranging from 640 litres to a cavernous 1,820 litres when the 40/20/40 split rear seat is folded, it is a versatile load carrier.

But the big difference comes in the way the new car behaves both on and off the road. Mated to four-wheel drive, a turbocharged three-litre V6 motor provides vivid acceleration and promotes confidence at any speed while its hushed output is complemented by a slick-shifting nine-speed auto transmission.

Yet for all that, the biggest wow factor concerns the latest version of the Mercedes-Benz air suspension system, which manages to blend sublime comfort with driver involvement despite the longer travel arising from a 29mm increase in ride height.

The result is a commendable engineering package that manages to deliver tenacious traction over winding roads and stability in spirited cornering. Even rough and tumble progress fails to disturb the calm when the bodywork is hoisted a further 20mm for off-roading adventures.

With such a relaxed demeanour to go with its armchair comfort, the All Terrain appeals as an accomplished performer that offers a refined, understated travel environment with the ability to make light work of mile-munching in all but the worst of road and weather conditions.

### COSTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price** | £58,025 |
| **BIK tax band (2016/17)** | 37% |
| **Annual BIK tax (40%)** | £8,588 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £2,963 |
| **Annual VED** | £800 then £450 |
| **RV (4yr/80K)** | £15,800 |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | 13.41 |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 13 |
| **Running cost (4yr/80K)** | 74.07 |

### SPEC

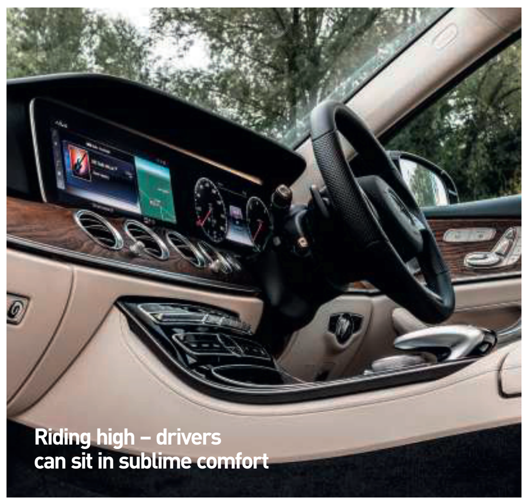
| | |
|---|---|
| **Power (PS)/torque (Nm)** | 258/620 |
| **$CO_2$ emissions (g/km)** | 179 |
| **Top speed (mph)** | 155 |
| **0-62mph (sec)** | 6.2 |
| **Fuel efficiency (mpg)** | 41.5 |

### KEY RIVAL

**Audi A6 allroad 3.0BiTDI Technology**

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price:** | £54,440 |
| **BIK tax band (2016/17)** | 36% |
| **Annual BIK tax (40%)** | £7,839 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £2,705 |
| **Annual VED** | £800 then £450 |
| **RV (4yr/80k)** | £15,025 |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | 12.61 |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 13 |
| **Running cost (4yr/80k)** | 69.57ppm |

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



Riding high – drivers can sit in sublime comfort



The ZS has three key factors in its favour according to the makers: a seven-year warranty, comparatively low starting price and plenty of room inside

1.0T GDI EXCLUSIVE

# MG ZS

## MG dealers encouraged to be more active locally as ZS bids to appeal to SMEs

**By Matt de Prez**

MG is ready to get back into the corporate market and is hoping the new ZS will give it a foothold in the small-to-medium enterprise (SME) space.

The Chinese-owned company is targeting growth among local businesses. Its 80-strong dealer network will be responsible for forging those relationships.

Matthew Cheyne, head of sales and marketing at MG Motor UK, said: "I firmly believe MG has a compelling offer for the SME business car sector. The business programme encourages our dealers to be active in their local communities. We want to see them sponsoring events, delivering on charity initiatives and becoming an integral part of their local area."

MG has strong aspirations for the new ZS. It expects to double its total registrations next year, achieving sales of almost 10,000 cars.

The ZS is a small crossover, set to rival established compact SUVs such as the Nissan Juke and Renault Captur. It also faces tough competition from newly-launched models such as the Kia Stonic, Hyundai Kona and Seat Arona.

MG says the ZS stands out in three areas: price, space and warranty.

Customers can choose between three trims and two engines. Entry-level Explore models are priced from £12,495, with mid-range Excites from £13,995. The highest-spec Exclusive is the predicted best-seller and costs from £15,495.

The ZS is around £2,000 cheaper like-for-like than its rivals and offers a high level of specification as standard.

All models feature cruise control and Bluetooth while the Excite benefits from an eight-inch touchscreen infotainment system, alloy wheels, parking sensors and air-con. Exclusive adds leather upholstery, sat-nav and a reversing camera.

A 1.5-litre naturally aspirated petrol engine kicks off the line-up with 106PS. It can return an average 49.6mpg and propels the ZS to 62mph in 10.6 seconds. This engine is only available with a five-speed manual transmission. It offers the lowest $CO_2$ emissions in the range with 129g/km – a poor performance in a segment where rivals are closer to 100g/km.

For an extra £2,000, a 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine is available. It is more powerful, thanks to an output of 111PS, but only comes with a six-speed automatic transmission. As a result, it is slower than the 1.5, taking 12.4 seconds to reach the 62mph benchmark.

Emissions for this engine are 144g/km with average fuel economy of just 44.9mpg.

With more torque from lower in the rev range, the smaller engine feels more powerful on the road. It is also much quieter and more refined than the 1.5. MG expects the 1.0 to be the more popular choice.

Handling was a priority for MG's engineers, who say they tuned the car for UK roads. The ride is smooth and body roll is well controlled, but it lacks the finesse of a Mazda CX-3.

Despite its relatively compact dimensions, interior space is impressive. There is adequate room for five adults and the boot is almost 100 litres larger than in a Nissan Juke.

It's disappointing there are no alternative powertrains or even a Euro 6 diesel to boost efficiency, but the ZS is an attractive, well-equipped car and comes with a seven-year/80,000 mile warranty for low mileage drivers.

### COSTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price** | £17,295 |
| **BIK tax band (2016/17)** | 7% |
| **Annual BIK tax (20%)** | £933.33 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £644.33 |
| **Annual VED** | £200 then £140 |
| **RV (4yr/80K)** | N/A |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | N/A |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 11 |
| **Running cost (4yr/80K)** | N/A |

### SPEC

| | |
|---|---|
| **Power (PS)/torque (Nm)** | 111/160 |
| **$CO_2$ emissions (g/km)** | 144 |
| **Top speed (mph)** | 112 |
| **0-62mph (sec)** | 12.4 |
| **Fuel efficiency (mpg)** | 44.9 |

### KEY RIVAL

**Nissan Juke 1.2 DIG-T Tekna**

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price:** | £19,320 |
| **BIK tax band (2016/17)** | 24% |
| **Annual BIK tax (20%)** | £927 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £640 |
| **Annual VED** | £160 then £140 |
| **RV (4yr/80k)** | £4,825 |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | 10.82 |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 11 |
| **Running cost (4yr/80k)** | 32.81ppm |

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

The Excite benefits from an eight-inch touchscreen

## BMW 5 SERIES 520D M SPORT


Oooh, ahhh... my first reaction upon sliding behind the wheel of the BMW 5 Series. Having driven the Jaguar XF for the past couple of months, I'd previously commented on the Jag's supportive front seats, with excellent lumbar and side support.

The 5 Series has made me rethink that glowing review. Its seats are magnificent: snugly sitting between the bolstered side supports, you sink into the leather like you would your favourite armchair. Farewell to backaches, this is definitely the car for the high mileage driver.

BMW has gone tech-extreme with the latest 5 Series. It is packed with interactive entertainment.

Some of it is outstanding, such as the optional voice-activated control, which even deciphers my West County brogue. For a *Fleet News* event: "Navigate to Capital Boulevard (Boulevarrrrrd) West, Leeds". The address is repeated back (with fewer 'r' inflections) and a final request to "say yes to set". Brilliant.

Slightly less brilliant is BMW's crazy notion that controlling radio volume by taking your left hand off the wheel to spin in a circular motion in front of the 10.25-inch screen – clockwise to increase volume, anti-clockwise to reduce – is a good idea.

First, your hand leaves the steering wheel; second, your eyes leave the road to check that your finger waggle is activating the volume (it doesn't all the time). Fine for passengers to mess with but, in our opinion, steering wheel controls are as safe as it gets (the 5 Series has them as well) and should be left alone.

I haven't delved fully into all the technology yet, but colleagues are waxing lyrical about their experiences. The ability to change the interior lighting to myriad colours seems particularly popular.

I can certainly wax lyrical about the driving experience: it's stunning, almost miraculous. How the car combines the firmness for engaging, sharp handling on meandering roads with the suppleness and comfort to cushion the roughest of ruts is, frankly, engineering genius.

**Stephen Briers**


Seven seats and plenty of interior space make the S-Max well worth considering

# FORD S-MAX

2.0 TDCI 150 TITANIUM AWD

## Reasons the S-Max rides high in our estimation

### COSTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price** | 31,140 |
| **BIK tax band** | 29% |
| **Annual BIK tax (20%)** | £1,806 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £1,246 |
| **Annual VED** | £200 then £140 |
| **RV (4yr/80k)** | £9,450/30% |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | 10.06 |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 11 |
| **Running cost (ppm)** | 1.96 |

### SPEC

| | |
|---|---|
| **Engine (cc)** | 1,997 |
| **Power (PS)** | 150 |
| **Torque (Nm)** | 350 |
| **$CO_2$ emissions (g/km)** | 139 |
| **Manufacturer mpg** | 52.3 |
| **Real-world mpg*** | 42.9 |
| **Test mpg** | 42.2 |
| **Max speed (mph)** | 122 |
| **0-62mph (sec)** | 12.1 |
| **Current mileage** | 14,548 |

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

**By Simon Harris**

The decline in the market for MPVs or people carriers can be viewed alongside a rise in appetite for SUVs.

People like the more rugged look of SUVs, and when they can seat the same number of passengers and offer equal or better versatility, people tend to want the most they can get for their money.

We have North Americans to thank for this obsession with SUVs, and Ford has been trying to solve the conundrum of what might work in all markets.

Its recent 'One Ford' model strategy aims to create global vehicles rather than cars and LCVs developed by and for regions of the world. The Kuga SUV, developed initially for Europe, has become the Escape in North America and is a global model in its second generation.

The Ecosport compact SUV, developed in South America, was launched in Europe a few years ago. The Edge large SUV (by our standards, at least), launched in Europe in 2016, became a global car for its second generation.

But the Edge only has five seats, and in almost any UK review of the car, this complaint will be prominent.

I drove one recently, and apart from not quite utilising its footprint as well as it could (it's a few millimetres longer and wider than an S-Max), it's a fine automobile.

Which brings us back to the Ford S-Max. Based on the same platform as the Mondeo (also a global car now), this more driver-focused alternative to the Galaxy will seat seven. And the version we have on test is fitted with optional all-wheel drive.

My first few hundred miles behind the wheel have reminded me that you get many of the benefits of an SUV – a high driving position, plenty of space, and, in this version, extra security in poor driving conditons, for a modest 10g/km increase in $CO_2$ emissions over a front-wheel drive version.

With a few months of winter ahead, I'm looking forward to relying on it.

*"A few hundred miles behind the driving wheel have reminded me that you get many of the benefits of an SUV – a high driving position and plenty of space"*

TEST TIMELINE

Start End

# ŠKODA OCTAVIA

1.0 TSI SE TECHNOLOGY

## For fuel economy and practicality Octavia scores well


Split headlights have been introduced as part of the recent facelift

### COSTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **P11D price** | £18,805 |
| **BIK tax band** | 21% |
| **Annual BIK tax (20%)** | £790 |
| **Class 1A NIC** | £545 |
| **Annual VED** | £140 |
| **RV (4yr/80k)** | £4,950 |
| **Fuel cost (ppm)** | 9.31 |
| **AFR (ppm)** | 11 |
| **Running cost (ppm)** | 29.37 |

### SPEC

| | |
|---|---|
| **Engine (cc)** | 999 |
| **Power (PS)** | 115 |
| **Torque (Nm)** | 200 |
| **CO2 emissions (g/km)** | 110 |
| **Manufacturer mpg** | 58.9 |
| **Real-world mpg*** | 44.7 |
| **Test mpg** | 48.5 |
| **Max speed (mph)** | **126** |
| **0-62mph (sec)** | 9.9 |
| **Current mileage** | 1,118 |

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

**By Sarah Tooze**

After the putting the Škoda Superb to the test last year we're now running the brand's other key fleet model, the Octavia, which was facelifted earlier this year.

Škoda may be expecting big things from its SUVs this year (see page 36) but that doesn't mean it has taken its eye off the Octavia 'ball'.

The most noticeable change is at the front, with the Octavia now featuring split headlights. Not everyone is a fan of them but it does help to make the Octavia more distinctive – something I feel it needs as, having just tested key rival the Honda Civic for the past six months, the Octavia looks bland in comparison.

But what the Octavia might lack in appearance it makes up for in practicality. It's known for its class-leading boot space (590 litres with the rear seats up, 1,580 with them folded) and its spacious interior, making it appealing to private hire operators and other job-need fleets.

We're testing the entry-level 1.0-litre three-cylinder petrol engine, which works out cheaper to run over four years and 80,000 miles than both the 1.6-litre and 2.0-litre diesels. In fact, it's £2,024 cheaper than the 2.0-litre diesel in SE Technology guise and £912 cheaper than the 1.6-litre diesel SE Technology.

The official combined fuel economy is 58mpg for our test model and we're currently averaging 48.5mpg after around 1,000 miles. That's 3.8mpg better than the real world figure reported by Emissions Analytics' Equa Index (available on the *Fleet News* website).

On longer motorway journeys our Octavia has returned around 52mpg.

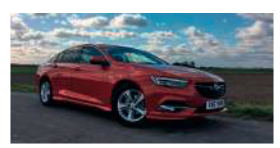
The engine is as quiet and as refined as the Civic's 1.0-litre petrol which I previously tested and it's a fraction quicker (0-62mph in 9.9 seconds compared to 10.8). However, there is noticeable wind noise at higher speeds on the motorway.

While I've yet to put all of the Octavia's technology to the test, I've been impressed with the optional rear-view parking camera (£375) which has great night-time visibility.

TEST TIMELINE

Start End

## AT A GLANCE – VIEEW THE REST OF OUR FLEET ONLINE



**Vauxhall Insignia**

**Mazda 6**

**Jaguar XF**

## THINKING CAP

**By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager**

cap hpi

**Monday** I seem to have had a bit of bad luck with tyre pressure monitors lately. You lose one PSI, from 30 to 29 in one tyre, and all hell breaks out, with the dashboard seeming to illuminate with flashing lights, red warnings and a picture of the car telling you where the problem is.

That's fine, that's what it's there for. But it takes over and will not go away. You then put the right amount of air in the underinflated tyre, which is minimal.

But it doesn't end there. The lights continue to annoy you until you reset the system, which normally involves firstly thinking you can navigate your way around the car's on-board computer. After a while, you realise you need to get out the handbook and find the correct page, which wasn't where you thought it would be.

Really annoying, I'm sure some manufacturers' systems will automatically reset themselves, but I haven't found one yet.

**Wednesday** Somewhere down south, in the middle of nowhere for the UK press event of the MG ZS compact SUV that comes with a full seven-year, 80,000 mile warranty. This versatile car measures 4,314mm, which makes it just right for what customers are buying at present.

It comes with a 1.5-litre petrol engine and a manual five-speed gearbox, or a 1.0-litre three-cylinder 111PS, with a six-speed auto. MG could be missing a trick by not offering the manual with the latter.

A pretty car, with some nice lines and prices that need to be seen to be believed as they are well below nearest competitors (starting at £12,495).

# JULIE MADOUI

**HEAD OF FLEET AND TRANSPORT, SKANSKA**

Madoui would not change her profession for any other. Her dedication to improving road safety and the development of team members are recurring themes in her thoughts

**I would like to be remembered as a major force in reducing incident rates on UK roads, not only for business drivers but for all road users. I also want to be remembered as a good manager of people and someone that helped others to build successful careers.**

**My first memory associated with a car was reversing into a car parking space one day after passing my test, and making such a mess of it. Passing the test is just the start of the learning experience.**

**The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is to be open, honest and transparent, recognise your strengths and weaknesses, follow your goals and always speak up – that is how we learn.**

**If I were made Prime Minister for the day I would review the driving test and mandatory learning as a way of reducing incidents. I'd also extend the mobile phone ban to include hands-free.**

**My hobbies and interests are travelling and exploring. I enjoy learning about other cultures and people. I am particularly fond of trying new foods and cuisines, which goes hand-in-hand with travelling.**

**A book I would you recommend others read is *The Highway Code* because the stories drivers come up with when involved in day-to-day bumps is interesting.**

**A pivotal moment in my life was achieving my current role and watching team members grow into successful management positions.**

**The three vehicles I would like in my garage are a Tesla Model S, Range Rover Evoque and a BMW i3.**

**My pet hate is doing things twice – working in an inefficient way. I like to plan to get things right from the start.**

**My favourite film is *Titanic* because it is a true story with a fantastic soundtrack.**

**First fleet role** I started in fleet just over 20 years ago as a plant and transport administrator and have remained within the industry since. The main factors for this are my passion for improving road safety and sustainability of our vehicles, as well as the need to have a wide range of skills to manage a continually evolving industry – so there is never a dull moment.

**Career goals at Skanska** My key goals are to develop and implement business strategies that reduce our company's impact on the roads from driving activities, both in terms of risk and sustainability.

**Biggest achievement in business** To have achieved CIPS (the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply) and FCILT (Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport) accreditations, and to have been recognised in a number of fleet awards for demonstrating the value we bring to the business.

**Biggest career influence** I started working with a director back in 2005 who really stretched me – he provided robust direction, guidance and support, allowing me the opportunity to grow.

**Leadership style** I believe in supporting, developing and empowering those within my team. It is important to listen to the ideas of others and take these opinions into account when making decisions. I am also keen to offer my team opportunities to develop.

**If I wasn't in fleet** I would not want to change profession – I have a great team around me, we have good banter, but all work hard.

**Childhood ambition** I wanted to be a nurse – looking after people, trying to improve lives when people were ill. But I realised I did not have the stomach for the sight of blood.

**Most memorable driver moment** Driving an HGV around a racetrack and experiencing the driver's visibility.

Next issue: Vicky Brown, fleet and compliance manager, Blakedale Ltd