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More than half of fleets expect costs to increase post-Brexit

As March 29, 2019, draws closer, the 'no negative effect' sentiment is in retreat

By Simon Harris

Fleet operators are lacking clear guidance on how to best prepare for the consequences of Brexit, as current talks appear to show little sign of agreement over the UK's future trade relationships with the EU.

However, there is agreement among fleet experts that leaving the EU will result in increased fleet costs.

A *Fleet News* online poll in December showed almost 60% of respondents believe Brexit will hurt fleet budgets with higher costs.

This contrasts with an earlier poll in March 2016 where close to the same number (61%) of respondents believed there would be no negative effect on fleet costs. A further poll – before the referendum – suggested more than half of fleet operators wanted the UK to leave the EU, with the number backing Brexit significantly higher than the score for remain (51.6% vs 42.8%).

Since then, trade body Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) has expressed concern at uncertainty over the future trading structure with the bloc, as well as the impact of tariffs on goods crossing EU borders with the UK post-Brexit should the Government walk away from talks without a deal.

Not only would this potentially increase the cost of new vehicles, especially those imported to the UK, it would also make UK-built vehicles more expensive for foreign customers, dramatically affecting the competitiveness, and therefore the viability, of UK car plants.

In a no-deal scenario, where trade would fall back to World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, tariffs would also be applied to vehicle components that needed to be imported to the UK, which



Geoffrey Bray,
Fleet Industry Advisory Group

"Brexit is already weighing on the decision-making process within some fleets"

would push up service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs.

Concerns were echoed by Paul Hollick, chairman of the ICFM, who told *Fleet News* that as well as the impact of higher costs through tariffs, there was potential for delays in new vehicle and spare parts deliveries due to border customs changes.

Brexit was listed as one of the major issues facing the contract hire industry in 2018, according to senior executives surveyed for the FN50 report in 2017.

A number of companies pointed out that the effects of the decision to leave the EU had been limited so far, but would doubtless have an impact on both the automotive and finance sectors.

While the devaluation of sterling since the referendum has stabilised to some extent in the meantime, the higher cost of imported goods has been offset to a degree by car manufacturers trying to reignite falling demand for new vehicles in 2017

with higher discounts and consumer incentives.

Sudden economic shifts can have a dramatic effect on consumer demand, and while businesses will follow a more stable, planned course, the appetite for used vehicles will have an effect on the value of fleet assets.

Vehicle Remarketing Association (VRA) chairman Glenn Sturley warned the uncertainty of Brexit negotiations is hanging over the economy, creating the kind of uncertainty that makes business planning very difficult.

He said: "In 2018, it is very likely that the 'B word' is going to be unavoidable. The issue is that there remains such a wide range of potential scenarios – from a cliff edge departure from the EU through to abandoning Brexit altogether – and the outcome may not be known until the last minute.

"As the year progresses and we get closer to the deadline for leaving the EU, this uncertainty is likely to become more acute and the resulting impact on the overall economy is more difficult to predict. It is not difficult to foresee situations where the economic effects are quite severe and sudden, especially if they are accompanied by political instability.

"Against this backdrop, the remarketing industry must maximise values for used vehicles, realising them in the quickest time possible. It might not always be easy."

The key, Sturley said, was to remain as flexible as possible and to ensure that businesses that face risks from Brexit sought expert advice to ensure they were able to make preparations, however limited.

"Our view is that this is a time when knowing what is happening on an almost daily basis is essential for everyone working in the sector," said Sturley. "Factors that affect the remarketing

outcomes achieved may change very quickly.

"Also, it will be important to not commit to any single remarketing method. There may well be arguments for quickly altering the disposal strategies that you are using in response to changing circumstances."

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) told *Fleet News* that with nothing concrete from the negotiations between the UK and EU so far, it was unable to offer any advice.

ACFO, the organisation that represents fleet operators, was also reluctant to speculate on which actions fleets might find beneficial with the outcome of the Brexit negotiations still unknown.

It means frustration for fleet operators who, according to some, are wary of how Brexit will affect their businesses, and have no alternative to include in current business plans.

Geoffrey Bray, chairman of the Fleet Industry Advisory Group (FIAG), said: "Fleet decision-makers are fearful of the outcome of Brexit. But what a world will look like with the UK outside of 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 plusses and minuses, generally international businesses are thriving as can be seen from the level of stock markets in London and globally."

Bray's optimism stems from fleets that could be

able to adapt quickly to maximise any opportunities that arise from a new trading regime. And there might still be a few years where the current trading conditions as an EU member are extended.

"It is a challenging and changing world and Brexit will have an impact," he said. "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.

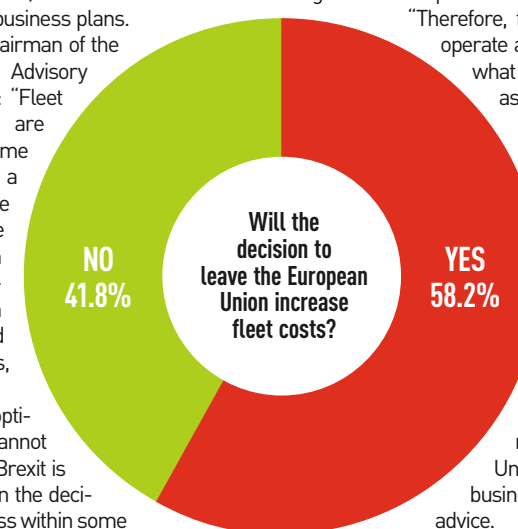
"Therefore, fleets must continue to operate against a background of what is known and manage assets effectively and efficiently. That means continuing to evolve because standing still while awaiting Brexit's outcome, which will take many months and even years, simply means costs will escalate."

Colin Tourick, professor of automotive management at the University of Buckingham business school, also offered advice.

He said: "Businesses should review how they fund and manage their fleets now, with a view to keeping costs as low as possible.

"That should put them in better stead if the negotiations don't deliver a smooth Brexit. And if there's one thing I'd recommend it's to look at the CO₂ emissions levels of the cars managers are putting on their fleets.

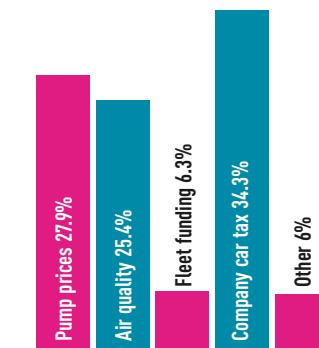
"Whatever else happens, CO₂ is still likely to be a key issue when it comes to vehicle taxation, national insurance, fuel consumption, running costs and depreciation, and will become increasingly important as more cities follow London and introduce low emission zones."



FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

OPINION POLL

What will be the biggest challenge facing fleets in 2018?



FleetNews view:

Company car tax increases, volatile pump prices and air quality concerns are among the biggest challenges facing fleets this year. One in three (34.3%) said company car tax was their biggest challenge, while one in four highlighted pump prices as their number one concern. It is clear that both domestic and international politics could impact fleet operations and planning for every eventuality will be key.

This week's poll: How often do you check your vehicle to ensure it's in a roadworthy condition?

fleetnews.co.uk/polls

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NEWS

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Fleets can't plan a ULEV future until Government policy is clear

DfT confirms that plug-in car and van grant will be reviewed this April

By Matt de Prez

Fleet operators have too many unanswered questions to make informed decisions about adopting Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), according to the ICFM.

Despite the Government outlining its ambitious plans to improve air quality and prevent the sale of new cars without zero-emissions capability by 2040, ICFM chairman Peter Eldridge says there is not enough information about what is happening in the short term.

Eldridge outlined the areas he feels the Government could provide better support to fleets when he addressed more than 70 fleet decision-makers at the Go Ultra Low Fleet Summit at the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) in London on January 10.

He called for a long-term policy on fuel types and an end to the current "demonisation" of diesel, so businesses can plan their strategies against a background of stability.

"We think the Government is painting a discoloured picture at the moment," Eldridge told delegates. "It's within its remit to encourage real fleet industry progress by outlining a clear long-term policy for all fuel types."

"If diesel is so bad why is Euro 6 still a benchmark for low emission zones? The platform needs levelling."

Eldridge also highlighted the "bizarre" company car benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax regime that sees drivers selecting a zero emission car in 2017/18 paying 9% tax, rising to 13% in 2018/19 and 16% in 2019/20 – increases of 44% and 23% respectively – before reducing to 2% in 2020/21, an 87.5% cut.

"I'm not critical of the numbers. I'm critical of the pattern. How can we encourage members to embrace that pictorial?" he asked.

In total, 47,263 plug-in cars were registered in 2017, representing just 2.5% of all registrations. In Norway, this figure exceeds 50% and Eldridge believes that's due to stronger government incentives there.

Phil Killingley, deputy head of the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), told summit delegates that the plug-in car grant was the UK Government's "flagship offer" to encourage the uptake of ULEVs.

It provides up to £4,500 towards a new fully-electric car, or up to £2,500 off a plug-in hybrid.

An extra £100 million of funding was made available in the Budget –



Peter Eldridge, ICFM

"Let's get the right vehicles doing the right job in the right environment"

enough for around 22,000 extra fully-electric cars – but, when questioned, the Department for Transport (DfT) would not reveal the total amount of funding currently available.

A DfT spokesperson told *Fleet News*: "The plug-in car grant will be maintained at the current rates until at least the end of April."

"A further review will be conducted around this time."

The spokesperson also confirmed that the grant "will remain in some form until at least the beginning of 2020".

According to Killingley an announcement is expected "very soon" to outline what impact the additional £100m will have on the grant.

While plug-in cars are expected to deliver wholelife cost savings of up to 70% compared to diesel over a typical life-cycle, the contract hire rate or list price of a vehicle is still regarded as a major consideration for most fleets, according to a Go Ultra Low survey.

Therefore, the plug-in grant is crucial to keep the cost of ULEVs at a level which makes them both beneficial to the fleet operator and desirable for the driver.

Chris Chandler, associate director at Lex Autolease, said: "The grant is applied at dealer level so it is taken off the list price of the vehicle, so that, basically, goes into the rental rate."

"The fleet gets a lower rental rate and the advantage for the driver is they can often get a plug-in version of a vehicle that may not have been available in their respective grade."

Eldridge said "drivers will make improved environmental vehicle choices if the BIK tax regime is beneficial", but warned that electric vehicles must not have prohibitive capital and lease costs otherwise the driver will be tempted by cheaper conventionally-powered models.

"Blending the fleet is the right message right at the moment," he added.

"We need to be considering what vehicles are fit for purpose."

"Allocating tax loophole vehicles to drivers is crazy. Let's get the right vehicles doing the right job in the right environment."

Use of hire vans in terror attacks may result in rental price increase

Anticipated higher insurance costs could be passed on to end-user fleets

By Sarah Tooze

Fleet operators could face a rise in daily rental prices this year as experts warn that insurance costs will increase in response to terror attack pay-outs.

Bob Baillie, commercial director at United Rental Group, told delegates at the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) industry outlook conference, that rising costs, particularly in the insurance sector following last year's terrorist attacks in the UK when hire vehicles were used as a weapon, were one of the biggest challenges for rental companies.

"The first one on Westminster Bridge, you're looking at claims costs predicted in excess of £150 million and we as an industry and as the smaller operators, the independents, we have to try to embrace those costs in the insurance and the re-insurance market," he said.

He pointed out that the rental industry has also had to face last year's vehicle excise duty (VED) changes, as well as general overheads.

"There is a lot of education we need to do with customers and we need to wake up to perhaps trying to pass on some of those increased costs to our customers – not an easy task," he said.

Martin Wilson, managing director of Thrifty Car and Van Rental, also indicated that rental prices could rise this year.

"The terrorist atrocities in 2017 have had a significant impact on the insurance costs for the rental industry in general," he said.

"As policies are renewed the liabilities borne by the insurers are being passed on to the rental companies; due to staggered renewals it will be well into 2018 before all rental companies understand the true commercial consequences of these vicious attacks."

He added: "Fleet insurance is such a substan-

A hire van was used to mow down people on London Bridge last June. Eight died and 48 were injured in the attack



"The terrorist atrocities in 2017 have had a significant impact on the insurance costs"

Martin Wilson, Thrifty Car and Van Rental

tial part of all rental companies' operating costs it seems likely that, ultimately, these increased costs will be passed on to the consumer."

Rental operators are also concerned that insurers may be reluctant to provide quotations in the future.

A spokesperson for Enterprise Rent-A-Car said: "There is a danger that some insurers and re-insurers could withdraw cover to the vehicle rental sector, or increase premiums to breaking

point for some companies. We believe this could disproportionately affect smaller operators and could impact competition and possibly even pricing."

However, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) downplayed the impact of the terrorist attacks on rental vehicle insurance.

Ben Howarth, senior adviser for motor and liability at the ABI, said: "There are lots of reasons why insurance premiums may change from year-to-year. The biggest pressures on motor premiums at the moment are Government changes to the tax on insurance and to the method used for calculating major compensation pay-outs."

He continued: "Insurers will be considering the implications, but it is too soon to say whether there will be any impact on the operation of the wider market."

Anthony Monaghan, transportation and engineering industry practice leader at insurance brokers Marsh, advised rental companies that if they faced "greater underwriting scrutiny" they should "work with their brokers to present insurers with robust evidence of their risk management practices".

He said: "Firms who are able to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to risk management, coupled with a good claims record, are likely to receive more favourable terms from insurers."

MORE VEHICLE-BASED ATTACKS PREDICTED

An expert in Islamist radicalisation has warned that vehicles will continue to be used as a weapon in terrorist attacks and that the fleet industry must think about "how to best raise the barriers to participation".

In a video broadcast at the BVRLA conference, Shiraz Maher, a lecturer at King's College London and deputy director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, said the terrorist attack in Nice, France, was "hugely significant".

It demonstrated how effective a vehicle could be in an attack of that kind and inspired others to carry out similar attacks

in Scandinavia, Germany and the UK.

"I think, unfortunately, we have not seen the last of vehicle-based attacks either in the UK or elsewhere across the Continent or, indeed, in the United States," said Maher.

The BVRLA set up a counter-terrorism taskforce last year, following the Westminster incident, and is working with consultancy firm Westbourne Communications to develop a public affairs campaign to demonstrate leadership.

It is continuing to work with counter-terrorism authorities to demonstrate self-regulation is best but will co-operate to risk mitigation through data-sharing.

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NEWS

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First MOT a year later might have put some testers out of business

As you were – Government keeps first MOT at three years, not four

DVSA given green light to use test fee income from vans to cover cost of enforcement

By Gareth Roberts

The fleet industry has welcomed the Government's decision to keep the first MOT at three years, rather than four, after raising safety concerns about the change.

The Department for Transport (DfT) had argued that the three-year test, introduced in 1967, was out of step with most of Europe, where four years tends to be the benchmark.

However, ministers admitted last week that the majority of responses they received to a consultation held last year, were against the proposals on safety grounds, with respondents arguing that any potential savings for motorists were outweighed by the risk to road users.

Roads minister Jesse Norman said: "Although modern cars are better built and safer than when the MOT test was last changed 50 years ago, there has been a clear public concern that any changes don't put people's lives at risk."

Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) findings suggested that extending the first test from three to four years for cars and vans would increase road fatalities by between two and four a year, with an additional 21 to 39 serious injuries.

Welcoming the decision to maintain the current regime, John Pryor, chairman of fleet representative body ACFO, told *Fleet News*: "Vehicle safety is paramount. Today's cars have variable service intervals so the current MOT means they are inspected by a qualified technician at least annually from three years of age, otherwise they may not be checked for several years."

The consultation also heard that extending the first MOT from three to four years could have forced some garages out of business.

Pryor said: "It is important that there are garages nationwide to undertake MOT testing.



"[Safety] must always be a primary consideration when making changes to MOT requirements"

Gerry Keaney, BVRLA

Any move to undertaking the first MOT at four years could have undermined the financial viability of garages, resulting in closures. That could have had a major impact on fleets, particularly those that rely on local independent garages for maintenance requirements."

Figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) for 2015/16 – the latest available – show that MOTs for class three and four vehicles – cars, vans and small passenger vehicles – had an initial fail rate of 36.8%.

The highest rate of failure was in class seven – goods vehicles from 3.0-3.5 tonnes. Their initial fail rate was 46.8%.

This compares to a fail rate for trucks of 18%.

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) said it was pleased to see the Government had listened to fleet concerns around safety. Chief executive Gerry Keaney said: "[Safety] must always be a primary consideration when making changes to MOT require-

ments. Although we did not have major concerns about increasing the first MOT test deadline for cars from three to four years, we did express serious misgivings about applying this to vans."

Fleets had raised particular doubts about the proposed extension to the first MOT for vans, especially for class seven vehicles. Official statistics suggest the average mileage for a car presented for its first MOT is 32,000 miles, compared to around 70,000 miles for vans.

In fact, in the BVRLA's consultation response, it called on the Government to reduce the first MOT requirement for class seven vans to one year. "We also said that we would like to see a targeted increase in van enforcement, aimed at removing non-roadworthy vehicles from UK roads and penalising those operators who flout vehicle safety regulations," continued Keaney.

The Government had suggested increasing the class seven MOT fee in the consultation to help pay £2 million a year towards the cost of targeting unsafe vans by the DVSA.

Currently, enforcement action is paid for out of general taxation, but the DfT recommended that van operators cover the costs in the same way HGV operators do, with the cost of enforcement paid via its testing fee.

However, it has also ruled out making any changes to test fees. Instead, it said it will amend regulations to allow the DVSA to use test fee income from light goods vehicles on compliance work relating to these vehicles, which is already the case for HGVs.

Norman said: "While the changes proposed in this consultation will not be taken forward at this time, further research will take place in the near future. This work will help ensure the MOT test remains robust and appropriate to the evolving needs of the road transport sector."

Solutions firm looks to bring fines management into the 21st century

All Fleet Services will accelerate its online fines management service in 2018

By Stephen Briers

All Fleet Services is looking to migrate its fines management customers across to a new digital system, Fleet Fine Online, which it launched last year.

The admin solutions provider worked closely with trade bodies British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), British Parking Association (BPA) and Independent Parking Committee (IPC) to create the service, which, claims managing director Dave Scobie, "brings fines management into the 21st century".

He said: "We process 300,000 fines a year and our target was to digitise 10% by the end of 2017 and a total of 30% by the middle of this year. Eventually everyone will migrate across."

All Fleet Services expects to increase the number of fines it manages to 450,000 by the end of the first quarter of 2018, by increasing the number of vehicles under management from 400,000 to 650,000. The company is targeting the FN50 leasing providers, rental organisations and larger fleets which process their own parking charges.

"We also work with them on fines reduction, such as driver profiling, repeat offenders and



"Our target is to digitise 30% of fines by the middle of 2018"

Dave Scobie,
All Fleet Services

multiple congestion charges," Scobie said. "We work to educate the fleet user with a real-time dashboard where fleets get immediate notification of fines and advice on how to contest."

He urged more fleets to contest parking charges, but added: "You have to be aware of whether you have a good chance of success. We can provide the information and the online set-up makes it easier to do it."

All Fleet Services will shortly launch Connected Car Online, a new service to harvest data from in-car technology to provide information on diag-

nostics and servicing needs, including recalls. It is working with several manufacturers and two breakdown providers to help them improve their services, but will also offer a portal for fleets and drivers that will enable them to book a car in for maintenance via an app.

"This is part of the 'now society' - access to all the information instantly," Scobie said. "It's about prognosis and proactively managing a vehicle before it goes into a downtime situation."

He added: "We are working with five manufacturers most capable of providing this service today. We are also looking at telematics providers to supplement where we are not getting the connected information. We expect to roll the product out to more manufacturers as they become ready to provide the information we need."

All Fleet Services has built into the platform intelligent rules that consider service level agreements, including booking timescales. It provides a 'best guess' date for servicing that the dealer can agree or reject.

"If they do reject it, we manage the dates with them," Scobie said. "But if they don't do the work, it affects their ability to be given work in the future. We manage the process and the expectations of the fleet."

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES TRANSPARENCY FOR AUTO WINDSCREENS

Auto Windscreens will be adopting video-based condition reporting from CitNow to enhance and aid transparency with clients.

From this month every technician will be able to video the vehicle while they are pre-repairing the glass. This footage will then be made available, ensuring security and transparency on every vehicle inspection.

The announcement follows Auto Windscreen's year-long education campaign around advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) as well as the implementation of a 'technician tracker' and, most recently, the

introduction of the plant team to expand its offering.

Auto Windscreens managing director Rupert Armitage announced the partnership alongside Gordon Grant, global sales director at CitNow, at its end-of-year innovation conference.

Armitage said: "We pride ourselves on being innovative and providing the best service. CitNow is well respected within the industry and we're delighted to have aligned ourselves with it, to help us provide a more seamless journey for our clients."



Auto Windscreens' Rupert Armitage (right) shakes on the new partnership with CitNow's Gordon Grant

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Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. 2017/18 tax year. Vauxhall Motors Limited does not offer tax advice and recommends that all Company Car Drivers consult their own accountant with regards to their own tax position. Grandland X Elite Nav 1.2 (130PS) Turbo Start/Stop model illustrated (P11D of £26,445) features Topaz Blue two-coat metallic paint (£565), silver-effect roof rails (£150) and black roof and door mirrors (£320), optional at extra cost. 3 Day Test Drive terms and conditions apply and vehicles are subject to availability. Please call 0330 587 8221 for full details. All figures quoted correct at time of going to press (January 2018). * = Standard on all models except SE.



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*Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones. If you are calling from a business phone, you should check with your provider whether there will be a charge for calling an 0800 number. ^BIK, MPG and CO₂ figures quoted apply to New C3 Aircross Compact SUV Feel BlueHDi 100 manual. Model shown is New Citroën C3 Aircross Compact SUV Flair PureTech 82 manual.

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NEWS

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Legal firm believes
buyers might be able to claim
a 'realistic' 25% of purchase price

Thousands bid to join legal group alleging mis-selling of used cars

More than 4,000 have registered interest in pursuing 'lack of history' claims

By Gareth Roberts

Thousands of buyers of ex-rental and former fleet cars have signed up to legal action after claiming they were mis-sold their vehicles.

The Marcus Sinclair law firm told *Fleet News* that less than two weeks after asking used car buyers to register their interest in its used car mis-selling group action, more than 4,000 people have been in contact.

Damon Parker, head of litigation at Marcus Sinclair, said: "I'm surprised by how many people have come forward saying they didn't know [their vehicle's history]."

Following a ruling from the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), dealers now have to disclose the full history of a car before selling it, including whether it was previously used for lease, hire or fleet purposes.

This is because the ASA considers it to be critical in influencing a consumer's transactional decision in buying a vehicle.

The implication is that used car buyers might be deterred by a vehicle with a rental or company car history, favouring one with a private owner. If that's the case, it could have implications for rental and fleet car residual values.

The ASA will be sending warnings to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) so it can draw attention to the issue.

The SMMT said ex-fleet vehicles can be a great used car choice if, as with any other vehicle, it can be shown they have been maintained and serviced properly. It advises consumers to carry out all the relevant background checks before committing to buying a used car.

"Simple steps such as checking the log book, using the DVLA's vehicle information checker

"There seems to have been a deliberate decision not to tell people [about the vehicle's history]"

Damon Parker, Marcus Sinclair

and verifying MOT history can all offer peace of mind to car buyers," it said.

The warning comes after an ASA ruling on Glyn Hopkin and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles UK (FCA) in October 2017. In that case, the ASA considered that because FCA was the previous registered keeper for the vehicles, it was reasonable to expect records showing how it had used them while under its ownership as a fleet operator, including whether they were driven by multiple users.

Furthermore, because Glyn Hopkin was an approved dealer and had bought the cars directly, the ASA considered that it was capable of easily obtaining such information as well.

FCA had provided evidence showing that each advertised car had only been used by one individual while they were part of its fleet. One was allocated to a contractor for training purposes and the other to an employee as a company car.

It also submitted documentation showing that both cars had a very low mileage prior to being allocated to their named users, which

were returned at a later date to be sold off.

However, the adverts did not state that the cars were previously used for business purposes and, for that reason, the ASA concluded that FCA breached its code of conduct.

Parker said that they were in the process of examining the claims of complainants, but early indications suggest that people have been mis-sold vehicles.

He said: "There seems to have been a deliberate decision not to tell people [about the vehicle's history]. But whether that's a conspiracy, or just people in the dealership not knowing, remains to be seen."

Leaving out significant details breaks the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations (2008), and the amount owed depends on how serious the case is, and how much it influenced the purchase decision.

In theory, successful claimants could claim up to 100% of a used vehicle's purchase price back from the vendor, but Parker believes a more realistic readdress would be 25%.

Consumer regulations give protection from 'misleading action' and Parker explained it was important first to establish whether not telling the consumer a vehicle's history is an 'action'.

He continued: "Before we can do anything, we also need to work out how these people cluster together; how many people are concentrated on which dealerships and which manufacturers."

Admitting, the firm was in the early stages of its investigations, Parker said Marcus Sinclair's first priority was to speak to the majority of complainants over the next two weeks, before writing letters on their behalf to vendors.

"If it really is a problem, it will be a big deal and 4,000 people, in my book, is a lot," he said.



One in three cars will be plug-in within five years, says Kia research

Fleets are 'nervous' about operating traditional internal combustion engines

By Simon Harris

Greater education is needed to make fleet managers more aware of current plug-in vehicle options to tap into growing interest, according to recent research.

A study by Kia for its 2017 Fleet Market Attitudes report found that two-thirds of organisations operating company vehicles are 'nervous' about purchasing pure internal combustion engine (ICE) cars in future, following the Government's announcement that they will be banned from 2040. Fleets expect one in three of their cars to be plug-in vehicles within five years and around 50% by 2027, but they have concerns about adopting such technology.

However, while some fleets point to price, infrastructure and the appearance of the vehicles as barriers against adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrids, others list these factors as reasons for choosing them.

Other reasons for avoiding plug-in vehicles include a lack of understanding and long charging times.

Regarding the charging infrastructure, more than half agree it is not good enough to warrant full investment in the technology at present.

Conversely, of those that are yet to adopt, they believe that the UK's charging infrastructure will be better by 2021 – with battery life and charge time improving by the same date.

John Hargreaves, head of fleet and remarketing at Kia, said: "There is still a job to be done to educate decision-makers and challenge preconceptions. But more pragmatic application of the technology in the future will overcome some of the complaints about appearance, and in our own range we have seen some success in the fact that our alternative fuel vehicles look similar to conventional petrol or diesel cars."



"Traditional powertrains are becoming less likely to be considered the default option in fleet purchasing decisions"

John Hargreaves, Kia

"The Government's recent announcement in the Budget about extra cash for charging infrastructure also feels significant, although we await further details about its implementation."

Kia has been later to introduce electrified powertrains than many, but its EV and PHEV share of sales increased dramatically in 2017.

In 2016, just 2% of its fleet sales were alternative fuel vehicles, while in 2017 the total was running at 6% with more than 2,500 units. The company is gearing up for EVs and PHEVs to take a 14% share of total sales in future.

Respondents in Kia's study also seemed open to the idea of introducing vehicles with an increasing number of autonomous features.

The average percentage of organisations where 'assisted driving' vehicles feature is 23%, with this anticipated to increase to 51% by 2027.

Similarly, the average percentage of organisations where 'semi-autonomous driving' vehicles feature is 19%, increasing to an average of 51% in 10 years' time.

When it comes to fully autonomous vehicles, most respondents (93%) see challenges.

Identifying who is liable in the case of an insurance claim (56%) and the cost in updating roads and motorways so they are compatible (47%) are cited as major concerns. In addition, around three-quarters of respondents think the greatest challenge facing fully autonomous driving lies in changes to culture – with employees able to work longer hours given they won't have to drive an autonomous vehicle on their commute.

Despite these barriers, many respondents believe fully-autonomous vehicles offer significant benefits, with 74% agreeing they will result in fewer accidents – potentially saving fleet costs and increasing road user safety – while 64% believe their fleet would be cheaper to maintain if it were fully-autonomous.

According to fleet managers, their organisation's fleet has had 10 accidents on average within the past year. Such accidents cost each respondent's organisation £472.72.

The number of incidents has dropped from 14 reported in the 2015 Fleet Market Attitudes survey. However, the average cost per accident, has risen by almost £90, from £384.50.

Kia believes this is due to the integration of more technology which means the repair bill on a like-for-like accident is often higher. In addition, safety design on modern cars, such as absorptive crumple zones, may mean more components need replacing.

Hargreaves said: "As more organisations embrace new technologies for the vehicles in their fleets – from EVs/PHEVs to 'assisted driving' and 'semi-automated driving' – traditional powertrains are becoming less likely to be considered the default option in fleet purchasing decisions."

The survey questioned 150 fleet operators about plug-in vehicles and autonomous technology.



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THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*



Is total mobility a sham or the biggest thing ever to affect the movement of people and goods?

As the Government identifies mobility as one of its four 'grand challenges' and the Transport

Systems Catapult deploys hyperbole to claim the way we travel and move goods will "change dramatically in the next decade", I can't help but ask: Really?

Mobility sounds great – transport when I want it, how I want it. But, is it that practical? I use my car to commute every day, a round trip of 34 miles. It takes 20-30 minutes each way. Every so often, I travel several hundred miles to meetings.

"Will there be thousands of cars waiting for the call to deliver them (commuters)?"

My future, according to the experts, looks like this: call a number and an autonomous car will appear at my door within minutes (how – is it lurking around the corner?) to take me to work (or I can share a ride with someone else and endure awkward small talk). All well and good. But I'm one person.

What about the thousands of other people in my town who are also looking to commute to different places of work: will there be thousands of cars waiting for the call to deliver them? Or will they all jump on mini-buses that will go from stop to stop?

Ah, maybe they won't be commuting – instead everyone will work from home and Skype each other. Will they? Can you bounce ideas around and spark creativity without being in the same room? I've done video conferencing; it is a poor substitute.

I'm not saying mobility isn't the future, but unless you live and work in a major conurbation like London, there are big obstacles. No one seems to be challenging these sweeping mobility statements, perhaps in fear of being labelled a dinosaur.

Here's a thought. In 10 years' time, I will still be driving my car to and from work, and to/from meetings. The only 'dramatic change' is it will probably be in an *electric* car.

YOUR LETTERS

DRINK DRIVING

England and Wales should adopt lower drink-drive limit

Winston wrote:

Having read '67% of UK motorists want the English/Welsh drink-drive limit reduced' (fleetnews.co.uk, December 14), how exactly does the Government plan to achieve better enforcement when, as Hunter Abbott rightly points out, there aren't enough police officers out there to manage the problem?

A 'zero' limit isn't practical, but aligning England and Wales with the Scottish limit shouldn't be difficult to introduce, should it?

There cannot be a driver in the UK that doesn't know the drink-drive laws

already. Introducing a lower legal limit, along with continuing to push the message "Don't Drink and Drive" might make a few more drivers wary of taking to the road. It can't hurt, can it?

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

RENTAL INDUSTRY

Tribute paid to industry giant

Stewart Whyte wrote:

Having read 'BVLRA honorary life president Freddie Aldous dies' (fleetnews.co.uk, December 20), I was so sad to hear of Freddie's death.

I had known him from around 1972/3

and he truly was a giant in the industry. I always found him generous and helpful, as well as exceptionally knowledgeable about all aspect of the rental market and business management. Condolences to all the family.

MOBILE PHONES

Instant ban for using mobile phones?

Edward Handley wrote:

Having read 'Tougher penalties for mobile phone-using drivers need 'rigorous enforcement', says Brake' (fleetnews.co.uk, December 14), it is clear that increasing the penalty points for using a mobile phone has not had much impact on those drivers who think they can drive and talk or text at the same time.

Rigorous enforcement might make a difference, but, unless there is a major

change to Government policy and a substantial increase in the number of police officers, especially traffic police, there's not much chance of getting caught.

We need a change of thinking. How about an immediate 30-day driving ban instead of points? They do it in France if you are caught exceeding a speed limit by more than 30kmh (18.5mph) and there is evidence that it works. Mind you, they have rather more police than we do.



Fleet News recognised customer service excellence at its FN50 Dinner last November as well as honouring the latest Hall of Fame inductee and the inaugural winner of the John Leigh Outstanding Achievement award, sponsored by Trak Global.



Simon Oliphant, head of vehicle solutions strategy at Hitachi Capital (left), enters the Hall of Fame



Neil Broad, flanked by Holly Smith (left) and Carol Burgess, heads of service management at Alphabet, the customer service team of the year



Toyota/Lexus Fleet general manager Neil Broad (left) with customer award winner Simon Carter, corporate internal sales executive at Alphabet



Neil Broad with customer service rising star Lisa Jones, senior account manager at Arval



Tusker CEO David Hosking receives the John Leigh Outstanding Achievement award from John's son Simon, widow Jenny and daughter Sammy

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Burning question:
What are you addicted to?

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I might as well face it, I'm addicted to love (with apologies to the late Robert Palmer)

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FLEET OPINION

USED CAR MARKET

Will 2018 hold more of the same?

By Andrew Mee

Last year was an interesting one in which, overall, new car sales held up relatively well and returned one of the biggest years on record. That said, new diesel car sales took a tumble.

Used car sales volumes were at an all-time high and used car values remained strong, especially in the second half.

Moving into 2018 many of these trends will continue. Exchange rates will still make the UK less profitable for many manufacturers and new registrations will continue to reduce, especially for diesel where the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax change in April will further discourage company car drivers.

Brexit and the clean air debate could impact on consumer demand, but we do not expect any disruption to used car values. The current trend for diesel values to deflate slightly more than petrol values will continue, as used diesel supply will outweigh demand. Conversely, used petrol and hybrid cars will be in more demand and this will support their values.

The shift in the balance between petrol and diesel will be most felt among smaller cars. For larger cars – and where drivers cover high mileages and/or need to carry many passengers or to tow – diesel will continue to make sense.

PCPs may become more expensive due to a combination of higher interest rates, higher list prices and lower residual values, but PCP (and PCH) is here to stay as a funding method so we expect consumers will still renew their PCPs, but perhaps with less of a model upgrade than before.

The Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) will replace the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC), as a more accurate testing regime for CO₂ emissions and fuel economy rates for new vehicles. It is expected that CO₂ emissions and mpg will be worse than under NEDC.

There is likely to be some confusion among consumers when WLTP is introduced, and this may result in some short-term fluctuations in new car sales and in used values, but soon buyers will get used to the new CO₂/mpg figures.

We expect the current gradual shift from diesel cars to petrol and alternative fuel cars, and the current trends in used values will continue without WLTP having a significant impact.

“Used petrol and hybrid cars will be more in demand and this will support their values”



Andrew Mee is senior forecasting editor (UK) at Cap HPI



Ashley Barnett, head of consultancy at Lex Autolease



FLEET POLICIES

Flexibility around fuel type will be key

By Ashley Barnett

The Budget confirmed the Government's direction on diesel. Although the impact of the measures announced will be relatively small over the next year or so, a clear line in the sand has been drawn.

This means it's vital for fleets to put a much closer focus on vehicle policy, ensuring the policy allows flexibility around fuel type while enabling the employee to make the right vehicle and fuel choice.

Real Driving Emission (RDE) 2 standards mean the majority of diesel vehicles will see a 1% supplement increase on company car tax in the short-term. This may not go down well with a majority of fleet drivers, however, it's unlikely to dissuade high mileage fleets from shifting their fuel policy. While unwelcome for some, this move is at least clear and straightforward to factor into decision-making.

As we begin the consultation on how to transition to the Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Testing Procedure (WLTP) in 2020, a priority will be ensuring this process is simple and transparent. Until the framework for a transition can be agreed, it will be difficult for HMRC to provide any further clarity around company car tax bands post-2020.

This will be a big challenge for fleets that typically plan in four year cycles. The result could be we start to see a greater shift towards petrol and electric cars this year across fleet.

At Lex Autolease, we have more than 16,000 alternative fuelled vehicles on fleet and we've seen a significant increase in enquiries this year. Infrastructure investment outlined in the Budget means it's sensible for fleets to start the transition process, but, first and foremost, they must ensure they continue to choose the right vehicles for their needs.

For light commercial vehicle and high mileage fleets, new, cleaner diesel will still be the most practical option. Where shorter distance, urban driving makes electric and plug-in hybrid cars a practical choice, fleets also need to invest in driver training to get the most out of these vehicles in terms of cost-saving and environmental performance.

The regulatory and technological landscape is becoming ever more complex. Navigating it successfully is a big challenge for 2018.

“The result could be we start to see a greater shift towards petrol and electric cars this year”

ASK NIGEL

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

This month's Ask Nigel is a bit different – as it will be my last. Rather than answer a question posed by a fleet manager, I want to take the opportunity to look back over the 30 columns I have written over the past two and a bit years and draw out some themes and thoughts for the future.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank deputy editor Sarah Tooze (who suggested the column originally) and editor-in-chief Steve Briers for giving me the opportunity to fulfil a lifelong ambition and write a regular column. They also allowed me to enjoy the surreal experience of seeing myself in foreshortened “cardboard cut-out” form at Fleet Management Live.

Thanks also to readers for your kind feedback and suggesting some of the questions – it would not have been the same without you.

Looking back over the columns, I can see just what a wide range of challenges today's fleet manager faces. Only one subject – salary sacrifice – has been the key theme of two columns, otherwise they have covered everything from future career prospects to towing and driver eyesight and a wide variety of others in between. Topics covered fall into five broad categories:

- Fleet manager roles and responsibilities
- Suppliers
- Drivers
- Products and services
- Policy

There is often a lot of overlap between them as a change or development in one area usually has an impact in at least one of the others. If anything, I think that the role of the fleet manager today is probably more complex and challenging than it has ever been. Conversely though, I also believe the opportunities for a forward-thinking fleet manager have never been greater – it is often just a matter of getting senior management to realise this!

In terms of changes since I started the column I think the most significant have been the increasingly rapid advance of alternatively-fuelled vehicles (AFVs) and the wider acceptance of the need for a more flexible approach to business mobility.

Having been part of the team that developed and launched both AlphaCity and AlphaElectric, I feel privileged to have been in at the start of two initiatives that have changed the face of fleet forever. I am also delighted to see ACFO evolving to face the challenges of the future and to see it working more closely with the ICFM – our industry needs both organisations to remain strong and effective.

Ours remains a great industry, despite the daily challenges to the role of fleet manager in business. As wider mobility needs are recognised, there will be opportunities to influence organisations to spend their travel budgets more effectively and more environmentally. The whole of the industry needs to address these challenges before it is too late.

However, we must never underestimate the ability of



“I think the most significant (changes) have been the increasingly rapid advance of AFVs and the wider acceptance of the need for a more flexible approach to business mobility”

politicians to make our lives in fleet more difficult and complex, and I am delighted to see ACFO and BVRLA continuing to seek to educate Government about our industry. They have at least shown some signs of listening – occasionally!

On a personal level I have thoroughly enjoyed my 25-plus years in the industry, have made some very good friends, met some amazing people and, hopefully, made a contribution to making it a little more effective.

I am now signing off for the challenges of retirement – which I can thoroughly recommend – though I may still appear at the occasional industry ‘event’.

I wish you well in all you do in moving our great industry into its brave new future!

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.

AN OPEN LETTER TO
THE CHANCELLOR

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer

The current company car benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax system is unfair, unjust, doesn't deliver on the Government's environmental policies and causes problems for employers.

The system is unfair because it requires people to pay the same amount of BIK tax regardless of the benefit they obtain. If two colleagues do identical jobs in identical company cars, but they drive 20,000 and 2,000 private miles a year, the latter will pay 10 times more for those private miles. The tax rules say this is fair because the car is 'available for their use'. Well, quite a lot of things in life are available for use – Eurostar, Wembley Stadium and my local Italian restaurant come to mind – but in every other case we're only expected to pay when we actually use these things, not simply because they happen to be there.

The system is unjust because you have just increased by 50% the planned tax rise for drivers of diesel vehicles from next April. This is just a £365 million tax-grab from company car drivers that will have no impact on the environment.

The system fails to meet your Government's environmental policies because it encourages employees and employers to abandon diesel and move 'back' to petrol, reversing years of excellent progress in reducing CO₂ emissions.

CO₂ for newly-registered cars run by British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) members has risen – yes, risen – for the first time in years, as a result of your vilification of diesel and without regard for the fact that Euro 6 engines are much cleaner than Euro 5.

The new operational risk appraisal (OpRA) rules further undermine your environmental policies, because by taxing an employee on the cash allowance they are entitled to receive rather than the BIK tax on the car they actually choose – as you will if that generates a bigger tax liability – you remove the incentive to choose a low-CO₂ car.

As if all this wasn't bad enough, the current system of sharp tax increases can encourage employees to take cash allowances rather than a company car.

But it is easier for a leasing company to ensure a leased car is properly maintained, repaired, MOT tested, etc, than it is for an employer to manage a similar process for grey fleet cars.

I'm sure you have people designing a new company car BIK system. Here are some suggestions to consider:

1. Make the BIK tax charge reflect the actual benefit to the employee. There are several options; my favourite is to require the employee to certify whether their private mileage has been minimal (say, under 2,000), modest (2,000-5,000), high (5,000-8,000) or very high (more than 8,000). Flex BIK to reflect private use.

2. Scrap the 1% increase in the diesel supplement. It is grossly unfair.

3. Reverse OpRA. If someone takes the cash, tax them on that allowance. If they take a company car, tax them on the benefit-in-kind.

"This is a £365m tax grab from company car drivers that will have no impact on the environment"

4. Change the 'appropriate percentage' for zero emission cars. It is daft to have a system that will rise from this year's 9%, to 13% next year and 16% the year after, then reduce to 2%. What message does that send? If you want to encourage the take-up on new EVs, change the percentage to 2% from April 2018.

5. Fix appropriate percentages. The current system increases BIK by more than inflation every year. If I had chosen a 105g/km petrol car early in 2017, I'll have been taxed at 20% this year, rising to 26% by tax year 2020. That's a 30% increase. Instead, set appropriate percentages for the duration of the use of the car. If I choose a car based on 20% tax, that should be the appropriate percentage until I hand it back.

6. If you really want to encourage the take-up of EVs, tilt the BIK further in favour of low CO₂ cars. If someone is foolish, selfish or wealthy enough to opt for a high-CO₂ 170g/km car, their BIK tax should be based on an appropriate percentage of 45% of the list price.

Now, here's a more radical proposal: scrap the BIK table. It is way too complicated and is no longer fit for purpose.

We are keen to reduce CO₂ and particulates and nitrogen oxides, and we want to encourage the take-up of EVs.

So replace the BIK table with a labelling system similar to the EU Energy System. Anyone who has bought a washing machine knows how this works. A number of parameters are measured, and the device is awarded an energy efficiency class from A-G.

We need a name for this system: let's call it the Eco-Score system.

To achieve the best scores, a car will need to have low CO₂, NO_x and particulates emissions, while travelling a fair way on battery only. If it falls short on one or more, it will not score as highly.

This system allows you to include multiple parameters without confusing fleets. The score will also appear on the V5C. Maybe my employer will say I can't choose anything scoring less than a C.

And, if the BIK charge is fixed from day one for the life of the car, I will know exactly how much BIK tax I am going to pay and can plan accordingly.

Over time, as cars get more CO₂-efficient, emit less NO_x, travel further under electric power alone, etc, the gradings can be changed but the consumer won't need to worry about how they are calculated. They'll just know that Eco-Score A is the best.

For there to be faith in the system, you would have to commit that any change to Eco-Score, or subsequent change in the underlying measurements, will be revenue-neutral rather than tax-grab.

These are just some thoughts designed to bring some new thinking to a system that needs to be made fairer for the employee, deliver on the Government's environmental policies and make life simpler for employers.

Your humble correspondent

Professor Colin Tourick



Professor Colin Tourick
University of Buckingham Business School

FleetNews
PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE DO IN YOUR INDUSTRY

Fleet News magazine

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

Commercial Fleet magazine

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



Fleet events

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



Driving Business magazine

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

Websites and newsletters

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

Fleet Leasing magazine

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

Bespoke publications

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

FLEET LIVE

Fleet News has revealed a new name for its premier annual exhibition and conference: Fleet Live

The Fleet Live show, previously known as Fleet Management Live, has been renamed following consultation with its visitor advisory board who felt Fleet Live better represented both the broader job functions involved in fleet decisions and the wider responsibilities of fleet departments in travel and mobility.

Visitor advisory board member Lorna McAtear, fleet supply manager at Royal Mail, explained: "FML has grown so successfully, it now encompasses much more than just basic management. It's keeping true to its roots but looks to the future much more – it has a pulse of its own, hence the change in name."

Fellow board member Stewart Lightbody, head of fleet services at Anglian Water, added: "By acknowledging the broad span of both content and visitors, dropping the 'management' reference wasn't a hard decision to endorse."

The 2017 show broke new records in audience numbers, with 1,830 visitors over the two days, up 58% on 2016 (fully audited by BPA Worldwide). Of these, more than 1,300 were primary audience – fleet and transport managers, senior management, finance, procurement and HR – with the rest from affiliated industries, including leasing companies, rental and supply chain.

They were able to gain insight into the latest fleet trends at 24 best practice seminars and network with 122 exhibitors representing every element of the fleet supply chain – from cars to trucks, after the integration of sister show, *Commercial Fleet Van & Truck*.

Fleet News introduced a number of new initiatives and features at last year's event, after consultation with visitors and exhibitors, including an advice centre, bluelight zone and intelligent fleet zone.

The advice centre was run by members of the visitor advisory board who took time out of their busy schedules to provide new and inexperienced fleet managers with guidance and information to help them address the challenges they faced in their operations.

Board member Rory Morgan, head of logistics support – Western Europe, Iron Mountain, said the advice centre was a perfect opportunity for those that had fleet thrust upon them to gain from the knowledge of their peers.

He said: "Seminars and presentations are great for getting an overview of ideas and successes, of course, but in my experience people want that closer, more personal, interaction to ask questions as well."

A post show survey revealed why visitors attended Fleet Management Live 2017. The majority – 72% – said they wanted to keep up to date with and grow their

knowledge of best practice, fleet policy and regulations, while 66% said they were there to meet fleet suppliers.

But fleets didn't expect their journey to end when they left the NEC in Birmingham: 72% expected to get more information on products and services they had been discussing, 43% intended to have follow up meetings with suppliers they had met and 31% expected to do business with a new supplier.

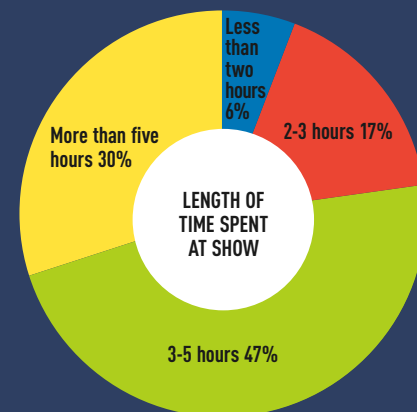
Stephen Briers, *Fleet News* editor-in-chief, said: "Fleet Management Live was a huge success and surpassed our target expectations. Changing the name to Fleet Live will give us even greater focus and momentum to ensure we improve and grow this year's show."

"If a business wants to cut costs, improve its green credentials, reduce risk, better manage its drivers, buy or lease vehicles more effectively, Fleet Live is the only place they can find all the answers."

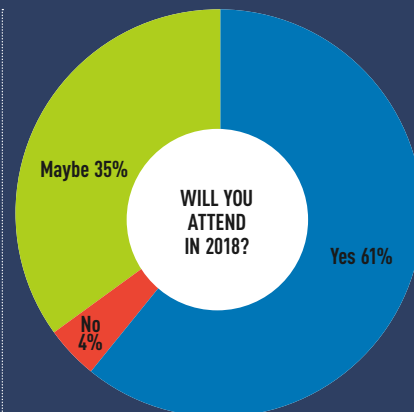


OCTOBER 9-10, 2018 NEC BIRMINGHAM

FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT FLEET LIVE 2018, GO TO WWW.FLEET-LIVE.CO.UK



Almost 80% of visitors stayed at Fleet Management Live 2017 for three or more hours.



The post-show survey revealed that 96% of visitors are likely to return this year, with 61% giving a resounding 'yes' when asked.

FLEET LIVE VISITOR ADVISORY BOARD

The Fleet Live visitor advisory board was created to help ensure the show meets the needs of fleet decision-makers, whether conventional fleet managers, travel/mobility managers, procurement, finance or HR. The panel meets every couple of months. Members of the advisory board manage fleets ranging from fewer than 100 vehicles to more than 10,000.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ■ Lorna McAtear, fleet supply manager, Royal Mail | ■ David Oliver, procurement manager, Red Bull Company |
| ■ Stewart Lightbody, head of fleet services, Anglian Water | ■ Debbie Floyde, fleet & risk manager, Bauer Media |
| ■ Alison Moriarty, fleet risk & compliance manager, Skanska | ■ Paul Taylor, fleet manager, Morgan Sindall |
| ■ Rory Morgan, head of logistics support – Western Europe, Iron Mountain | ■ John Pryor, group fleet & travel manager Arcadia and chairman ACFO |
| ■ Dale Eynon, head, Defra Fleet Services | ■ Caroline Sandall, vice-chair, ACFO |
| ■ Peter Weston, fleet manager, Arcus | ■ Jerry Ward, manager, legal operations, John Lewis Partnership |

EXHIBITORS BOOKED SO FAR





'FLEETS ARE SICK OF DOING THIS DANCE'

Paul Brown selected flexi-rent to eliminate early termination fees, now he wants suppliers to solve the uncertainty of end of contract damage re-charges. *Gareth Roberts* reports

Freedom Group is avoiding early termination costs of around £50,000 per year after switching its entire light commercial fleet to flexi-rent.

As a specialist contractor to utility companies, Freedom's contracts can often last three-to-four years, which meant leasing was deemed the best acquisition method for its 300-strong van fleet.

However, head of group fleet Paul Brown told *Fleet News* that the requirements of a contract can change partway through, which can require a new set of vehicles or even their early termination.

"It's fluid and it's flexible; numbers change and volumes change," says Brown.

But, with no room for manoeuvre in contract hire or lease agreements the group faced costly early termination penalties if vehicles needed to be returned.

Historically, Freedom Group had seen Northgate Vehicle Hire as a short-term vehicle solution only, believing it did not have the resource, infrastructure and buying power to sustain its flexible offer at an affordable price over the long term.

However, after carrying out a full tender process, Brown says it became clear the rental company could offer the same vehicles at the same price and with the same kit as contract hire and leasing suppliers, but with the added benefit of flexibility.

He explains: "If I want to send back 20 flat-bed Transits and replace them with 20 box Lutons, Northgate don't see it as being stuck with the asset, whereas for a leasing company it's just seen as dead metal."

NO UPFRONT DEPOSIT

Furthermore, if a contract became bigger and new vehicles were required at short notice, Brown says that was unachievable with other suppliers, while Northgate's flexibility meant the right van, with the right kit, could be provided quickly, with no upfront deposit.

Vans are still deployed on a four-year replacement cycle, but Brown has struck a deal with Northgate whereby there is 20% flexibility in the fleet meaning up to a fifth of vehicles could be terminated early without Freedom facing early termination fees.

Freedom typically terminates 25 vehicles a year so avoids these charges.

Brown says: "It's worked really well, from the speed of getting the vehicles and kitting them out, to their management, service and maintenance; it's also not as if it's any dearer."

However, there can be a cost if you send vehicles back early.

"You have to return the vehicle in rentable condition if terminated in the first year, which is a lot different to getting it to an auction retail standard," he says. "But the longer you keep them, those costs will fall as they're not being returned to Northgate's rental fleet."

Early termination fees may have been tackled by Brown, but the uncertainty of damage recharges remains.

They are a frustration for fleets of all sizes, he says, providing uncertainty for the financial director and fraying relationships with vehicle suppliers.

"It doesn't have to be like this," he says. "Fleets are sick of doing this dance every four or five years. We know what it's going to cost per vehicle, why can't we just put a few quid a month on top of the rental at the start of the contract? Build potential damage recharges into the lease costs and then, in four years' time, there are no nasty surprises."

Brown believes data on end



Freedom's head of group fleet Paul Brown wants to see damage recharges incorporated into rental fees

FACTFILE

Organisation Freedom Group (formerly Enserve Group)

Head of group fleet Paul Brown

Time with company four and a half years

Fleet size 125 cars, 300 vans (3.5 tonne and below) and 50 HGVs (7.5 tonne and above)

Funding method contract hire (cars); flexi-rent (vans)

CASH IS MORE POPULAR THAN COMPANY CARS

A plethora of deals available for people via personal leasing has helped fuel growth in the number of employees choosing cash over a company car.

Freedom Group operates a car fleet of around 125 vehicles, but Brown told *Fleet News* that cash-takers have now overtaken company car drivers for the first time.

"We've got around 150 members of staff opting for the car allowance," says Brown. "There are two main reasons for that; the main one being the 9p per mile [advisory fuel rate] we pay for company cars."

The vast majority of cars are job need and in an effort to drive down fuel costs, smaller, more fuel efficient engines have been chosen, resulting in the 9ppm rate. That compares to a grey fleet rate of 25ppm.

"The other reason is probably the option of cars we give them," he says.

Freedom Group has secured a solus deal with Volkswagen for its car fleet. Senior managers have access to a top of the range Volkswagen Passat, while the next level down, which is a field engineer, has the choice of a Volkswagen Golf hatch or estate.

Brown explains: "They are both great cars, but some people like a different badge and, if they want a BMW or a Mercedes-Benz, it's another reason for them to opt out."

Brown says Freedom struck a solus fleet deal, because it wanted to avoid having different cars from different suppliers.

"We give them four basic colours – black, white, silver or grey – standard black cloth interior and we give them all the options we think they'll need, such as sat-nav and parking sensors," explains Brown.

"Then if a car comes back it's easy to

issue as a replacement to somebody else."

However, the popularity of a cash allowance does mean that managing the grey fleet has become a priority.

"You've got to have a single point of ownership on grey fleet," says Brown. "Should it be HR, the operations manager, payroll or fleet? It's got to be somebody that's strong enough and thick-skinned enough to actually manage it."

"A lot of fleets say it's not our vehicle, it's nothing to do with us. But once you pay a cash allowance it becomes the equivalent of a company car."

Brown manages grey fleet drivers, with employees facing similar rules to the firm's company car drivers.

Cash allowance cars have a five-year age limit on them, compared to the four-year cycle employed on company cars. Brown says the additional year helps employees offset extra costs such as insurance.

To qualify for the allowance, log books also have to be in the employee's name, from which Brown says the group can ascertain the age of the vehicle and when the MOT is due.

Furthermore, cash allowance takers must provide a copy of their insurance documents and undertake driver licence checks.

All of this data is uploaded to Freedom Group's fleet management system which will automatically flag up when renewals are required, with drivers sent an email requesting action be taken.

Brown says: "If it isn't updated, we have the option of emailing payroll to suspend the car allowance. You usually find that within 48 hours they will supply the paperwork you were after."

"EVs are not a practical solution yet and petrol hybrids would have increased our fuel costs by a third"

Paul Brown, Freedom Group



of contract costs could be used to establish an industry-by-industry charge, with a per vehicle premium included from day one of the contract.

"In the end, leasing companies will realise it's the best way of doing business," he says.

Another area where Brown has succeeded in keeping Freedom Group's fleet costs in check is fuel spend. A £3 million fuel bill in 2013-14 has fallen by a third to £2m.

That saving has been achieved by adopting more fuel efficient vehicles and by reducing engine sizes without any operational impact.

Northgate's Tracker-based telematics system is fitted in all new commercial vehicles, which monitors driving style, vehicle idling times, routes taken between jobs and unauthorised private use.

Telematics allowed Freedom to identify 50 under-utilised vehicles, contributing to a £225,000 saving (see *Fleet News*, April 28, 2016). Since then, it has achieved a further £75,000 saving aided by telematics, but doesn't anticipate any more reductions.

Driver league tables allow peer pressure to be applied and a desire to be the best driver. Not only has this encouraged safer, more environmentally friendly and cost-effective driving techniques within the team, it has also boosted employee engagement and morale.

Furthermore, it has helped reduce the frequency of repairs and replacement parts due to poor driving. Freedom Group estimates savings here to be worth a further £20,000 per year.

Fuel data reports have also been closely monitored to look at any irregular purchases, or purchases on high cost versus power type fuels.



Paul Brown has reduced fuel spend by a third by choosing more efficient vehicles or reducing engine sizes

TECHNOLOGY WILL BE KEY

Brown has made substantial improvements to the fleet since joining Freedom almost four-and-a-half years ago, but he has no intention of resting on his laurels.

The fleet is up for renewal this year and technology will be key, he says, with stop-start engines one of a range of measures under consideration to help continue keeping fuel costs in check.

However, he admits it is likely that diesel will remain the group's fuel of choice for the immediate future.

"We looked at petrol cars rather than diesel, but when they're doing 25,000 miles per year it just wasn't practical," he says.

"EVs are not a practical solution yet either and petrol hybrids would have increased our fuel costs by a third."

Plug-in powertrain technology, it seems, still has a long way to go before it will be considered the right fit for Freedom Group's fleet of vehicles.



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

AWARDS GET YOU NOTICED AND HELP WHEN BIDDING FOR NEW CONTRACTS

Awards success has given the fleet operation a much higher profile and helped Freedom Group win business, according to Paul Brown.

Freedom – formerly Enserve Group – was voted Fleet of the Year (251-1,000 vehicles) at the 2017 Fleet News Awards.

The awards judges said: "Brown shows a solid understanding of the fleet and has introduced a number of initiatives, which are robustly measured to display clear results. [It is] an extremely well-run operation."

Success at the Fleet News Awards was followed by a Green Apple Award in recognition for environmental best practice and a 'highly commended' for Commercial Fleet of the Year – Utilities at the 2017 Commercial Fleet Awards.

Brown says: "Fleet has become more of a focus at boardroom level. A couple of years ago, they wanted three or four lines from me for a monthly report. Now they want three or four slides. "Winning an award makes people sit



up and take notice and it helps us when bidding for work."

Tender documents require the group to demonstrate high health and safety standards. A Fleet News Award, says Brown, assures prospective customers these are being achieved.

'SHUT UP SHOP OR UNDERTAKE A COMPLETE REINVENTION'

Those were the choices facing a company that had 'lost its identity'. It has now re-emerged with a new name and a focus on service and reducing fleets' claims costs. *Stephen Briers* reports

Fleet Accident Repair Group (FARG) had been "neglected" and its services had become "one dimensional".

Not our words, but the uncompromising view of the man brought in to turn around the 25-year-old company's fortunes.

The figures are stark: at its height, FARG handled 10,000 repairs a month with a workforce of 120; today, monthly volumes are down to a little over 1,000 with just 18 employees.

In a bid to revive its fortunes, the private owners called in Mike Monaghan to act as a consultant five months ago.

Best known in automotive circles for launching the Motor Vehicle Repairers Association (MVRA) in 1988, which he ran for more than 20 years, Monaghan has spent the majority of his career in the sector. More recently, he diversified into business coaching and leadership.

After a few days picking his way through the accident management company, Monaghan delivered some hard-hitting home truths. FARG had struggled in the 2000s with the onset of credit hire and repair. It had chased credit hire commission, which had affected the quality of its service provision.

Combined with consolidation among its blue-chip customer base, the company had lost its identity.

Monaghan's solution? Either shut up shop or undertake a complete reinvention.

The owners remain committed to the business and opted for reinvention, appointing Monaghan as interim managing director to make the proposition a reality.

"My purpose is to consider where the gaps

are in the industry and how we can bring a difference to the sector," he says.

His first decision was to change the name. "FARG is one dimensional; clients want a different type of service provider," he explains. "It's about how can they reduce their exposure to cost, not just can we fix it. Repairing the car is the easy bit; we want to be recognised for our expertise by acting as an adviser."

On January 1, the company was rebranded Atticus Innovation with the creation of three operational divisions.

The first, Atticus Reinstatement, is the core 24/7 accident damage repair service.

However, there are changes. The most noticeable has been a major cull of the bodyshop network, reducing the number from 214 to 83. Further cuts are likely, before Monaghan rebuilds the network to around 100 sites.

"I will be hand-selecting the repairers. They will all be part of a new technical platform which will show available hours and capacity so we can intelligently deploy repair services. Customers will not go into a queue," he says.

"We will be able to identify the repairer, their geographic position, whether they have the Kitemark, their manufacturer approvals and equipment capability so that when we triage the repair, we will send it to the right repairer every time. This will speed up the repairs and result in a better service."

Atticus will independently audit the network to its own standards, with the emphasis on a customer-centric service.

"We will have new SLAs (service level agreements) which will include designated capacity within the workshop so our customers are a priority," Monaghan says. "Vehicles will be collected on the day of the

FACTFILE

Company Atticus Innovation
(formerly Fleet Accident Repair Group)
Head office Swinton, Manchester
Interim MD Mike Monaghan
Repair volume 1,000 vehicles a month
Services accident repair (Reinstatement), consultancy (Innovate), personal service (Concierge)

Consultant Mike Monaghan has been appointed interim MD while he puts Atticus on course for a turnaround

incident and work will begin.

"But, we recognise that every client is different and we will work with them to define a profile of their vehicles. For example, if a vehicle is near its end of life on the fleet, we could use non-original equipment or green parts to reduce costs. We will choose the right repair process for each job."

The second division, Atticus Innovate, will provide consultancy services to fleets on everything from vehicle selection to green policies to safety, advising on the use of telematics, cameras and driver training as part of a broad suite of risk management.

Atticus will offer this service irrespective of whether the fleet opts to use its services for accident repair.

"We will ensure the fleet fits with the business priorities," Monaghan says.

For clients who require 'white gloves' treatment, the company has launched Atticus Concierge. Targeted at companies with high-end cars and blue-chip clients who want to offer a higher level of service to their employees, Atticus Concierge will provide a named account handler who owns the relationship. It is currently in talks with

a number of football clubs, for example.

Fleets and insurance companies need to come to terms with some cold facts before selecting their partners, says Monaghan.

"They need to understand that it's not all about the labour rate. Costs are going to increase due to all the new technology and electronics, and if the vehicle goes to a network that can't deal with it, then off-road times will also increase," he adds.

"Fleets should be choosing partners based on their ability to profile their needs, especially as we move towards autonomous and electric vehicles. One of our differentiators is that we help companies to measure our performance in the three areas [divisions], rather than throwing everything into the pot at the same time."

He says: "We will not be there just for the asset; we will use our skills to protect your vehicle, your asset and your people."

So why did he choose the name Atticus? Two reasons: after *To Kill a Mockingbird's* Atticus Finch for his stance on social justice and partnerships, and after the eponymous Greek philosopher for his quote 'I will never be perfect for you, but I will always imper-

"Fleets should be choosing partners based on their ability to profile their needs"

Mike Monaghan, Atticus Innovation

fectly try to be', which epitomises Monaghan's business ethos to relentlessly strive for excellence.

Atticus is also taking a different position on payment. Unlike some rivals, it will not be charging a percentage of the final invoice. Instead, there will be a flat rate admin fee based on the level of service the fleet requires.

"The percentage approach is unjust; it adds cost to the service," Monaghan says. "The model has to change. It needs to be a service-provision model."

He also wants to educate customers on a

bodyshop pricing model that adds margin to paint and parts which further impacts their repair costs.

"We will give impartial advice whether or not they use our services," he adds.

Atticus has a broad target market. In addition to brokers and insurance companies, it will be seeking terms with fleets running every type of vehicle, from cars to HGVs, who are "frustrated with the status quo", Monaghan says.

Many will be outright purchase, rather than contract hire fleets as the latter manage their asset books differently.

The bulk of the contracts will be for the Reinstatement business tapering to the high-end Concierge service.

This year, Atticus hopes to double its weekly repair volume. A year later, Monaghan expects to step down as interim managing director to return to offering consultancy services, potentially retaining a non-exec role with the business.

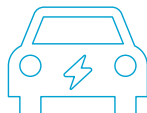
By then, the company will be well on its way to achieving its ultimate goal: to reduce the cost of claim for all stakeholders – fleets, insurers and bodyshops.

Electric cars can save your business money. Our interactive tools can save your business time.

If you have questions about running electric cars on your fleet, get the answers at GoUltraLow.com



GoUltraLow.com



2018 VEHICLE LAUNCH GUIDE



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



DS 3

Available: late 2018

- New DS 3 expected eight years after the original launched under Citroën brand
- Speculation suggests a crossover body rather than premium hatchback
- Expect styling cues from the 2014 DS Divine concept
- Choice of 1.2-litre turbocharged petrol engines and new 1.5-litre diesel engines
- New safety and assistance features



Current model pictured

FORD FIESTA ACTIVE

Available: Spring

- More rugged version retains basic Fiesta appearance with raised ground clearance and additional styling kit
- Unique interior detailing gives the Active its own crossover character
- New technology including safety and driver support systems
- Ecoboost petrol and new 1.5 TDCi diesel engines available



MG3 FACELIFT

Available: early 2018

- New look front end echoes the compact ZS crossover
- Improvements to interior look and feel expected to make it more mainstream
- Smaller, more fuel efficient turbo-charged engine available for improved fuel economy and lower emissions
- Likely to benefit from a new seven-year manufacturer warranty



Current model pictured

AUDI A1

Available: Summer

The Audi A1 will be the third Volkswagen Group small hatchback to be based on the versatile MQB platform, following 2017's Seat Ibiza and Volkswagen Polo.

At the time of writing little information has been available, but the other cars offer a few clues, including a slightly roomier interior and new engines, including a 1.5 TFSI with cylinder deactivation technology.

We should also see autonomous emergency braking as standard, and optional safety features such as blindspot warning and rear cross traffic alert to warn of approaching vehicles when reversing from a parking space.

Expect prices to start from around £16,000.



Current model pictured

HONDA JAZZ FACELIFT

Available: January

The Jazz will be updated in 2018 with styling tweaks, new safety features and a more powerful engine option with Honda's 130PS 1.5-litre motor alongside the 100PS 1.3-litre.



ŠKODA FABIA FACELIFT

Available: Summer

While Volkswagen, Audi and Seat have already embraced the MQB platform for small cars, Škoda's Fabia reaches mid-lifecycle in 2018 and continues with a facelift. Expect new tech and engines, however.



SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT

Available: Spring

Suzuki's hot hatch has always been popular in the UK, and the new Swift Sport, based on the Swift launched in 2017 will offer more fuel-efficient turbo power.



VOLKSWAGEN UP GTI

Available: Q1

The Up GTI will hark back to the original Golf GTI, with an identical power output of 115PS and a kerb weight of less than a tonne.



VAUXHALL CORSA

Available: Late 2018

The Corsa introduced in 2014 was a heavily revised version of its predecessor on a platform, shared with Fiat, which dated back to 2006.

There will be a new Corsa in 2018, which is developed in conjunction with PSA, and will have much in common with the next-generation Peugeot 208.

We can expect the Corsa to be roomier as well as more efficient – in real world driving – than its predecessor.

The Corsa will also lead Vauxhall's alternative fuel strategy, with a battery electric version in the pipeline, which will be a rival for the Renault Zoe, and the brand's first plug-in model since the Ampera was discontinued in 2014.



Current model pictured

PEUGEOT 208

Available: Late 2018

- New, lighter platform shared with Citroën C3 and forthcoming Vauxhall Corsa
- 1.2-litre petrol engines and 1.5-litre BlueHDi diesels will offer sub-100g/km CO₂ emissions
- Platform engineered to accommodate electrification expected to follow
- New version of Peugeot i-Cockpit and faster dashboard screen system



Current model pictured

VOLKSWAGEN POLO

Available: January

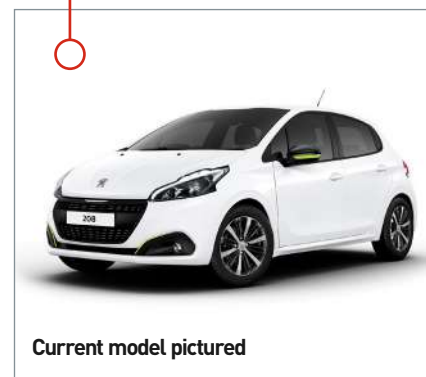
- Roomier Polo comes with autonomous emergency braking as standard
- A choice of normally aspirated and turbocharged three-cylinder petrol engines, plus a 150PS four-cylinder 1.5 TSI with cylinder deactivation technology, as well as 80PS and 95PS 1.6 TDI diesel
- Optional adaptive cruise control
- Customisable interior features



RENAULT CLIO

Available: Summer

- New Clio expected to downsize Mégane styling cues in a smaller package
- Mild hybrid powertrains expected to feature in the range
- Interior appearance and quality to move upmarket, with materials and features from larger Renault models
- Upgraded central tablet-style screen to offer more functions and 'haptic' responses



Current model pictured

BMW 1 SERIES

Available: Late 2018

- BMW ditches rear-wheel drive for its family hatchback
- The switch to front-wheel drive should be revolutionary in terms of interior space, as the engine bay will be shorter and there should be no transmission tunnel in the cabin
- Three-cylinder and four-cylinder petrol and diesel engines available.



TOYOTA AURIS

Available: Autumn

- New Toyota Auris will share platform with the latest Prius and C-HR crossover
- It is expected to be more radical than the current car
- Interior quality and driver engagement expected to be improved over the outgoing model
- Popular hybrid variant, and turbo petrol variants offered, but diesel unlikely.



CITROËN C4 CACTUS

Available: Spring

- Revised C4 Cactus replaces C4 hatchback in the Citroën range, with new market positioning, new technology and broader engine range
- Debuts new 'progressive hydraulic cushions' (PHC) suspension system
- Improved refinement over outgoing C4 Cactus to ensure broader appeal
- New driver assistance systems



Current model pictured

FORD FOCUS

Available: Summer

The 2018 Focus will be the fourth-generation model, but like last year's new Fiesta, it will undergo an evolutionary change rather than being dramatically different.

The car is likely to be around the same overall size as the current model, but with a slightly longer wheelbase to create a more spacious interior.

The Focus will have new technology and more sophisticated functions, but the dashboard design will be simplified compared with the car it replaces.

We can expect three- and four-cylinder engines, including versions of the 1.0-litre Ecoboost petrol and the 1.5 TDCi diesel, but even with the new WLTP test system, they should be at least as fuel efficient as the outgoing model.



Current model pictured

HYUNDAI I30 FASTBACK

Available: Spring

A four-door version of the latest Hyundai i30 will arrive in 2018 with a sleek, coupé-like profile. It offers a more stylish alternative to the hatch.



LEXUS CT FACELIFT

Available: January

A minor restyling, quality upgrades, restructured equipment grades and new safety features refresh the seven-year-old hybrid hatchback, which is still the only compact premium hybrid on sale.



MERCEDES-BENZ CLA

Available: Late 2018

We don't know much about the CLA yet, other than four-door coupé and Shooting Brake estate versions are expected to continue in the new model. It will be distanced further from the A-Class than the current CLA.



SUBARU IMPREZA

Available: Spring

A new Impreza will launch in 2018, based on a new platform and offering more safety features than before. However, Subaru has only confirmed petrol all-wheel drive versions of the car, with a diesel version unlikely.



MERCEDES-BENZ A-CLASS

Available: Spring

At the time of writing, Mercedes-Benz hasn't revealed how the A-Class will look from the outside – although there are some spy shots in circulation – but we have seen the interior.

The A-Class will have a more sophisticated feel inside, with features inspired by the S-Class and E-Class, including a two-screen dashboard layout, and simplified design.

It's expected to have a roomier cabin than before, as well as a larger boot, while Mercedes-Benz will offer a saloon version for the first time, which will give it stronger appeal in North America and, in Europe, a direct rival for the Audi A3 saloon and the forthcoming Volvo S40.



KIA CEED

Available: Autumn

- New Ceed will be inspired by the ProceeD concept (pictured), unveiled at the 2017 Frankfurt motor show
- Kia will target the Volkswagen Golf for quality and sophistication, and the car will have styling cues from the new Stinger GT
- New interior with free-standing touchscreen, while the Ceed will offer the latest safety and driver support tech
- Turbocharged petrol engines to be offered alongside diesel



VOLVO S40/V40

Available: late 2018

- Volvo's 40 range expected to offer saloon and hatchback variants in next generation
- Some engines carried over from XC40 launch, but new three-cylinder petrol and diesel engines also expected for T2 and D2 variants
- Momentum, R-Design and Inscription equipment grades expected, with Pro 'pack' options of popular features
- Expected to offer sector-leading safety technology, including 'oncoming lane mitigation' with steering assistance to avoid oncoming traffic

HYUNDAI i40

Available: Late 2018

- Second facelift for i40 model likely to bring styling in line with new i30 and renew its appeal
- Updated engine line-up will offer improved fuel efficiency and lower emissions
- Interior quality expected to be enhanced to keep up with rival large family cars
- As it retains the current platform, a plug-in hybrid is unlikely until the next generation in 2020



Current model pictured



MAZDA 6

Available: Spring

- Mazda 6 facelift will focus on an interior redesign alongside subtle exterior changes, with European public debut expected at Geneva in March
- New interior includes a redesigned centre console and dashboard, with less clutter and more functions housed within the centre screen
- Upgraded materials make the Mazda 6 feel more upmarket
- Petrol and diesel engines carried over from the current car, but likely to offer better real-world fuel efficiency

BMW 3 SERIES

Available: Late 2018

BMW has much ground to make up with the new 3 Series, as the current model has fallen behind some rivals in ability and appeal.

We can expect sharper styling and the launch of three-cylinder versions in entry-level petrol and diesel models to help give it a lead in the fuel-efficiency and emissions battle, as well as a new plug-in hybrid to follow on from the current popular 330e.

Reduced weight should also improve real-world fuel efficiency, while a longer wheelbase will ensure better interior space, and wider stance is likely to ensure the 3 Series reclaims class honours for driver appeal.



Current model pictured

FORD MONDEO FACELIFT

Available: Summer

Three years on from the Mondeo launch, we can expect revisions to bring a more upmarket feel inside and a family look inspired by the 2018 Focus.



Current model pictured

INFINITI Q50 FACELIFT

Available: Spring

A subtle makeover for Infiniti's 3 Series rival will bring it in line with the new QX50 due in 2018, with a redesigned front end. We can also expect more equipment for the money.



Current model pictured

MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS FACELIFT

Available: Summer

Facelifted C-Class will debut new technology and superior 2.0-litre diesel engine from the E-Class, improving fuel economy and reducing emissions, while exterior changes will be subtle.



Current model pictured

VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT FACELIFT

Available: Late 2018

Three years after launch, it's likely we'll see minor revisions to the Volkswagen Passat to ensure it keeps pace with developments in technology, as well as some styling tweaks.



Current model pictured

VOLVO S60/V60

Available: Late 2018

The first model of the new '60' generation – the XC60 – launched in 2017, and, while these will be the third-generation 60 models, they will be viewed as legitimate rivals for the BMW 3 Series, Audi A4, Mercedes-Benz C-Class and Jaguar XE for the first time.

The renewed '90' range, as well as last year's XC60 and XC40, have

shown Volvo can position itself as a premium car brand, with residual values forecasts comparable with German rivals.

For the S60 and V60, we can expect an uncluttered cabin with a portrait format central touchscreen. They should also be roomier than the outgoing models. Engines will reflect the XC60 line-up, with turbo-charged petrol and diesel, plus plug-in hybrid power.



Current model pictured



Current model pictured

MG 6

Available: Summer

- New MG 6 expected to demonstrate a huge leap in quality over its predecessor
- Car has grown in size with a wheelbase equivalent to upper-medium cars
- Chinese market model offers a plug-in hybrid using a 125PS 1.0-litre turbo petrol engine and 85PS electric motor, which could be destined for the UK
- Likely to be unveiled in the UK at the London motor show in June



Current model pictured



PEUGEOT 508

Available: Summer

- New Peugeot flagship saloon will move upmarket and be more style-focused than predecessor
- Peugeot targets 'high-end mainstream', with DS remaining PSA's 'premium' brand
- Design will be inspired by the Instinct concept car (pictured)
- New platform will accommodate plug-in hybrid technology, but turbocharged petrol and diesel versions will be offered
- i-Cockpit instrument screen from 3008 and 5008 will be standard

AUDI A7 SPORTBACK

Available: Spring

- New A7 Sportback to offer some form of hybrid technology on all engine variants
- Longer wheelbase and significantly longer cabin offers more interior space than before
- Quattro-only range, prioritising front-wheel drive running with on-demand four-wheel drive
- Initially available as a 340PS 3.0 TFSI, diesel expected to follow, with the UK engine line-up still to be confirmed at the time of writing



MERCEDES-BENZ CLS

Available: Summer

- Unveiled at the Los Angeles motor show in December 2017, new CLS comes with one petrol and two diesel choices
- New six-cylinder 285PS 350d and 340PS 400d both offer CO₂ emissions from 148g/km
- Chassis and technology carried over from the latest E-Class model
- Dual-screen instrument panel and dashboard display featured
- Four-cylinder diesel variants expected to follow in 2019



LEXUS LS

Available: Early 2018

- New LS 500h flagship saloon powered by 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine with 180PS electric motor hybrid system
- CO₂ emissions 147g/km for rear-wheel drive and 161g/km for all-wheel drive
- Luxury, F-Sport and Premier equipment grades, with prices ranging from £72,595 to £97,995 on the road
- Vast array of safety and assistance systems fitted as standard



AUDI A6

Available: Summer

The new A6 (current model pictured) will boost Audi's presence in the sector two years after the launch of the latest E-Class and just over a year behind the latest BMW 5 Series, so it has much ground to make up.

A new platform will mean reduced weight over its predecessor, which, along with the latest engines, will mean much improved fuel efficiency for the new model.

We are likely to see a plug-in hybrid e-tron A6 for the first time, which will compete with BMW and Mercedes rivals, as well as clever electric turbocharging technology, which can make engines run more efficiently than conventional turbos.



Current model pictured

AUDI A8 **Available:** Early 2018

New luxury saloon brings more characterful styling, mild hybrid technology and advanced semi-autonomous driving features to market, with prices starting at £69,100 on the road.



BMW M5 **Available:** February 2018

The latest M5 saloon comes with 600PS turbo V8 power and all-wheel drive, as well as an eight-speed automatic transmission, making it the fastest ever version of the saloon.



FORD ECOSPORT FACELIFT **Available:** January

A major update to the Ecosport sees improved materials, the availability of an ST Line equipment grade, a 125PS 1.5 TDCi diesel offering (requiring AdBlue top ups) and new assistance technology.



MG ZS **Available:** January

A smaller crossover from MG than the GZ, the ZS offers a budget rival to more established players in the compact SUV sector, backed by a seven-year warranty.



NISSAN JUKE

Available: Late 2018

The Juke is one of Nissan's most successful models, and one of its longest serving since its introduction in 2010.

Nissan has kept tight-lipped about its replacement, but we know it will be produced for Europe at its Sunderland plant, and it's likely to be based on the South American Nissan Kicks (pictured).

A number of UK automotive writers were invited to try the Kicks in 2016, and it's likely that feedback would help with making a European version more in line with customer expectations.

A Kicks-based Juke replacement might be less radical looking, but would certainly be more spacious than the current model.



SEAT ARONA

Available: January

■ Seat's compact SUV competes with the Nissan Juke, Vauxhall Mokka X and Ford Ecosport

■ Priced from £16,555 to £22,020 with 1.0 TSI, 1.5 TSI and 1.6 TDI engine choices

■ CO₂ emissions from 111g/km for petrol and 105g/km for diesel

■ Five main equipment grades with Sport pack on FR and Lux pack on Xcellence, plus a high-specification First Edition for launch



VOLKSWAGEN T-CROSS

Available: Late 2018

■ Volkswagen's smallest crossover will compete with the Ford Fiesta Active and Hyundai i20 Active

■ Largely Polo-derived, sharing engines and technology, with raised ground clearance and no four-wheel drive

■ Inspired by 2017 T-Cross Breeze convertible concept, but not a soft top

■ Petrol and diesel engine options expected with a choice of manual or DSG auto transmissions.



VOLKSWAGEN T-ROC

Available: January

■ New compact SUV is derived from the latest Polo with raised ground clearance and spacious interior

■ Diesel variants, including a 4Motion all-wheel drive option, will follow petrol-only launch in January

■ Launch range priced from £20,425 for 115PS 1.0 TSI SE to £31,485 for a 190PS 2.0 TSI 4Motion DSG SEL.



AUDI Q3

Available: Summer

- Q3 is the last small Audi to migrate to the Volkswagen Group MQB platform, but will mean a lighter and more spacious replacement
- Appearance likely to evolve in line with latest Q7 and Q5 models
- E-tron plug-in hybrid version expected during the new model's lifecycle
- Expected choice of 1.5-litre and 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engines and 2.0-litre TDI diesel



BMW X2

Available: March

- Style-focused alternative to X1 shares engines and technology with sister model
- Front-wheel drive petrol and choice of four-wheel drive diesel versions offered initially, with xDrive20d the first to arrive in the UK
- Front-wheel drive sDrive18d diesel variants to follow later in 2018
- CO2 emissions start from 121g/km for the xDrive 20d (dependent on wheel size), with later FWD diesel expected to be lower



HONDA CR-V

Available: Summer

The next-generation CR-V will be based on the model first seen at the 2016 Los Angeles motor show.

Arriving in Europe around 18 months later, the new CR-V will offer hybrid technology for the first time and will not be available with a diesel powertrain.

The hybrid power unit was previewed in the CR-V prototype shown at last year's Frankfurt motor show, offering zero emissions driving for short distances at low speeds, with the battery being regenerated under braking.

The 2018 CR-V will also be specified with Honda's 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine, with a choice of either six-speed manual or CVT auto.



JAGUAR E-PACE

Available: Spring

- Jaguar's smallest SUV sharing its platform with the Range Rover Evoque and Land Rover Discovery
- Offers front-wheel drive and four-wheel drive versions
- Line-up includes in-house 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol and diesel engines, with CO2 emissions from 124g/km
- Standard features include a 10-inch dashboard touchscreen
- Expected to boost Jaguar sales further following the launch of the F-Pace in 2016



CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS

Available: Late 2018

- European version of the C5 Aircross unveiled in China last year will be built in France
- Qashqai rival should bring new customers to the Citroën brand in the UK
- Initially front-wheel drive only, but possibility of four-wheel drive versions in future with plug-in hybrid technology
- Engine line-up should be similar to the Peugeot 3008
- Expected to offer class-leading interior comfort and ride comfort

ŠKODA KAROQ Available: January

Škoda's Yeti replacement is more mainstream, and an accomplished performer for those seeking an alternative to the Nissan Qashqai or Kia Sportage. A great all-round family car.



SUBARU XV Available: January

Based on the new Impreza, with extra ground clearance and a rugged styling kit, the XV operates in a niche for those who want all-wheel drive and a petrol engine.



MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE CROSS

Available: January

Mitsubishi will have a more mainstream rival to the Nissan Qashqai when the Eclipse Cross launches in January.

Initially available with a 163PS 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine, the Eclipse Cross offers a choice of manual or automatic transmissions and four-wheel drive on some versions.

As Mitsubishi has been a pioneer in plug-in hybrid technology, it's likely a plug-in hybrid version will be offered at some stage, and a diesel version is also expected.

We think it will be a version of the 2.2-litre diesel engine currently used in the Outlander.



JEEP COMPASS

Available: February

- Jeep offers a model aiming at premium rivals, such as the Land Rover Discovery Sport, BMW X1 and Audi Q3
- Front-wheel drive and four-wheel drive versions available, as well as a choice of turbocharged petrol and diesel engines
- Four equipment grades offered in the UK, with Trailhawk providing maximum off-road ability
- Prices from £22,995 on the road



VOLVO XC40

Available: Spring

- First compact XC model debuts new-generation '40' series for Volvo
- Standard touchscreen, digital instrument panel, navigation, voice control, LED headlights and 18-inch alloys
- Initially offered with 190PS T4 and 247PS T5 petrol variants and 150PS D3 and 190PS D4 diesel, with D4 CO2 from 127g/km
- Prices start at £27,905 on the road

DS 7 CROSSBACK

Available: February

- First SUV from upmarket DS Automobiles aims to offer more for the money than premium rivals
- Available with 130PS 1.6-litre and 180PS 2.0-litre BlueHDi diesel, or a 225PS 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol engine.
- Active Scan Suspension monitors the road ahead, available on some versions
- High-end features, such as night vision and semi-autonomous assistance



INFINITI QX50

Available: Late 2018

- New variable compression ratio petrol engine to offer the performance of a petrol engine with economy of a diesel
- The turbocharged 2.0-litre engine has targeted efficiency improvements of 35% over the 3.7-litre V6 motor in the old QX50
- Infiniti claims best-in-class cabin space for the BMW X3/Mercedes-Benz GLC/Audi Q5 rival
- Prices expected to start around £35,000



KIA SORENTO FACELIFT

Available: Early 2018

- Revised exterior styling as well as addition of new GT Line equipment grade
- Interior changes include a new steering wheel, updated instrument cluster and a new eight-inch dashboard touchscreen
- New eight-speed automatic gearbox replaces the old six-speed transmission, helping reduce CO₂ emissions from the 200PS 2.2-litre diesel engine to 159g/km from 172g/km.



JEEP WRANGLER

Available: Summer

- Next-generation model for iconic 4x4 comes with more fuel-efficient engines, improved safety, and new technology
- Smarter interior with full LED screen instrument display
- Five-door fixed roof version and three-door convertible body styles
- Off-road ability expected to be among the best available

Current X4 model pictured



Current model pictured



BMW X4/X5

Available: Late 2018

The X4 is expected to undergo a transformation, sharing much with the X3, which has recently entered its third generation.

We can expect a new 2.0-litre diesel engine, as well as a six-cylinder 3.0-litre diesel, plus a high-performance M40i petrol variant.

The new X5 will be the fourth-generation model, and benefits from a new platform, expected to be a modified version of that used for the 5 Series and X3 and X4.

Four-cylinder and six-cylinder diesel engines will be offered, as well as a plug-in hybrid variant.

RANGE ROVER SPORT FACELIFT

Available: Early 2018

Mid-life facelift for 2018 includes the option of a plug-in hybrid. The P400e will offer CO₂ emissions of 64g/km, with a fully electric range of up to 30 miles.



LEXUS NX FACELIFT

Available: Early 2018

Responsible for a third of Lexus registrations each year since its launch, the NX has been restyled for 2018. It has new safety features, with new interior colour options and a larger central screen.



BMW X7

Available: Late 2018

BMW will be creating a luxury 4x4 rival to the Range Rover and Mercedes-Benz GLS with the new X7, based on the concept car shown at the 2017 Frankfurt motor show.



AUDI Q8

Available: Late 2018

The Q8 will usurp the Audi flagship title from the A8 saloon and will be based on the Q8 concept car shown at the 2017 Detroit motor show. Expect all the tech from the latest A8 and more.



SEAT LARGE SUV

Available: Late 2018

We don't know the name of the new Seat SUV at the time of writing, but we know it's coming and is likely to be inspired by the 20V20 concept pictured. We can also make some educated guesses about its market positioning.

Using the same basic Volkswagen Group MQB architecture as the Seat Ateca medium SUV, it should follow the lines of the Skoda Kodiaq and Volkswagen Tiguan Allspace, with a longer wheelbase and more room inside.

Being a Seat, we expect a more engaging feel and sharper handling than that of the Kodiaq and Tiguan, and a slightly firmer ride.

MERCEDES-BENZ GLE

Available: Late 2018

- All-new GLE expected to share styling cues with smaller GLC
- E-Class-derived technology, including optional dual-screen for instruments and dashboard display
- Petrol and diesel engines will be available, while a more competitive plug-in hybrid version is also expected, with lower CO₂ emissions than the current model, bringing it in line with Audi and Volvo rivals
- Four-door coupé version expected to follow in 2019



VW TIGUAN ALLSPACE AND TOUAREG

Available: Tiguan Allspace, January; Touareg, summer

- Tiguan Allspace uses a longer wheelbase than the Tiguan to create more interior space and offer seven seats
- Engine line-up to reflect standard Tiguan range
- New Touareg uses a new platform shared with the Porsche Cayenne, Audi Q7 and Bentley Bentayga
- Platform is capable of accommodating plug-in hybrid technology



MITSUBISHI SHOGUN SPORT

Expected: Summer

- New large SUV sits below the Shogun in the range, and shares its platform with the L200 pick-up truck
- Expected to be offered with a 2.4-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel producing around 180PS
- Should offer greater off-road prowess and towing capability than car platform-based crossover rivals
- Equipment includes hill descent control, trailer start assist, hill start assist, multiple drive modes to suit different off-road conditions

BMW 2 SERIES ACTIVE TOURER/ GRAN TOURER FACELIFT

Available: Spring

- Cosmetic revisions include a new look front end likely to reflect the new 1 Series hatchback due in 2018
- Unlikely to see any changes to engines, with the Active Tourer range topper continuing to be the plug-in hybrid 225e
- Latest version of BMW's iDriver controller inside, with new driver assistance technology available



Current models pictured



Current model pictured

CITROËN BERLINGO MULTISPACE

Available: Summer

- Mechanically identical to new Peugeot Partner, the Berlingo is likely to be distinguished by a unique LED daytime running light signature
- Potentially more differentiation inside, with Citroën's aim of maximising comfort
- New turbo petrol engine option likely, with BlueHDi diesel carried over from the current model
- New safety features and connectivity technology expected

PEUGEOT PARTNER TEPEE

Available: Summer

Peugeot's van-derived MPV will enter its third generation in 2018, promising more space and sophistication than before.

The current model has been in production for almost 10 years and, with the Citroën Berlingo, is the oldest vehicle in its van-based sector.

We can expect new safety systems on the vehicle, as well as improved connectivity.

Spy photographs have shown a longer vehicle than before, so perhaps a seven-seat version with a little more versatility will also be offered, making the Partner Tepee a more convincing rival for the Nissan NV200 Combi and Ford Grand Tourneo Connect.



Current model pictured

CITROËN C4 PICASSO/GRAND C4 PICASSO

Available: Late 2018

Revised styling to reflect new C3 and C3 Aircross models, with new 1.5 BlueHDi diesel engines and 'progressive hydraulic cushion' suspension available.



Current model pictured

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SV FACELIFT

Available: Spring

A revised Golf SV will include updates similar to those featured on the Golf hatchback and estate, with new engines and technology, but, potentially, also with reduced pricing.



HYUNDAI KONA ELECTRIC

Available: Late 2018

- Fully electric version of Kona compact SUV expected by the end of the year
- Range on a full charge expected to be more than 200 miles
- The Kona will be the second in a range of electric models from Hyundai
- Minor styling changes expected compared with petrol and diesel models, such as exterior trim treatment



Next Generation FCEV

HYUNDAI FUEL CELL VEHICLE

Available: Late 2018

- Next-generation hydrogen fuel cell vehicle to replace pioneering ix35 FCEV
- Unique styling features will separate the new crossover model from the rest of the Hyundai range
- Expected to have a significantly lower purchase price than £50,000-plus ix35 predecessor
- Power output of 163PS and with denser hydrogen storage, maximum range could be close to 500 miles

JAGUAR I-PACE

Available: Spring

- All-electric Jaguar is similar in length to the F-Pace SUV, but with a longer wheelbase for more interior space
- Maximum range expected to be around 300 miles, with a power output of 400PS making it one of the fastest Jaguars on sale
- Twin electric motors provide four-wheel drive traction
- Prices are expected to start at around £60,000



NISSAN LEAF

Available: Spring

The second-generation Leaf has a completely new look, with styling inspired by the latest Micra, launched in 2017.

More importantly, the car will be capable of travelling greater distances between charges, with a maximum range of 235 miles on the NEDC system, compared with a best of 155 miles for the outgoing model.

The electric motor is more powerful, with 150PS and 320Nm of torque, improving acceleration compared with the current Leaf.

It will be available with new semi-autonomous driving systems, including one that allows the car to brake and accelerate in slow moving traffic without intervention from the driver.



KIA NIRO ELECTRIC

Available: Summer

Kia Niro Electric follows the launch of the hybrid in 2016 and plug-in hybrid in 2017, as the brand expands its range of electrified models, with prices likely to start at around £30,000.



AUDI E-TRON QUATTRO

Available: Late 2018

A direct rival for Tesla's Model X and Jaguar's I-Pace, the e-tron quattro will offer the practicality of an SUV shape, with an all-electric powertrain capable of travelling up to 300 miles.



MERCEDES-BENZ X-CLASS

Available: March
Nissan Navara-derived X-Class double cab successfully carries off a Mercedes-Benz look and feel, while a Mercedes-sourced V6 diesel will arrive later to complement the four-cylinder Nissan engines.

**FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM FACELIFT**

Available: Early 2018
With a subtle exterior refresh, most changes to the Transit Custom for 2018 can be found in the cabin, with new technology and a big redesign, using modules from the latest Ford Fiesta.

**FORD TRANSIT CONNECT**

Facelift available: Spring
Minor exterior changes hide a new interior and new engines, including a 1.0-litre EcoBoost turbo petrol engine, as well as a 1.5 EcoBoost Ecoblue diesel.

**FORD TRANSIT COURIER**

Facelift available: Spring
The Fiesta-based Courier will get a new-look interior, a six-speed manual, and the choice of 1.0-litre EcoBoost turbo petrol or 1.5 TDCi Ecoblue diesel engines in its 2018 revamp.



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Current model pictured

**CITROËN BERLINGO/
PEUGEOT PARTNER**

Available: Summer

By the time the new models arrive in 2018 around 10 years will have elapsed since we last had a new Berlingo and Partner model.

It will be a chance for the French pair to catch up on important safety features and technology, as well as offer improvements in payload over their predecessors, with some in this class able to carry 1,000kg.

We can expect great strides to be taken in fuel efficiency, while an electric version will most likely follow the launch of diesel and petrol variants.

Like the current versions, the Peugeot and Citroën will look almost identical.

RENAULT ALASKAN

Available: 2018

- Renault's pick-up was announced for sale in the UK at the 2017 CV show, but introduction has since been delayed with no date confirmed yet
- Shares 2.3-litre diesel engines and technology with the Nissan NP300 Navara
- Double-cab design only, with a choice of six-speed manual and seven-speed automatic transmissions
- Hill-descent control and switchable low-range 4WD mode are on offer



Current model pictured

VAUXHALL COMBO

Available: Late 2018

- New Vauxhall Combo will take the 2018 Citroën Berlingo/Peugeot Partner as its starting point, ceasing its relationship with Fiat
- Van partnership signed off before PSA takeover of Vauxhall, so expect more differentiation than just badges
- Petrol and diesel engines sourced from PSA, but also opens the possibility of an all-electric version should Vauxhall customers demand it

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7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLEET SOFTWARE

Fleet management software has many benefits
but important decisions need to be made when
selecting and implementing a package.
Catherine Chetwynd examines the subject

1 SOFTWARE CAN IMPROVE COMPLIANCE

The centralised and automated recording of the disparate elements of fleet management which software allows ensures that all management information is in one place and immediately accessible to fleet managers.

Driving licence checks, MOTs, training and more can be recorded, with automated reminders sent via text and email to ensure the information remains current.

Details such as licence validation, vehicle servicing and MOT documentation can be fed into the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) database with minimal human intervention.

Dependent on the system, the software can also provide a comprehensive and holistic record of activity, something that will become even more important with the introduction of the General

Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May.

Also, the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS), the Freight Transport Association Van Excellence scheme and DVSA Earned Recognition Scheme (being piloted), although voluntary, all raise the standards of fleet operation but increase the need to record actions that prove compliance to those standards, rendering hand-written records inadvisable and high on impracticable.

Fleet management software provides a clear, concise and automated audit of all fleet-related activity and shows companies are adopting the GDPR principles of transparency and accountability, backed by proof that they have obtained individuals' consent to use all the data they have collected.



2 SOFTWARE CAN BE TAILORED TO THE SIZE AND TYPE OF YOUR FLEET

Buying a fleet management system that handles current requirements is not enough. The package should be configurable and modular to ensure it moves with the times and your needs.

Not only may a fleet either grow or reduce in size and change in vehicle profile, but legislation and industry standards will also change and it is essential that incumbent software is able to respond without having to be replaced – neither major investment nor disruption should be necessary.

The size of fleet is not the driving factor because duty of care, risk management, safety and legislative demands are common to all, although the amount of data to be collected, processed and analysed increases with the size of the fleet.

As a result, there is technology to run a fleet of five on one platform to 5,000 vehicles spread across several companies, countries, currencies and continents.

Those with a single-digit fleet could go for entry level solutions, with a view to stepping it up as the fleet grows.

Fleet management tools should integrate seamlessly with HR, finance, payroll, external systems such as fuel and maintenance cards, electronic purchase transactions, telematics, DVLA and HMRC.

A good supplier's standard set-up should be predicated on best practice, so start with the basic and see whether it covers most of your needs, then look at what else would be useful and what it will take to provide it.

A bespoke design is not usually desirable as it is an inflexible and short-term fix, whereas a modular system is sustainable, caters for changing needs and ensures that all elements of a vehicle's lifecycle are covered, from vehicle maintenance and driving infringements to policy reviews and complaints protocol.

Upgrades should perpetuate any changes made when the programme is installed.

"Start with the basic and see whether it covers most of your needs, then look at what else would be useful and what it will take to provide it"

3 HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT SOFTWARE PACKAGE

Given the number of modules available from some suppliers, choosing the right software to run your fleet is akin to negotiating a minefield.

First and foremost, buyers should work out exactly what they need: what data do they want to collect, how and to what level it should be analysed, the processes and protocols the system should run, etc.

Document the vehicle's life from start to finish and decide how much of that should be automated – probably all of it because no factor exists in isolation and the data can be combined to give an invaluable holistic view and an audit trail.

"Beware of looking for technology that mirrors what you have: the new software should give best cost and efficiency benefits"

Then assess what you will need in three, five, seven years' time, so you are catering for cultural and technological progress.

Having done that, you will have a good idea of the scale of the task, allowing you to transmit that to potential suppliers in an RFP (request for proposal). Definition is all.

While outlining the component parts, it is worth examining what you have done to date to identify any outdated practices, so you can cater for that in the RFP.

And when you want to change what your existing programme does, beware of looking for technology that mirrors what you have: the new software should give best cost and efficiency benefits; and do not update old tender documents – your company and the market have almost certainly moved on.

Splendid isolation is also not the way forward, so consult companies that are using your preferred system and then ask to see it in situ, so you can experience it operating live.

All-round communication is crucial – talk to suppliers and glean information from them about what they have, what they are planning and how the tools have worked for their existing customers.

4 SOFTWARE CAN IMPROVE SAFETY AND DUTY OF CARE

Fleet management software can play an important role in improving employee and vehicle safety.

For example, it can be used to record daily vehicle checks to ensure they are roadworthy, as well as maintenance records.

A system can point out that a service is overdue, an MOT test is due and vehicle checks are being undertaken regularly – and all can be visible on one screen.

Managers should be able to set and prioritise alerts, so that they are informed of potential lapses in duty of care; for example, where strong enforcement is required, a fleet manager can be notified where a moving vehicle has not been inspected.

Prioritising is essential. It is easy to

become bogged down with data to the extent that the temptation is to do nothing with it, which can quickly become habit.

Less, but honed, data provides greater value.

If this is crucial for standard fleets, it is even more important for grey fleets, which are subject to the vagaries of owner subjectivity.

Anything that increases efficiency and makes it easier for employees to submit details such as vehicle insurance, VED, MOT and servicing means employers are protecting themselves legally and safeguarding their image; risk and reputation management are inseparable.

It also means they can demonstrate to customers that their fleet is safe and compliant.

5 SOFTWARE CAN REDUCE THE BURDEN OF ADMIN

Although a paperless society may still be a flight of fancy, it is an aspirational goal and anything that does away with spreadsheets tends to be more efficient.

Fleet management software collects, organises and displays information in real-time and makes it easily accessible. As fleet administration continues to intensify, this is increasingly relevant.

Apps allow mobile devices to enter the picture, ensuring drivers have little excuse for not providing the information required and allowing immediate and automatic communication directly with drivers.

It also removes the need for manual intervention unless instant action is called for.

This makes regular updating of information part of company culture and allows it to be included in contracts of employment, codes of conduct and job descriptions.

It should be possible to automate almost everything in the lifecycle of a fleet: adding, allocating and updating jobs, the clocking on and off of employees, logging and updating of vehicle defects, maintenance history and service schedules with details of work done/to be done.

In addition, paper forms can be replaced by online versions, including inspection sheets, and self-service records such as pool car availability and use, accident/incident forms, etc.

This also removes the likelihood that fragmented physical data leads to loss or duplication of information, giving a collated and accurate fleet profile that is instantly accessible to all parties.

eConsent, approved by DVSA, and eSignatures further ease the process. And if time is money, the time saved is worth a fortune.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

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 companies operate at the cutting-edge of data management, operational

best practice and compliance.

In the past decade many fleet decision-makers have woken up to the fact that hi-tech fleet management systems, such as Jaama's multi-award-winning Key2 technology, can seamlessly interact with other internal and external software to dramatically improve operating effectiveness and efficiency.

What's more, the development of smartphone apps ensures the very latest data is always available. For example, Jaama's My Vehicle App with auto-triggering means all information uploaded by drivers automatically updates their employer's Key2 system.

"The age of paper documents is over and should be confined to the waste bin"

Such technology advances mean so-called 'big data' is not imminent; it is here.

It is vital 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.

Anglian Water is one business that has recognised that industry-leading software will make running its fleet more efficient and with a swift return on investment. The utility company has described Key2 as a "game-changer" saying it is "investing in the future" and will reap efficiency and financial benefits as the technology enables the business to analyse outcomes and "understand what excellent fleet performance looks like and how we can make it even better".

With the rapid advance of technology and data it is critical that other organisations are not stuck in the fleet management software slow lane.

For further information: web – www.jaama.co.uk; email – enquiries@jaama.co.uk; telephone – 0844 8484 333.



6 SOFTWARE CAN BE REGULARLY UPDATED

Updating fleet management technology requires serious investment of time and money and should therefore bring a measurable return.

Changes in legislation, new business practices or product developments are all good reasons for doing so. Problems with the existing arrangements are also a prompt to re-assess, particularly if it does not integrate with other software smoothly or is creating more problems than it solves, requiring greater human input rather than less.

The right system should allow a fleet department to take on more work without needing to increase the number of staff.

Whether updating means starting from scratch and emerging from a deluge of paper or moving on to the next generation of technology, the task has been alleviated by the elevation of many systems to the web or cloud, making it easy to implement, scalable and compatible with most other programmes, internal and external.

Any product that pushes a company into working

differently because it cannot be adapted should be avoided, but if your existing provider undertakes ongoing product development and enhancements, upgrading should be painless.

However, keep in mind that moving information from one supplier to another may involve data reformatting – a gargantuan task if you are migrating from spreadsheet to software.

And keep an eye on the future; manufacturers will soon be putting telematics in vehicles as standard and devices will become ever smarter.

"Right system should allow a fleet department to take on more work without increasing staff"

7 WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A SUPPLIER

As with any long-term relationship, partnering with a fleet management software provider requires considerable research.

Your partners will act as your support team, one that will ensure compliance and provide automation of that compliance.

The provider should actively and continually assess your requirements, giving not just value, but added value.

Research the market so you know what is happening in software development and talk to potential providers about how their system integrates with that of the wider world such as HR, finance, payroll, etc.

For this you need an API (application programming interface). Most cloud platforms are equipped with fully enabled API, but, without it, you will be constrained to working with one company.

Financial stability of the supplier is a prerequisite, product investment a must and high standards in the areas that matter to your company such as ISO accreditation for

security, legislation compliance and DVSA compliance, for example, are essential.

Seek out an experienced account management team, take up references, talk to your peers and look for a proactive user group – there is nothing more valuable than hearing from those who have done the empirical research.

Where you consult clients of your intended supplier, see the technology in action and talk to those who are using it – both fleet managers and drivers, so you get management and coalface reviews.

When you are confident you have found a potential partner, trial your chosen system so you have hands-on experience and get feedback from those in your company who will be using it.

Do not ignore cultural differences: if your organisation is forward thinking, your supplier should be equally progressive; equally, if your company tends towards the conservative, your provider needs to think likewise.

When you first meet them, make sure those who attend a presentation to your business are also those who will be working on the account – it's important that you like and get on with them.

Although all parties hope there will not be any major problems, it is still worth knowing who you can turn to higher up the management chain, if necessary.

And just as you want to feel valued as a customer, so your supplier wants to feel valued – they are an extension of your department and should be treated as such.

"Make sure those who attend the presentation are those who will be working on the account"

Thanks to Alphabet (GB), Drive Software Solutions/Odo Drive, Chevin Fleet Solutions, Civica, FleetCheck, Jaama and Lex Autolease for input into this article

NEW EMISSION RULES?

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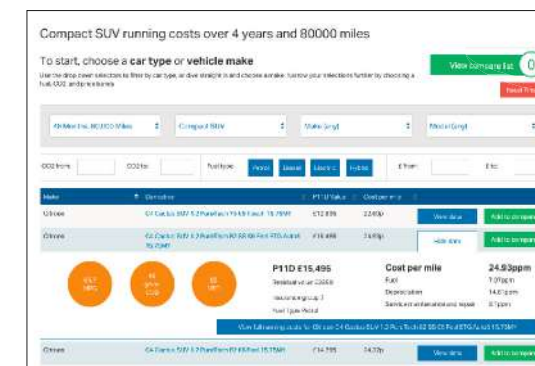
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"We pride ourselves on our levels of support. To me that is absolutely number one"

Peter Golding,
FleetCheck

WINNER: **FLEETCHECK**

FleetCheck seeks to get more personal with its customers

Company adds consultancy services to software supply as it continues to tailor fleet management solutions to client needs

By Elizabeth Howlett

The inability to perform fleet management correctly can have "massive implications" especially for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), according to FleetCheck founder Peter Golding. Having run independent garages for 15 years Golding grew to know the "spanner side of the business" well and during that time he came to realise that many of his clients were unsure of how to run their fleets correctly. "The fact of it is, if you don't do fleet management correctly, the implications are massive. The company could go bankrupt and there may even be custodial sentencing," says Golding.

Further up the scale, major companies convicted of corporate manslaughter could face fines of up to £20 million, alongside sentencing for severe breaches of health and safety, under new guidelines enforced in February 2016.

"I felt we could be doing more to help, and that was when I noticed a gap in the market for SME vehicle management software," he says.

Golding's desire to help the inexperienced fleet manager, twinned with his engineering background, led to the creation of simple and easy-to-use software. FleetCheck was launched in 2006.

A dozen years on, the company has launched Policy Manager, a service designed to help fleets remain legally compliant and avoid hefty fines.

"It creates policies for fleets to help them with compliance, but on the back of that we are launching a consultancy service – to help create a more personalised and direct approach," says Golding.

It was FleetCheck's dedication to the industry that won over the *Fleet News* judges alongside its flexibility with product offerings and focus on legal compliance.

Making user-friendly software was key for Golding as he encountered inexperienced fleet managers predominantly using spreadsheets to manage their vehicles.

"Companies were reliant on spreadsheets. The majority were not using a fleet management system but had it all on multiple spreadsheets. While they are essential for financial control, they are not for fleet management," he says.

FleetCheck's focus on the industry is unwavering and

its innovations will continue to be led by its clients and whatever the industry needs. As Golding explains: "Currently, 80% of our functionality comes from our users. Our clients have continuously inspired our offerings. We will continue to be inspired by them."

The service has since expanded to accommodate fleet management of all sizes and not just sub-200, thanks to a partnership with TomTom Telematics that started in 2007.

Fleet News: Is it challenging to transition companies reliant on spreadsheets to a fleet management system?

Peter Golding: What we found is that change is always a problem, especially when companies are reliant on spreadsheets. The majority of companies we come across are not using a fleet management system, but have it all on multiple spreadsheets.

FleetCheck runs on exception management and will tell the user what needs to be done, rather than what has been done.

Training is all performed online and takes no longer than an hour. We transition a company from spreadsheets onto a database, which is designed as a stepping stone.

After the training, businesses' fear of change is eliminated as FleetCheck's traffic light notification system is simple to follow. It was designed specifically to diminish fear.

FN: FleetCheck does not offer on-site training or webinar-based learning, why?

PG: We pride ourselves on our levels of support. To me that is absolutely number one. We try to make the training as personal as we can, because everyone learns at different levels.

The problem with webinars is that people are only watching and listening – whereas if they call us or do online training, they are learning by doing.

My views are simple: if the only way we can demonstrate the software is via webinar then it is too complex.

If we have to do on-site training, workshops and training sessions then we have lost what we are trying to do, which is to create something people can pick up easily.

We combine that level of learning with support, because if you are dealing with someone whose main responsibility is not fleet management, then they often need guidance.

We spend a lot of time supporting clients through areas where they may need that extra bit of guidance.



FleetCheck managing director Peter Golding holds the award surrounded by members of his team

FN: Does FleetCheck have the ability to integrate data from other sources?

PG: Thanks to our many telematics partners, FleetCheck can pull all of that data through. Mileage information is particularly powerful to us.

We have also integrated with every fuel card provider in the UK. We combine fuel usage with vehicle mileage, so we can provide meaningful mpg analysis.

We launched a walk-around driver app earlier this year as part of the FleetCheck service, which also integrates the data it collates.

FN: How does the app differ from other free products on the market?

PG: Drivers are able to carry out vehicle inspections, record any defects and instantly notify the software.

If a defect is found, the driver can photograph the damage and that picture will be sent to the fleet manager. From there they can identify if the vehicle needs to be taken off the road or taken for a routine check. The app relays information back to the office and closes the loop.

Combining a walk-around inspection tool with a fleet management software platform is the single most powerful thing. Walk-around apps without fleet management software integration are good, but if that data doesn't get fed into the system then it is simply replacing a piece of paper with an email.

With the ability to integrate data from telematics, fuel and maintenance providers, FleetCheck has now become an all-encompassing solution.

FN: What separates FleetCheck from its competitors?

PG: I never like to talk about my competitors. I prefer people to focus on us and I think in the industry we are in, it is far nicer for us all to get on.

When comparing us to Jaama or Civica, for example, I would say we all do something different.

FleetCheck clearly has a specialism within the SME sector as that is the foundation of the business. As we evolved into larger fleets we provided more bespoke work.

Our USP is the fact the system was designed to be intuitive and an easy transition from spreadsheets, especially with our traffic light notification system.

It is much easier to take something simple to use and make it more complicated, but harder to do the reverse and make something that is complex simple to use.

People choose us because they like us.

FN: Will FleetCheck ever diversify its product offering into other management systems?

PG: We don't diversify in the fleet market. We have had many opportunities to do this but our focus is to concentrate on the fleet management aspect.

If someone was looking for a back office management system to manage rental vehicles, invoicing or a workshop management system, then, in fairness, we would encourage them to look at the market. If we started to digress into those areas we would dilute our product offering.

FN: What did winning the award mean to you?

PG: I am really proud of the award. We didn't expect to win and it came as quite a shock. To get recognition from the industry we serve was important to us.

For me it was the result of 10 years' hard work, and to win it was very gratifying.

We have so many people that have worked extraordinarily hard. To go back and present the award to my team and see their joy at being recognised by our peers was brilliant.

FleetCheck is developing its future offerings with a focus on artificial intelligence and managing electric vehicle (EV) data.

"We are looking at how artificial intelligence can benefit the app, for example, developments in number plate recognition, driver ID and policy documentations," explains Golding. "We are well aware of industry changes and EVs are a big interest to us."

It also hopes to innovate support for automated MOT alerts and road tax alerts, alongside a vehicle maintenance scheme with Epyx.

Golding adds: "The scheme is targeted at companies who don't have vehicles in a maintenance agreement with a lease provider. We will be able, through Epyx, to give access to a national network of garages with the best prices possible.

"Ultimately, we will continue to be led by clients and by what the industry points out."

FACTFILE

Organisation FleetCheck
Managing director Peter Golding
Customer retention record 98.6%
Telematics partners TomTom, Quartix, Teletack Navman, Matrix, C-Track

JUDGES' COMMENTS

FleetCheck's senior management team understands the needs of its fleet customers and reacts to requests. Its fleet compliance portal was borne out of a need for legal help, particularly among SMEs. FleetCheck proactively contacts customers it believes need additional training or support.

D4 R-DESIGN PRO

VOLVO XC40

Hi-tech and high spec, Volvo newcomer is a true premium SUV contender



By Simon Harris

Volvo cars became affectionately immortalised in the 1990 film *Crazy People* where Dudley Moore's weary advertising executive began his own campaigns telling it like it is.

In it, the proposed campaign for Volvo had the tagline 'Buy Volvos – they're boxy, but they're good', and also pointed out in the text below the pictured 760 saloon that they were safe (as opposed to sexy!).

I was reminded of the film when I saw Volvo's newest model, the XC40 SUV. A compact SUV for North American customers (although we might refer to it as a family car-sized 'medium'), with its upright stance and right angles around the rear bodywork, it's definitely the 'boxiest' Volvo for years.

Although the analogy is perhaps a little unfair, as the early 1990s Volvos were all sharp edges, while the XC40 has curved edges.

75%
of XC40s sold are expected to be diesel powered



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

Volvo says the XC40 completes its SUV line-up (following the introduction of the latest XC90 and XC60), and is an SUV rather than a crossover, with ground clearance of 211mm and a wading depth of 450mm.

Volvo's transformation under the stewardship of giant Chinese car manufacturer Geely continues, and while the latest generation of cars launched to date have used the company's SPA (scalable product architecture), the XC40 is based on a new compact platform developed jointly with Geely that will also form the basis of the next V40.

The latest generation of Volvos are viewed internally as premium products and are priced as such. Residual value forecasts suggest that the market agrees.

The XC40 is no exception, with predictions placing it ahead of the Audi Q3 and BMW X1, although not enough to beat the UK market's obsession with anything wearing a Jaguar or Land Rover badge (see our comparison).

Premium price tags it may have, but the XC40 certainly isn't short of equipment as standard. Its entry-level Momentum models come with LED headlights and T-shaped LED daytime running lights, a nine-inch centre touchscreen with sat-nav including real-time traffic information and lifetime updates, autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian, cyclist and large animal detection, oncoming lane mitigation (which can help steer away from oncoming traffic on a collision course), 18-inch alloy wheels, rear parking assistance and a digital dashboard.

R-Design models add a contrasting black roof and door mirror surrounds, part leather upholstery, aluminium trim inlays, sports chassis, perforated leather steering wheel and gearknob, and colour-changing interior lighting.

Inscription versions add leather-faced seats, driftwood trim inlays and electrically adjustable driver's seat.

Each equipment grade is available with a Pro upgrade that adds a cluster of popular options. Momentum Pro has heated front seats, heated washer jets with headlamp



R-design model has a contrasting black roof and door mirrors

"With its upright stance and right angles around the rear bodywork, it's definitely the 'boxiest' Volvo for years"

cleaning, active bending headlights, heated windscreen and LED front foglights with cornering function.

R-Design Pro sees alloy wheel size upgraded to 20 inches, while Inscription Pro has 19-inch alloys and electrically adjustable passenger seat.

On the launch event, we were able to drive 190PS D4 diesel variants and 245PS T5 petrol, both equipped with 2.0-litre engines, eight-speed automatic gearboxes and all-wheel drive. Less powerful variants will follow, with a 150PS front-wheel drive D3 diesel expected to be the best-selling version in the UK.

Volvo UK expects around 75% of XC40s sold to be diesel versions, despite recent tax increases.

The engines are familiar to us from other Volvo models, and the D4 seems well suited to the XC40. Smooth and refined, and with enough pulling power to haul the car to 62mph from rest in less than eight seconds, the diesel provides effortless performance.

Fuel economy of 56.5mpg in NEDC figures are tempered with a WLTP range of a more realistic 39.8-44.1mpg, although the CO₂ emissions of 133mpg are pretty good for such a potent engine in a four-wheel drive car with automatic transmission.

Our test vehicles were fitted with optional 19-inch alloy wheels for the D4, and 20 inches for the T5 (with the maximum available on the XC40 an astonishing 21 inches). Ride comfort was pretty good, with most harshness from poor roads eliminated before being felt in the well-insulated and roomy cabin, which bodes well for cars specified with the standard 18-inch wheels.

The XC40 is an attractive package for so many reasons. With an abundance of safety and assistance technology as standard, a cool and smart design, and relatively low running costs, it should strengthen Volvo's credentials as a true premium alternative to Jaguar, Land Rover and the German brands.

COSTS

P11D price	£36,300
BIK tax band (2017/18)	28%
Annual BIK tax (20%/40%)	£2,033/£4,066
Class 1A NIC	£1,403
Annual VED	£200 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£12,700/35%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.71
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	45.59ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	190/295
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	133
Top speed (mph)	130
0-62mph (sec)	7.9
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	56.5 (39.8-44.1)*

KEY RIVAL

Jaguar E-Pace D180 AWD R-Dynamic S auto	
P11D price:	£38,645
BIK tax band (2016/17)	??%
Annual BIK tax (20%/40%)	£2,396/£4,792
Class 1A NIC	£1,653
Annual VED	£200 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£14,475/37%
Fuel cost (ppm)	10.88
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	46.66ppm

*WLTP combined low to high Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)



Even the entry-level XC40 has a nine-inch touchscreen

THINKING CAP



By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

cap hpi

Another new year, oh how they pass. It will soon be time for Fleet News Awards judging down in Peterborough and, before you can say Easter, it will be the awards event itself in London. I'm sure it will be full to capacity and there will be many happy – and some not so happy – people, but that's the nature of awards.

Looking back at the final part of 2017, I went to Valencia for the PSA International B2B Conference and test drive. The event was for two groups spread over three days. The company invited fleet managers, rental companies and leasing and contract hire companies.

We gleaned many interesting facts including: PSA plus GM (Opel/Vauxhall) will give them a 17% market share in Europe. PSA sales in Europe are strong, but sales in China are down 42%, simply because they have the wrong products there. By 2020, 50% of vehicles will be low emission, rising to 80% by 2023, many being 'part-electric'.

"DS said there will be a new model introduced each year for next seven years"

The number of B2B centres across Europe is rising, giving better coverage for fleet-specific customers. There will be a plug-In Citroën C5 Aircross.

The departure was announced of the Citroën C4 hatch, to be replaced by the new C4 Cactus, which has new suspension and more comfortable seats.

Then it was the turn of DS. It said there will be a new model introduced each year for the next seven years, including the DS 7, which is due in the UK, any time soon.

Peugeot is certainly having a good time, especially with the brilliant new 3008. It confirmed there will be a electric-powered 208 when the new model is launched – no dates though.

Then we got chance to drive some pre-production DS 7 Crossbacks in the sun around Valencia. The quality is of a high standard and it is loaded with high-tech kit.

A good, well organised fleet event.

2.0 BLUEHDI 180 AUTO PERFORMANCE LINE

DS 7 CROSSBACK

First new model post-Citroën separation takes fight to premium rivals

By Simon Harris

It's just over three years since PSA management decided to separate DS models from the Citroën line-up and attempt to create a stand-alone luxury automotive brand.

During that time, the DS 3, DS 4 and DS 5, all conceived under Citroën, have been revised to give them more of a separate identity, but the DS 7 Crossback, due in the UK from February, is the first new model developed since the brand's launch.

DS 3 aside, which although a relatively strong volume model is now in the twilight months of its current life-cycle, the DS 7 Crossback certainly has the potential to make DS Automobiles more visible in the UK and among company car drivers.

Priced as a premium C-sector SUV, with a presentation slide of rivals at our press conference showing the Audi Q3, BMW X1, Jaguar E-Pace, Range Rover Evoque and Volvo XC40 as rivals, the DS 7 Crossback is larger than most of its competitors, offering more space and improved passenger comfort.

Developed from the same platform as the Peugeot 3008 and 5008, the DS 7 has a slightly longer wheelbase than the seven-seat Peugeot and a number of unique features that befit its upmarket status, such as the availability of an active suspension system to smooth out bumps or potholes in the road.

The DS 7 Crossback range will launch with 180 PS 2.0-litre Blue HDi diesel automatic versions in February, with 225PS turbocharged 1.6-litre auto petrol versions and a manual 130PS 1.6 Blue HDi to follow in March.

There will be a range-topping plug-in hybrid launched in the second half of 2019, using front and rear electric motors, giving the car four-wheel drive capability, and an expected total power output of around 300PS.

For now, the entry level Elegance grade is only available with the 130PS diesel, and gives the range its £27,995 P11D value start point.

Elegance features 18-inch alloy wheels, autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, speed limit recognition, rear parking sensors, eight-inch touchscreen with Mirror Screen and Android Auto and Apple CarPlay functionality, dual-zone climate control, two rear Isofix mounting points and a space-saver spare wheel.

The Performance Line grade adds unique styling features and larger alloy wheels, adaptive LED headlights, rear side and curtain airbags, a 12-inch HD touchscreen and 12.3-inch digital instrument display.

"The DS 7 Crossback has many of the right ingredients to succeed, but UK market will be a tough one to crack"

Alcantara dashboard, door and centre console upholstery, sat-nav, voice recognition and the option of DS Active Scan Suspension (priced at £1,000).

Prestige has a standard pack of advanced safety features, heated front seats with a massage function and electric adjustment, electrically adjustable and folding rear seats, two-position boot floor, wireless smartphone charging, and standard Active Scan Suspension on BlueHdi 180 and Puretech 225 models.

Ultra Prestige is the range-topping grade, and comes with 20-inch alloys, panoramic opening glass sunroof, remote tailgate opening, keyless entry and start, laminated side windows, upgraded audio, adaptive cruise control with 'stop and go' function for traffic and park pilot on eight-speed auto versions, with park assist on other transmissions.

Active Scan Suspension uses a camera to monitor the road ahead and prime the suspension to absorb bumps or potholes ahead and minimise cabin discomfort.

It only works when the 'comfort' drive mode is selected, as DS says the benefit in the car's default 'normal' mode is offset by a greater degree of body roll when cornering.

It does appear to work, however, and even when not in 'comfort', the DS 7's ride is rather more compliant and comfortable than a Q3 or X1.

Night vision, with enhanced images displayed on the digital dashboard, is also one of the high-tech features available on the DS 7.

We spent most time in the BlueHdi 180 (there were no BlueHdi 130 models available on the event), and it

seems to suit the car well, with ample performance and excellent comfort most of the time.

It's a little disappointing that the ride, although comfortable most of the time regardless of driving mode, remains a little fidgety at higher speeds.

The interior design is trying to create its own identity, with substantial window switches on the centre console and angular dials on the digital instrument panel.

Not sure it works entirely well, but the DS 7 Crossback certainly couldn't be mistaken for something else.

France has a long history of luxury brands, in automotive and in other sectors.

The DS 7 Crossback has many of the right ingredients to succeed, but the UK market, with its well established hierarchy of premium brands, will prove a tough one to crack.



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



The interior design is trying to create its own identity



The DS 7 Crossback is larger than many of its competitors

COSTS

P11D price	£36,280
BIK tax band (2016/17)	27%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,959/£3,109
Class 1A NIC	£1,352
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£10,650 /29%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.72
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	46.92ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	180/295
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	128
Top speed (mph)	134
0-62mph (sec)	9.9
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	57.6

KEY RIVAL

Jaguar E-Pace 2.0 180 AWD	
R-Dynamic S auto	
P11D price	£38,645
BIK tax band (2016/17)	31%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£2,396/£4,792
Class 1A NIC	£1,653
Annual VED	£200 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£14,325/37%
Fuel cost (ppm)	11.11
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	47.08ppm

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

1.0 TSI DESIGN

VOLKSWAGEN T-ROC

VW newcomer is a rational choice in the increasingly crowded SUV market



Unique design 17-inch alloys and a contrasting roof colour help distinguish the Design trim from the SE

By Simon Harris

It could be contended that the Volkswagen T-Roc shows in microcosm how consumer tastes and expectations for cars have developed in the past decade or so.

Volkswagen's latest SUV borrows some of the letters of its name from the discontinued Scirocco coupé and takes the Scirocco's place at Volkswagen's plant in Palmela, Portugal.

The T-Roc is likely to sell many more per year than the Scirocco and two-door coupés count among several sectors of the car market that have ceded ground and share to SUVs and crossovers.

The T-Roc sits below the Touareg (with a new model due later this year), seven-seat Tiguan Allspace and five-seat Tiguan in the line-up, with room beneath it for the forthcoming Volkswagen T-Cross.

It arrives in a growing sector, which was arguably defined by the Nissan Juke in 2010, and has recent new arrivals with the Citroën C3 Aircross, Hyundai Kona, Kia Stonic and Seat Arona.

We sampled some high-end versions late last year, but the first UK driving opportunity allowed us to try the more popular 1.0 TSI version, although the 1.6 TDI, likely to be the most popular variant among businesses, is still some months away.

The three-cylinder engine develops 115PS and has CO₂ emissions of 117g/km, which will appeal to low-mileage company car drivers as it avoids the diesel supplement on benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax as well as the P11D price premium. The perky engine's 148Nm of torque at 2,000rpm gives it a diesel-like feel in the mid-range.

The T-Roc's solid and purposeful exterior design lends itself well to the current 'born confident' TV advertising campaign, while inside looks smart and high quality.

The Design equipment grade comes with colour-coordinated trim inserts, that make it feel more fun than the other versions. But, while everything looks like it belongs in an upmarket car, the dashboard and doors don't have soft-touch materials on the upper elements, where you might

COSTS

P11D price	£20,910
BIK tax band (2016/17)	22%
Annual BIK tax (20%/40%)	£920/£1,840
Class 1A NIC	£635
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£6,425/31%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.9
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	31.11ppm

SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	115/148
CO₂ emissions (g/km)	117
Top speed (mph)	116
0-62mph (sec)	10.1
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	55.4

KEY RIVAL

Hyundai Kona 1.0 T-GDI Premium	
P11D price	£18,580
BIK tax band (2016/17)	24%
Annual BIK tax (20%/40%)	£892/£1,684
Class 1A NIC	£615
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£5,600/30%
Fuel cost (ppm)	10.49
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	31.31ppm
<i>Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)</i>	



Interior is smart and high quality but the dashboard lacks soft-touch materials

have expected to find them elsewhere in the Volkswagen range.

It's based on the SE, and includes cloth seats with height adjustment for front seats, split folding rear seats, two USB charging sockets, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto functionality, electrically folding door mirrors, adaptive cruise control with autonomous emergency braking and front and rear parking sensors.

Extra features that distinguish the Design from SE are a unique-look 17-inch alloy wheels, contrasting roof colour, rear privacy glass, alternative bumper design and a driver fatigue alert.

The T-Roc is roomier than a typical small car, and provides a good degree of comfort boosted by the high-riding cabin. There's a good combination of comfort and driving pleasure, as the T-Roc offers user-friendliness around town and agility on high-speed roads away from urban sprawls.

The T-Roc offers strong user-chooser appeal for drivers in this category because of the brand perception, but its attractiveness has greater depth than badge alone, and highly competitive running costs should also make it a rational choice.

2.2 JTDM 180 SPECIALE

ALFA ROMEO GIULIA

Giulia makes premium rivals sit up and take notice



Beauty of the Giulia is much more than skin deep

By Matt de Prez

Alfa Romeo hasn't had a particularly successful decade with both retail and fleet sales slipping significantly behind rivals – yet it remains a highly respected marque with a loyal following.

Last year, the Italian brand decided to throw everything it had at a new model offensive and the Giulia was the first vehicle to demonstrate the new approach.

What the company has managed to achieve since in a short period of time is little short of astonishing. Utilising its motorsport heritage and strength for creating beautiful vehicles, the Giulia is, simply, a masterpiece.

And this time, the beauty is more than skin-deep.

Alfa's new rear-wheel-drive platform is complemented by an entirely new suite of engines and an eight-speed automatic transmission.

It's common practice for manufacturers to turn up the knobs on their executive saloons to create 'halo' models such as BMW's M3. Alfa chose to do things the other way around, creating the Nurburgring-dominating Quadrifoglio version first, then reverse engineering it to produce the standard car.

As a result the Giulia is light and nimble. It offers better driver engagement than anything else in its class – yet manages to deliver the numbers when it comes to efficiency and running costs.

Our test car is the 2.2-litre JTDM in range-topping Speciale trim. It is comparable to a BMW 320d M Sport or Audi A4 S Line, with a list price of £35,000.

The engine develops 180PS and emits 109g/km of CO₂,



The start button is mounted on the steering wheel

"Giulia offers better driver engagement than anything else in its class – yet manages to deliver the numbers"

which is low compared to direct rivals. A driver should expect to pay around £135 per month in benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax for this model.

It's not the quietest diesel unit around but it is hushed on the move and delivers strong performance, sprinting to 60mph in 7.1 seconds.

Official combined fuel economy is rated at 67.3mpg – putting it on par with rivals. During our test we found the figure to be closer to 50mpg.

Standard equipment is generous and includes sat-nav, keyless start, xenon headlights, parking sensors and electrically adjustable, heated leather seats.

Safety is a key attribute, too. The new Integrated Brake System provides immediate brake response. As a result the Giulia can stop from 62mph in just 38.5 metres.

Autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian detection, forward collision warning and lane departure warning are also included, helping the car to gain the five-star Euro NCap rating. A score of 98% for adult occupancy protection was the highest result ever achieved for a passenger car at the time of testing.

Inside the cabin, the Giulia offers a driving position more akin to a supercar than a diesel saloon and sets the standard for the sector. The seat is mounted low and the pedals deep in the footwell giving a real sense that you are sitting in the car, rather than on it.

Adding to the theatre is a Ferrari-style steering wheel mounted start button, while optional (£250) aluminium gear shift paddles complete the experience.

Its overall interior quality doesn't quite match the Germans and the sat-nav is less impressive than the latest BMW and Audi systems, but there is plenty of space for passengers and a reasonable sized boot.

Strong residuals help to minimise running costs although service, maintenance and repair costs are higher than average for the sector.

THE RIVALS

- Audi A4 2.0TDi 190 S Line Auto
- BMW 320d M Sport Auto
- Jaguar XE 2.0d 180 R Sport Auto

P11D PRICE

XE	£35,070
Giulia	£35,320
3 Series	£35,395
A4	£35,925

BIK TAX AND CO₂

A4	109g/km
Giulia	109g/km
XE	111g/km
3 Series	116g/km

MPG AND FUEL COSTS

A4	67.3/8.32ppm
Giulia	67.3/8.32ppm
XE	67.3/8.32ppm
3 Series	64.2/8.72ppm

DEPRECIATION

XE	31.18ppm
Giulia	32.59ppm
3 Series	32.62ppm
A4	32.63ppm

SMR

XE	4.79ppm
3 Series	4.84ppm
A4	5.66ppm
Giulia	6.82ppm

RUNNING COSTS

XE	44.29ppm
3 Series	46.18ppm
A4	46.91ppm
Giulia	47.73ppm

VERDICT

Winner: Jaguar XE

Our comparison shows the Giulia is serious contender in the fleet market. In our closely fought comparison it takes joint-first or second in almost every category. The Jaguar XE takes the lead thanks to its impressive SMR costs.

Running cost: KeeResources (4yr/80k)

JAGUAR XF 2.0
PORTFOLIO 180

Rear-wheel drive cars and icy or snowy conditions generally don't mix well. Front-wheel or four-wheel drive vehicles offer much better traction on slippery roads.

This is, of course, because front-wheel drive cars tend to have the weight of the engine above the driven wheels, keeping them firmly planted on the ground.

Rear-wheel drive cars usually have an empty boot above the driven wheels, meaning they struggle for traction much more than their front-wheel drive counterparts.

The XF has a front-engined, rear-wheel drive configuration. But it has incorporated technology to minimise the risk of losing grip in slippery conditions. One of its four driving modes is 'rain/ice/snow'.

This setting automatically dampens acceleration and applies more gradual traction for slippery conditions.

This makes the car's throttle response feel sluggish compared to when the car is in 'normal' mode, but also makes it less likely the wheels will lose traction.

On the few occasions I've switched to this mode in slippery conditions, traction has definitely improved.

The XF is well equipped for cold weather motoring in a number of other ways.

It is fitted with a heated front windscreen which makes de-icing the car an easy and quick task, while the heated rear windscreen automatically comes on with the ignition when the outside temperature drops below a certain level.

Our test model is fitted with some pretty effective heated front seats. They are fiddly to operate as you have to use the infotainment system's touchscreen to switch them on and off as well as adjust the heat setting.

It also takes a couple of minutes before you feel the heat coming through, but when it does, it is fierce, even on the lowest setting.

It doesn't take long until I have to switch the heater off before it becomes uncomfortably hot. However, it does have a hidden benefit: the heated passenger seat is ideal for keeping food warm on the way home from the takeaway!

Andrew Ryan

FIRST
TEST

Back in business –
this 1.6-litre diesel
has impressed

RENAULT KOLEOS 1.6D SIGNATURE NAV

Born-again Koleos completes maker's SUV hat-trick

COSTS

P11D price	£30,085
BIK tax band	27%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,625
Class 1A NIC	£1,121
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,325
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.73
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (ppm)	41.87

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,598
Power (PS)	130
Torque (Nm)	320
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	128
Manufacturer mpg	57.6
Real-world mpg*	50.3
Test mpg	47.8
Max speed (mph)	115
0-62mph (sec)	11.4
Current mileage	2,900

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

TEST TIMELINE



End

By Gareth Roberts

Almost eight years after Renault pulled the plug on the first generation Koleos due to poor sales, it is back as the manufacturer's flagship SUV.

The Koleos completes Renault's three-strong SUV line-up with the smaller Kadjar and Captur, launched in 2013 and 2015 respectively, already securing a firm foothold in the market.

The all-new Koleos meanwhile, faces a tough challenge as it goes toe-to-toe with class leaders such as the Škoda Kodiaq and Nissan X-Trail.

It is offered in a six version line-up based on two trim levels – Dynamique S Nav and Signature Nav. There is a 1.6-litre dCi 130 engine available on both trim levels, with a six-speed manual transmission and two-wheel drive, while the 2.0-litre dCi 175 engine is available with either a six-speed manual or seven-speed auto transmission – both with four-wheel drive.

Our model on long-term test is the two-wheel drive, 1.6-litre diesel Signature Nav, delivering a claimed 57.6mpg with emissions of 128g/km, which puts it in 27% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band for 2017/18.

The four-wheel drive 2.0-litre

diesel returns 148g/km and 50.4mpg as a six-speed manual; 156g/km and 47.9mpg in Auto X-Tronic.

In terms of spec, the Dynamique S is well-equipped, with front and rear parking sensors, a rear-view camera and blind spot monitoring.

It also comes with a seven-inch touchscreen, with a larger, tablet-style 8.7-inch screen on the range-topping Signature Nav.

Every version gets Tom Tom live-traffic sat-nav, a digital radio and Bluetooth, as well as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone mirroring. This lets you operate selected apps from your phone via the main screen.

On the road, the light steering means the Koleos feels fairly nimble around town, but sure-footed and firm on the motorway.

However, change direction quickly and you will get a degree of body lean which can make the car feel awkward.

As you expect for a D segment SUV, the Koleos has huge boot capacity – some 579 litres rising to 1,795 litres with rear seats folded.

Overall, the Koleos has impressed during its first few weeks on the *Fleet News* fleet and will give those looking a large SUV food for thought.

"All-new Koleos faces a tough challenge as it goes toe-to-toe with class leaders"

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA GRAND SPORT

1.6D ECOTECH SRI VX LINE NAV

Eyes front! Insignia's head-up display is no distraction



The Insignia Grand Sport
packs in the safety features

COSTS

P11D price	£26,125
BIK tax band	24%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,092
Class 1A NIC	£753
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£6,875
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.17
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (ppm)	31.93

SPEC

Engine (cc)	1,600
Power (PS)	136
Torque (Nm)	320
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	114
Manufacturer mpg	65.7
Real-world mpg*	47.9
Test mpg	53
Max speed (mph)	131
0-62mph (sec)	9.9
Current mileage	4,036

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

By Luke Neal

Our Insignia is equipped with a head-up display (£290) which is optional on all Insignia Nav models with the exception of the Design trim level.

It's the first long-term vehicle I've driven that is fitted with one.

As you are probably aware, a head-up display (sometimes known as HUD) presents data without requiring users to take their eyes off the road. It was developed for military aviation so pilot's eyes do not need to refocus to view the outside after looking at the in-cockpit instruments.

The Vauxhall display shows current speed, rpm, gear change indicator and collision warning but will also display turn-by-turn directions when navigation is in use. It feels like an important safety addition, keeping drivers' eyes facing forward.

Previously I've often wondered whether a head-up display is just an annoyance or distraction.

Not so. In fact, quite the opposite,

I find I rarely even notice the head-up display and, instead, look to the car's conventional speedometer and navigation screen for information.

However, a colleague has recently commented on how useful he finds the head-up display. Whether it's an important addition for business drivers may well be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Another important safety system included on our car is lane departure warning with lane assist.

It comes as part of Driving Assistance Pack One which also includes:

- Forward collision alert with automatic city emergency braking
- Following distance indicator
- Traffic sign recognition

Lane departure is an impressive system which keeps the car between the white lines should you need it. If you change lanes, without indicating, the system will fight to keep you within your lane until you have crossed the white lines.

It can be switched off by a dash-mounted button or overridden when the indicator is used.

FORD S-MAX 2.0
TDCI 150 TITANIUM
AWD

A brief trip abroad allowed me to sample some of the convenience features the S-Max is available with.

It has been mentioned before that the headlights are all-LED adaptive units with 'glare-free' main beam. They are supremely effective, and with the main beam set on automatic, I haven't had any angry flashes from the headlights of oncoming vehicles.

An additional feature within the settings means they can be adapted for right-hand traffic, so avoiding the normal left-side bias of our cars unintentionally dazzling other road users abroad.

It means that while you need to carry all the necessary extra equipment for overseas travel, there's no need to mess about with headlight deflector stickers – which would be more difficult to work with on LED headlights as they generate no heat.

After boarding the DFDS Seaways ferry at Dover for Calais and parking up, I set up the headlights for driving on the right.

It was also a good opportunity to test the unstressed high-speed fuel economy as a mainly motorway route for two-and-a-half hours beckoned on the other side of the channel along roads that remained more or less flat.

The S-Max did creep closer to the official combined figure of 52.3mpg, ending the outward leg of the trip at 48.5mpg according to the trip computer.

It didn't quite fare so well on the return leg, with the displayed average slipping down to 46mpg by the time it arrived at Dunkirk ferry terminal, and with long uphill stretches along the A2 from Dover; the calculated average fuel consumption on refuelling was a disappointing 41.1mpg.

However, the S-Max proved an ideal companion for international travel, with plenty of space, ample pace for long-legged motorway travel, and excellent comfort and refinement – with laminated side glass helping insulate the interior from the outside world.

Simon Harris

TEST TIMELINE



AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET



BMW 5 Series



Mazda 6



Škoda Octavia

VICKY BROWN

FLEET AND COMPLIANCE MANAGER AT BLAKEDALE LTD

From administrator to fleet and compliance manager, Brown has risen through the ranks of the family company she joined a decade ago. In her spare time she works as a TV extra

My hobbies and interests are acting. I really enjoy working as a TV extra in my spare time. It's something completely different to what I do day to day, with the bonus of meeting some really interesting characters. I have managed to appear in popular soaps, dramas and even a Hollywood film.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self would be to learn from the mistakes you will make, and never think you are not good enough to achieve whatever you want in life.

The most pivotal moment in my life would have to be meeting my husband. I truly believe he has helped me grow into the person I am today.

The three vehicles I would like in my garage are a Ford Mustang, Bugatti Veyron and a McLaren P1.

My first memory associated with a car was a painful one. By the age of 16, I had been in two car accidents and run over by a car. So my memory of them is that cars can really hurt!

I want to be remembered as someone who has always been willing to go the extra mile for the best possible outcome.

If I were Prime Minister for the day I would get more help for lower income families who are struggling.

My favourite film is *Gladiator* but unfortunately I do not have a book to recommend.

My pet hates are bullies and Sunday drivers.

First fleet role My first fleet role was with my current company – Blakedale – some 10 years ago. I joined as an administrator to a fleet of 22 vehicles. Every day is completely different. I think variety is what has kept me interested and I enjoy problem solving. I really enjoy working for a family business and over the years I have come to feel part of that family.

Career goals at Blakedale My goal is to see the company grow and expand successfully. Ensuring the company has as many USPs as possible to ensure we are first choice in our field. Quality and customer service is key and I hope that is what will keep customers coming back to us.

Biggest achievement in business My biggest achievement so far is moving up the ranks to the position of fleet and compliance manager.

Biggest career influence I have had the benefit of working for a business savvy and strong MD (Carmen Bowley) who has helped me professionally and personally throughout the past 10 years.

Biggest mistake in business The most valuable lesson I have learned is to delegate and surround myself with a strong team.

Leadership style I ensure my team members are harmonious and aligned with the business needs, both current and future. I encourage team social activities to create a good, cohesive unit. I like to think I am fair and encouraging.

If I wasn't in fleet Due to my inquisitive nature, had I had the opportunity to follow a different career, I would have worked for the intelligence services.

Childhood ambition My childhood ambition was to be a singer or actress. From an early age I proved myself to be quite the performer and enjoyed keeping my family and friends entertained.

Next issue: John Mason, MD and owner of i247 Group



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