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IGNITION

ELECTRIC FLEET

COMMERCIAL FLEET

Two-thirds of fleets say 2030 ban on ICE vehicle sales is too soon

Inadequate charging infrastructure and limited range are biggest barriers to EV adoption

By Gareth Roberts

Almost two-thirds of fleets believe implementing a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 is too soon, research suggests.

The Government had previously said it would end the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and vans by 2040.

However, in announcing a 10-point plan to tackle climate change, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed the Government was bringing forward the ICE ban by 10 years (fleetnews.co.uk, November 18).

A *Fleet News* survey completed by more than 600 fleet decision-makers showed that fewer than a third (29%) agreed with the implementation date for cars.

One-in-five fleets (21%) would have preferred the ban for cars to be introduced from 2035, with a similar number (22%) suggesting a start date of 2040 – the original date chosen by the Government.

BAN TOO EARLY

One-in-10 fleets (11%) believes 2040 was still too early, favouring 2045, while one-in-20 (6%) wanted the ban on the sale of new ICE cars to start five years earlier, from 2025.

The online survey, which ran from November 24 to December 2, found an even greater proportion of fleet decision-makers were unhappy with new diesel and petrol vans also being banned from sale, from 2030.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents said 2030 is too early to ban new petrol and diesel vans, with just one-in-five fleets (21%) agreeing with the Government's new start date.

A ban on the sale of new ICE vans from 2035 was preferred by one-in-four fleets (24%), while a similar number (25%) opted for 2040.

One-in-20 respondents (5%) would have been even more ambitious than the Government, choosing a start date of 2025, instead.

The UK Electric Fleets Coalition, run by the Climate Group in partnership with BT Group, has been calling on the UK Government to set a 2030 target for 100% electric vehicle (EV) sales.

The coalition, which includes five of the UK's six biggest business fleets (Royal Mail, BT Group, Centrica, SSE and DPD) among its 29 members and collectively runs half a million vehicles on UK roads, welcomed the Government decision.

Helen Clarkson, CEO of the Climate Group, said: "This is what UK businesses are committed to and calling for through the UK Electric Fleets Coalition."

However, Gerry Keaney, chief executive of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), labelled 2030 as an "extremely aggressive phase-out target".

He explained: "Many fleet operators are unable to source appropriate electric vehicles for their needs, while others have a business model that struggles to absorb the additional cost and charging constraints of running EVs."

ZERO EMISSION MILES

Hybrid cars and vans, which can drive a "significant distance with no carbon coming out of the tailpipe", will be banned from 2035.

The overwhelming majority of fleets (80%) agreed with the Government not implementing the ban on the sale of new hybrids at the same time as that for ICE vehicles. Just one-in-five (20%) would have preferred the ban implemented at the same time.

Natasha Robinson, head of the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), said: "From 2035, all new cars and vans will need to be fully zero emission at the tailpipe and between 2030 and 2035 all new cars and vans must have significant zero emission capability.

"That means, for example, plug-in hybrids and what are called full hybrids would count, but what are known as mild hybrids, which just help with acceleration and deceleration, wouldn't necessarily count as having significant zero emission capability."

What constitutes significant zero emission miles hasn't been decided yet, she said.

"We will be talking to industry and talking to others more widely around defining that more tightly over the coming months.

"But, at the moment, just to be clear, what we are looking at is those plug-in and full hybrids."

Full hybrids include the likes of the Toyota Prius and the Kia Niro, while mild hybrids are rapidly becoming the norm on most engines.

Keaney said the 2035 extension for hybrids would provide an "essential lifeline" for those facing a greater zero-emission challenge.

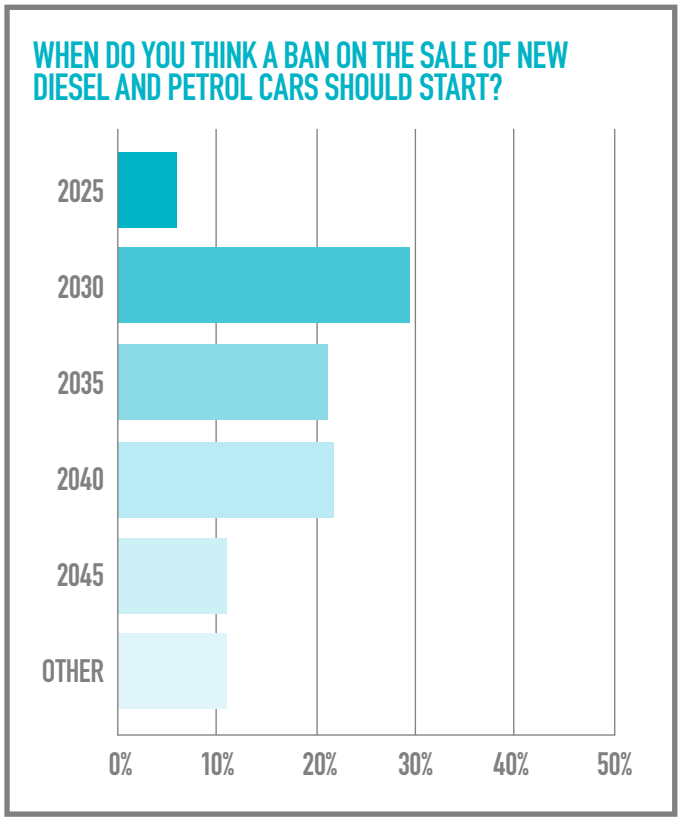
However, he said that vehicle rental companies and van fleet operators would need "clarity on exactly what types of hybrid are in scope".

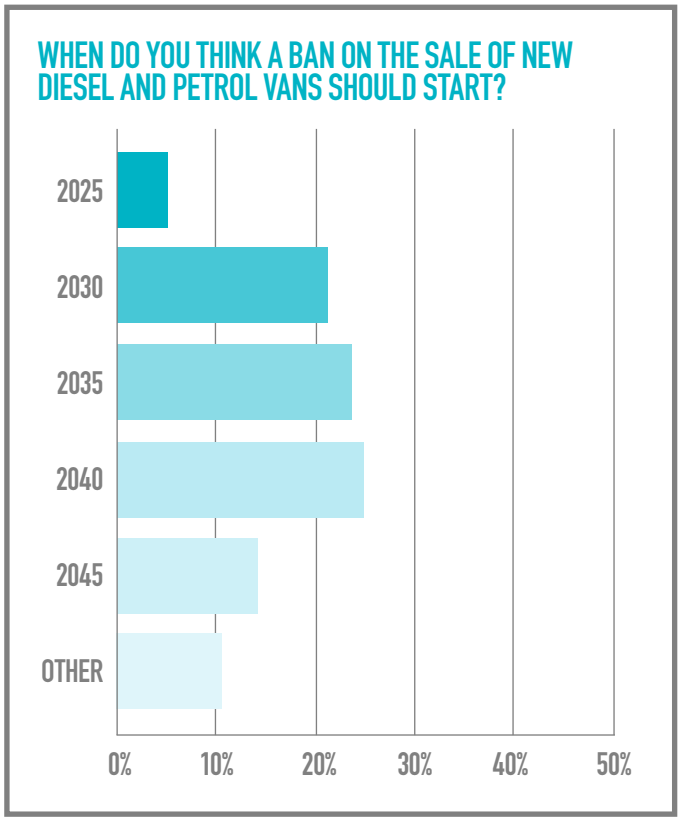
Almost half (47%) of the respondents to the *Fleet News* survey already operate electric cars or vans on their fleets.

However, when asked about the biggest barrier to operating more electric cars, two-in-five fleets (40%) said a lack of charging infrastructure.

One fleet decision-maker said: "Charging infrastructure, price and range all need to be addressed more quickly in order for fleets to fully embrace the 2030 timeframe."

> "THERE IS NO WAY GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE TO ENABLE THIS TO HAPPEN"
>
> **FLEET SURVEY RESPONDENT**





Another survey respondent said: "There is no way the Government will have the necessary infrastructure in place UK-wide to enable this to happen."

BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

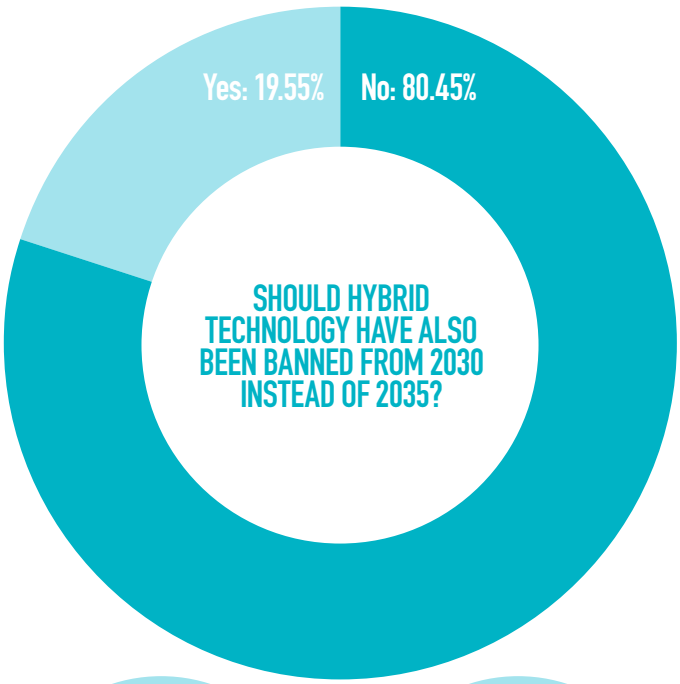
A limited driving range for electric cars was seen as the biggest barrier to adoption by almost a quarter of fleets (24%), while close to the same proportion (23%) cited vehicle price.

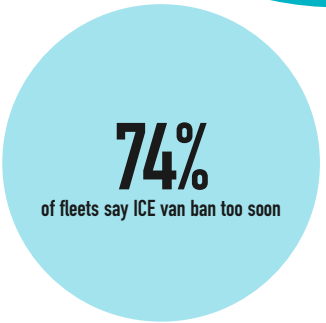
In terms of electric vans, almost a third (32%) of respondents said limited driving range was the biggest barrier; 29% were more concerned about charging infrastructure and 17% price.

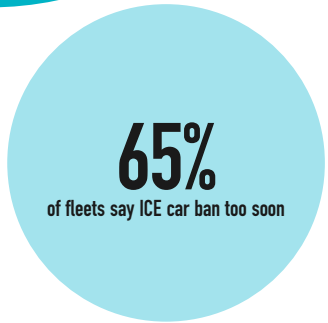
The National Infrastructure Strategy, published by the Treasury on November 25 to coincide with the Spending Review, says that the Government will "kick-start" the delivery of a core rapid charging network across motorway and key A road service stations.

By 2023, It expects to see a high-powered charging hub at every motorway service area, installed by the private sector.

To help with the expansion of the network, the Treasury says it will invest £950 million to future-proof grid capacity along motorways and will also extend support for charge point installation at homes, workplaces and on-street locations. It has also committed £90m to fund local EV charging infrastructure.







Brian Madderson, chairman of the Petrol Retailers Association (PRA), said: "Technical and commercial challenges remain in establishing the electric charging infrastructure required for mass EV take-up.

"This is particularly apparent at petrol forecourts where many of our members have abandoned plans to install ultra-rapid charging points. This is due to a lack of local power sub-stations, onerous regulation and lack of return on investment."

When asked about the most important thing Government can do to help fleets adopt more EVs, six-in-10 respondents said it should invest in charging infrastructure.

The first of more than 100 electric forecourts, being built by Gridserve in a £1 billion programme over the next five years, was opened in Braintree this week (fleetnews.co.uk, December 7).

Drivers charging at the new purpose-built site will initially pay 24p per kWh of energy (including VAT), meaning a typical charge from 20% to 80% will cost less than £10.

Furthermore, in trying to understand future charging infrastructure needs, electricity network operator UK Power Networks has launched its White Van Plan research project (fleetnews.co.uk, December 4).

More than two million small businesses from across London,

the south-east and east of England are being asked to voice their future needs for transport, whether they operate vans, trucks or passenger vehicles.

Ian Cameron, head of customer services and innovation at UK Power Networks, said: "Each company is different, with a unique set of needs and pressures."

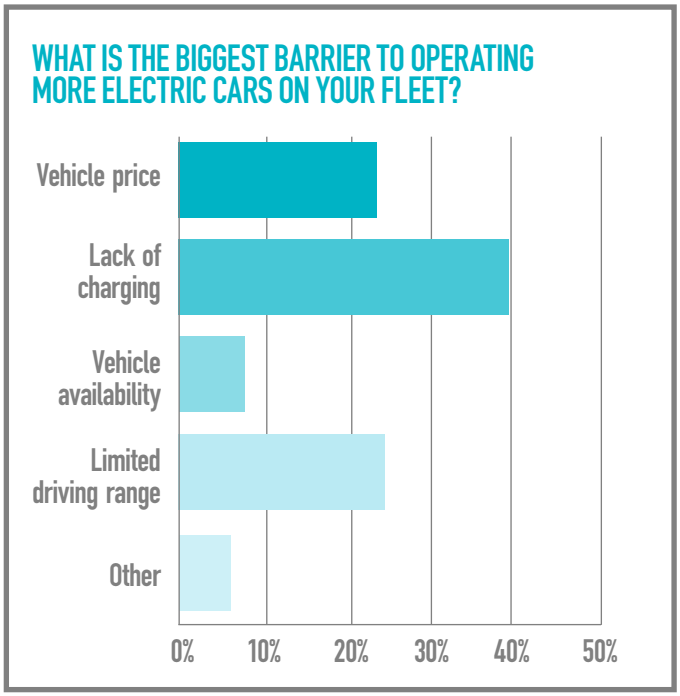
After infrastructure, fleets also believe the Government must maintain grants for plug-in vehicles and continue to provide tax incentives to help operators switch their vehicles to electric power.

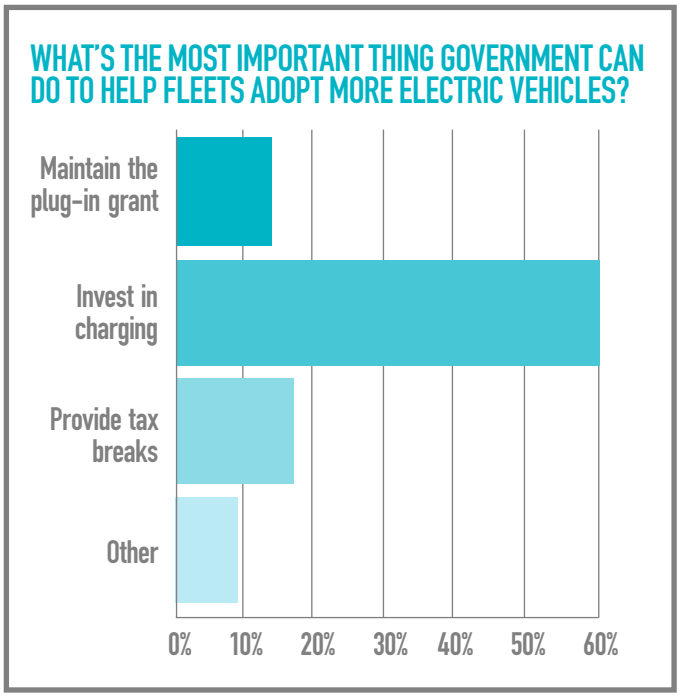
Almost one-in-six respondents to the survey said the most important thing to promote fleet adoption was providing the tax breaks for both employer and employee.

Furthermore, around one-in-eight wanted the Government to maintain the plug-in car and van grants.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, confirmed in the Spending Review that the Government will continue the plug-in grants until 2022-23, increasing funding by more than £200m compared with Budget 2020, to £582m in total.

See page 92 for more on the challenges facing van fleets to electrify their vehicles.





Electrification by 2030 is achievable, but co-ordinated action is needed

PAUL HOLLICK
CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF FLEET PROFESSIONALS (AFP)

Can fleets meet the new 2030 electrification deadline? In a way, it's a redundant question. The authorities have set a date in stone and so fleets have no choice. The question, really, is how will they hit the target?

The crux of the answer is that it is eminently do-able – but only if a whole range of factors are tackled, requiring a co-ordinated effort from fleets, Government and others.

The primary driver from a fleet point of view is going to be tax. Much reduced benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax for low and zero emissions vehicles is the key to current, rapidly-growing levels of EV and PHEV adoption. However, we only have tax tables through to 2024-25 and, if the Government is going to focus on just one thing to help our sector towards the deadline, it would be to make clear that similar rates will stay in place until the end of the decade.

Ideally, we'd also see similar measures adopted for electric vans. For a variety of reasons, e-LCV adoption lags behind cars, and more needs to be done to bring them into line.

The second point is battery charging. Really, for people who have a driveway at home, this is not going to be an issue, with the vast majority of charging set to be carried out domestically. However, there remain situations for which there are currently no universally viable solutions, such as charging for people who live in apartments or on terraced streets. Also, locations need to be identified where charging is likely to be needed en masse – at certain points on motorways, for example – and appropriate capacity created.

Will all of this infrastructure change come from the Government? It is required on such a large scale that private money will also probably be needed. However, some degree of co-ordination at a national level is likely to be desirable.

A third point is what you might describe as corporate enthusiasm. I suspect even the most evangelical of us have probably been surprised at the degree of movement towards EVs that has been seen over recent months. We already have some AFP members that are no longer ordering petrol or diesel cars and it is worth bearing in mind that the 2030 change is only two or three fleet cycles away.

It's satisfying to see UK businesses responding so well.

However, this enthusiasm does need to spread into some other areas, notably grey fleet, where petrol and diesel vehicles could potentially persist well into the 2030s and even 2040s. Employers need to think about the policies they will adopt in this area, with increased promotion and use of salary sacrifice schemes potentially one solution.

Finally, there are a whole load of loose ends that are presenting themselves in the wake of the 2030 announcement. Crucially, it doesn't appear to include any serious strategy on hydrogen, which is essential for zero emissions buses and HGVs. Also, there is talk of road tolling as a replacement for fuel duty, and this needs careful discussion.

In conclusion, there's a lot to do, and the journey to the end of the decade may well be bumpy, but it is one that is undeniably worthwhile. At the AFP, we're very excited to be working in fleet at this moment in a time of radical, but meaningful, change.

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LCVs go under the spotlight as Euro NCAP extends safety ratings

Five-star system will enable fleets to identify the safest light commercial vehicles in each category

For the first time Euro NCAP will give guidance on van safety

By Stephen Briers

The highly respected European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) safety initiative is to be expanded to include load-carrying light commercial vehicles (LCVs) for the first time this month.

Euro NCAP has already tested and rated 98% of vans up to 3.5 tonnes using a five-star system similar to cars, with the results due to be announced on December 16.

The organisation has previously carried out assessments of the passenger-carrying equivalents to several LCVs, giving a good indication of the safety levels of the related van counterpart. However, those tests stopped in 2015.

At the time, five-star scores were achieved by the Citroën SpaceTourer, Ford Transit Custom, Mercedes-Benz V-Class, Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, Peugeot Traveller and Toyota Proace.

Van manufacturers have repeatedly been accused of slow adoption of the latest preventative and mitigative safety systems, although a growing number, including Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen, now include an array of equipment as standard fit.

Matthew Avery, director of research at Thatcham Research and Euro NCAP board member, believes it is imperative the vehicle safety rating body begins testing vans in order to accelerate safety levels in the same way it has for cars.

"We have seen a big increase in the sale of vans and there is a huge discrepancy between the collision avoidance on cars and vans," he said. "Sixty-eight per cent of cars now have autonomous emergency braking (AEB) as standard, but only 12% of vans do. And where it's available as an option on the spec sheet, it often is hard to get hold of. There is clearly a need to address the safety issue."

Consequently, the Euro NCAP testing protocol will focus on collision avoidance systems, rather than crash test performance where "there is only so much you can do with a vehicle that is two or three tonnes".

Avery added: "We have done some passive testing just to demonstrate the aggressiveness of vans, but the best option is to prevent the crash in the first place."

The advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) incorporated into the test include AEB, lane-keeping, seat-belt reminders, speed limiters and driver drowsiness detection.

With the first tests complete, Avery said his reaction was "inevitably disappointed". He explained: "We knew vans lagged behind, but carmakers know how to do this to achieve five stars on their cars. So, the question is: why aren't they doing it for vans?"

"WE HAVE A PLAN TO UPDATE THE CRITERIA EVERY COUPLE OF YEARS"

MATTHEW AVERY, EURO NCAP

The answer, he says, is down to cost and the fact that many fleets buy vans primarily on price and suitability for the job, rather than safety.

Changing that cultural mindset might take a bit of time, but it is likely to be much quicker than for cars, which, noted Avery, took around four years before the public, businesses and manufacturers reacted and safety systems become standard fit.

There are, he said, two reasons why. First, the general safety regulations are due to come into force in 2024 that will force van manufacturers to include some technology as standard so "they are already on notice".

Second, while the regulations are at a lower level than the Euro NCAP standards, the market has seen manufacturers go much further than the regulations on cars and they are expected to do the same for vans. In addition, the fact that electric vans are now being designed gives them the perfect opportunity to incorporate the latest collision prevention technology.

"This won't be a one-off," Avery said. "We will continue to test and we have a plan to update the criteria every couple of years. We will continue to put vans under the spotlight to ensure their drivers aren't second class citizens and that we make the road safer for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians."

■ Keep an eye on the *Fleet News* website – fleetnews.co.uk – on December 16 for the results of the first Euro NCAP van tests.

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*Benefit In Kind tax rates for 2020-21 financial year. ^EV range figures are based upon production vehicle over a standardised route. Range achieved will vary dependent on vehicle and battery condition, actual route and environmental and driving style.

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Government must seek fair ways to replace taxes lost due to EV uptake

Expecting petrol and diesel drivers to pay majority of road taxes is 'unsustainable', says RAC

By Gareth Roberts

The Government is being urged to work with the fleet sector to ensure any changes to motoring taxation are carried out in a timely, effective and proportionate way.

Ahead of the annual Spending Review (Wednesday, November 25), reports suggested that the Government was considering reviving road pricing plans to counter lost tax revenues from the increasing adoption of electric vehicles (EVs).

The fleet sector has already shown it is receptive to road pricing as a replacement to other road and fuel duties. *Fleet News* has been calling for the Government to launch a feasibility study since its Fleet Industry Manifesto report in 2015.

The National Infrastructure Strategy, launched to coincide with the Spending Review, emphasised the need for motoring tax revenues to 'keep pace' with the uptake of EVs. It did not, however, mention road pricing as a potential alternative to the current regime.

Gerry Keaney, chief executive of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) says any changes need to be fair to the fleet industry.

He recognises that the Government's future motoring tax strategy must strike a "fine balance" in maintaining vital revenues and encouraging people into newer and cleaner vehicles.

> "THE GOVERNMENT MUST AVOID PLACING A CRUSHING TAX BURDEN ON BUSINESSES"
>
> **GERRY KEANEY, BVRLA**

Road pricing was a notable omission from the Spending Review statement

ISTOCK.COM/YEVTONY

But he stressed: "The Government must avoid placing a crushing tax burden on businesses and individuals that are unable to upgrade their cars, vans or trucks and are already struggling to cope with the economic implications of Covid-19 pandemic and EU exit."

The Government has already spent £280 billion to help support the economy through the pandemic and will spend a further £55bn next year to support the recovery.

In total, taxes on UK motoring, including vehicle excise duty (VED), fuel duties and VAT, raise around £40bn per year or 7% of total revenue to the Exchequer. Of this, benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax payments, covering the provision of company cars, raise close to £1.8bn.

Darren Handley, head of infrastructure grants at the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), told attendees at Virtual Fleet and Mobility Live (see p24) that, while the question of future motoring taxation is one for the Treasury, it should not necessarily follow that lost fossil fuel revenues will be recouped from EV drivers.

He said: "If you look at a parallel with something like health and smoking, any reduction in tax (take) from (a reducing number of) smokers isn't regained by taxing somebody who is healthy."

In Budget 2020, the Treasury outlined expected tax receipts from fuel duty each year up to 2024/25. It expected to collect £27.5bn this tax year, a £200m decline on £27.7bn in 2019/20. But, then it was predicted to increase to £28.1bn the following year (2021/22), before reaching £30.5bn in 2022/23, £31.2bn in 2023/24 and £31.7bn in 2024/25.

VED receipts are expected to fall by £100 million to £7bn in 2021/22, before increasing by £200m each year for the next three years, reaching £7.6bn in 2024/25.

Revenues, however, have already been impacted by Covid-19, with lockdown restrictions reducing fuel duty by £2.4bn in April and May compared with the same time last year.

Nicholas Lyes, RAC head of roads policy, said: "While not paying car tax is clearly an incentive to go fully electric at the moment, we will very soon need a system that can levy tax on both conventionally fuelled and battery electric vehicles fairly.

"If this isn't addressed, we risk finding ourselves in a situation where petrol and diesel drivers continue to pay all the tax for using the roads which is unsustainable."

Four-in-10 drivers believe that some form of 'pay-per mile' system would be fairer than the current system of fuel duty, says the RAC, while half (49%) agree that the more someone drives, the more they should pay in tax.

Insurance and Mobility Solutions (IMS), which is part of Trak Global Group, has successfully piloted road pricing projects in several US states.

Dr Ben Miners, chief innovation officer for IMS, explained: "Road user charging (RUC) and electronic toll collection (ETC) are both important solutions to fairly generate revenue from road users."

ETC focuses on specific concessions or fixed points with a roadside/infrastructure approach, whereas RUC focuses on the broader transportation network with an infrastructure-free, wireless infrastructure, process.

Miners said: "The additional flexibility of RUC enables new virtual tolls to be introduced and transform any road segment or fixed asset into a 'tolled' road, which eliminates lengthy construction times and shortens time-to-market."

ALD and Ford partner up to launch fleet management venture FFM UK

New enterprise adopts 'start-up mentality' to offer 'something different', says UK MD John Wright

By Stephen Briers

Former ALD head of OEM strategic partnerships John Wright has been appointed managing director at the newly-created Ford Fleet Management (FFM) UK, a joint venture between ALD and Ford which opens for business this month.

FFM enters a crowded sector for funding and fleet management. It intends to carve out a place by offering "bespoke solutions not one-size-fits-all", focusing on larger companies with more complex needs, according to Wright.

Services will be offered across all manufacturer brands, not just Ford, and for cars and vans.

"We will have multi-brand capability across cars and vans. But we are Ford-branded, so, while we won't push customers into any choice, there will be a natural favour towards Ford because that's where the deep collaboration comes from," Wright said.

"We don't want to create just another leasing company or accept the way things have always been done – this business has to offer something different and the way to do that is to talk to our customers about their needs. We are adopting a start-up mentality, but as a well-funded company."

He describes FFM as a "strengthening of our proven relationship" between Ford and ALD which started in the UK in 2011 with the launch of Ford Lease. The two have worked together in mainland Europe for 15 years.

Wright was responsible for the launch of Ford Lease, which targets small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) through the Ford franchised dealer network. It will continue to operate as a standalone in the short term, but the back office will eventually be folded into the new FFM business. However, Ford Lease funding products will still be sold by dealers.

"Our new venture will fill all the gaps around Ford Lease," Wright added. "This will be an integrated fleet management business, leveraging our position to understand the in-life relationships that manufacturers, typically, don't enjoy."

> "WE WILL NOT GET PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT (FROM FORD); IT'S UP TO US TO MAKE THE COMPELLING OFFER TO THE CUSTOMER"
>
> **JOHN WRIGHT, FORD FLEET MANAGEMENT UK**

Customer ownership has been a much-disputed subject in recent years, with leasing providers and fleet management companies increasingly controlling the relationship.

Ford is keen to have a "deeper collaboration" beyond merely supplying the vehicle.

"We will take an agnostic approach – we don't have a perfect target customer," Wright said. "However, we see an opportunity with the larger fleets running LCVs that a leasing company might not look at; for example, those with highly technical needs or conversion requirements. We can play to our strengths in the van market – that's gold to us as a fleet management provider."

An additional appeal is the growth in demand for vans due to the impact of Covid and lockdowns on the essential services and home delivery sectors.

Consequently, uptime management will be a crucial part of the service, with FFM able to tap into the emergent connectivity and technology solutions offered on vehicles.

"Most Ford vehicles now have full modem capability, including Ford telematics, which will drive data into our business, enabling us to manage uptime proactively and, eventually, prognostically. In time, we'll be able to predict events and manage them before they happen," Wright said.

"We will also be able to tie in fixes with regular maintenance and scheduled servicing, bringing three or four events into one (workshop visit) for an uptime solution that doesn't exist in the market."

The data enabling FFM to accurately predict component failure is already available; the next step is to analyse it in sufficient quantity and figure out how to turn it into something meaningful for customers.

Wright anticipates being able to tailor the solutions by customer group having, for example, one set of rules for utility vehicles and another for home delivery vehicles based on usage patterns.

Growth aspirations are a closely guarded secret, but Wright says the objective is "less about unit growth and more about the quality of the conversations we are having with customers – that's the key".

He added: "While this is about growing the business for Ford, FFM exists in its own right. It's been set up to be successful as a standalone business and we are recruiting a sales team to take the service out to market."

Ford does not believe FFM will ruffle feathers among its other leasing company partners, and there are precedents already of manufacturer-owned multi-marque leasing providers, including BMW's Alphabet, Volkswagen Financial Services and Toyota's acquisition of Inchcape Fleet Solutions (now rebranded Kinto).

"We will not get preferential treatment (from Ford); it's up to us to make the compelling offer to the customer," Wright said. "It won't affect Ford's relationship with other leasing providers."

FFM will offer a full suite of fleet management and funding services, including salary sacrifice, although companies do not need to be leasing customers in order to take the fleet management solution.

"We will look at all needs and create a solution for them," Wright said. "We won't discount any conversation."

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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the 21MY Land Rover PHEV range in mpg (l/100km): Combined 69.9-141 (4-2). WLTP CO_2 Emissions 91-44 g/km. The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation with a fully charged battery. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ. CO_2 and fuel economy, energy consumption and range figures may vary according to factors such as driving styles, environmental conditions, load, wheel fitment and accessories fitted.

*Benefit In Kind tax rates for 2020-21 financial year. ^EV range figures are based upon production vehicle over a standardised route. Range achieved will vary dependent on vehicle and battery condition, actual route and environmental and driving style. Defender specification featured in image shown may differ for UK market.

Hunt is on to find most inspirational woman in the automotive industry

Fleet News and *AM* link up with Cox Automotive to promote third Woman of the Year Award

By Sarah Tooze

Cox Automotive is seeking nominations for the 2021 Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award, which will honour an inspirational woman within the automotive industry.

Now in its third year, the award is being launched in association with *Fleet News* and sister title *AM* to recognise a woman who shows a commitment to innovation, leadership or community.

The award is named after Barbara Cox, who served as director of Cox Enterprises, Cox Automotive's parent company in the USA. Its winner will receive £5,000 to spend on her personal development.

Earlier this year it was presented to Alison Jones, group managing director UK and senior vice-president of Groupe PSA. On her win, Jones said: "I felt very privileged to be recognised by the judges for my contribution to our industry, customers, my teams and the wider community. To be recognised for this by others was a real honour, and it meant so much after many years of service to our industry."

Pictured at the previous awards are (from left): Alison Fisher, chief people officer at Cox Automotive, winner Alison Jones, group managing director UK and senior vice-president of Groupe PSA, and Martin Forbes, president of Cox Automotive International

Alison Fisher, chief people officer at Cox Automotive, said: "Inclusion is a key priority for Cox Automotive, not only in the UK, but globally.

"We want to create inclusive workplaces where everyone can be their true self. A key part of our inclusion strategy is our Women With Drive initiative which exists to celebrate the work of women in the automotive industry.

"The Barbara Cox 'Woman of the Year' recognises successful women, like our previous winners Beryl (Carney of JCT600) and Alison, who make a significant impact on the industry and, hopefully, inspire other women in automotive to do the same."

Diversity and inclusion

Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief of *Fleet News, AM* and *Smart Transport,* said: "Diversity and inclusion is a key brand value for our titles so we are delighted to partner Cox Automotive in this important award which recognises and celebrates inspirational women in the automotive industry."

The nomination window is open until January 22, 2021, and nominees will be invited to provide further details. Both the nomination and supporting information will be reviewed by a panel of judges that includes *Fleet News'* Sarah Tooze, Cox Automotive UK's Liam Quegan and Alison Fisher; both the previous winners plus Lynda Ennis from Ennis & Co.

The winner will be announced at the next Women with Drive event on March 8, 2021, as part of wider planned celebrations on International Women's Day.

Nominations for the award are invited from across the automotive industry, and should be entered via the Women with Drive website: womenwithdrive.co.uk/barbara-cox-award/barbara-cox-award.

Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award

Presented by Cox Automotive

THE FOUR MAIN GOALS OF COX AUTOMOTIVE'S WOMEN WITH DRIVE NETWORK

Cox Automotive's Women with Drive network is open to individuals and businesses across the automotive sector.

Since its launch on International Women's Day in March 2016 it has grown to regularly having 150-200 people at its events.

Businesses that have pledged support include BMW UK, Free2Move Lease, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, Fleet Logistics and Grosvenor Leasing.

Businesses that join Women with Drive commit to:

- Celebrating the achievements of women in the automotive industry.
- Championing equality both inside and outside the workplace.
- Ensuring every woman has the opportunity to reach her full potential.
- Challenging inequality and bias.

The events feature inspirational speakers and celebrate the achievements of women working in the automotive sector.

Last month's event, which took place virtually, was an hour-long panel session with Daksh Gupta, group chief executive officer at Marshall Motor Group, and Louise Benford, chief people officer at The AA.

The event focused on inclusion and the role men have in creating inclusive workplaces. It also looked at the impact of Covid-19 on the automotive industry, how the industry is changing and what 2021 might have in store.

THE BIG PICTURE

Few of us will be sad to see the back of 2020, but at least we have an end in sight with the roll out of the first Covid-19 vaccine.

Next year will bring its own challenges, however, with the end of the Brexit transition period and the implementation of – well, who knows what. In the short space of time it took to write this column, we have veered from upbeat reports that UK and EU negotiators were close to signing off an agreement to general pessimism that the chances of striking a deal were rapidly receding.

And, of course, any agreement would still have to be ratified by UK Parliament and EU countries before implementation at the start of 2021. There's very little time left for manoeuvring, that's for sure.

It seems that every year for the past five years has been dubbed "The Year of the Electric Vehicle", with industry watchers predicting exponential growth in sales volumes. This year has certainly seen electric and hybrid swell their share of the market, although this is largely down to a collapse in new car sales, especially in fleet, during the coronavirus pandemic.

However, with some EV launches put back to 2021, and a host of new models scheduled to come to market – roughly 30 across all segments (see p48) – posterity may well conclude that 2021 truly was the year electric became mainstream.

Challenges remain around public charging infrastructure – not least its fragmented composition with almost 50 network providers with myriad payment methods and fees. Coverage is improving, but there are big gaps (according to Zap-Map, 40% of the 13,000 charging locations are in London and the south-east; the north-east has just 3.5% – around 450 – and Yorkshire/Humberside has 5.7%, or 740) and our contacts tell us that reliability remains an issue, with many points not working.

But, as people become accustomed to home charging, their reliance on a public network for everyday travel will diminish.

We've plenty of advice in this issue for companies looking to embark upon an electric journey.

Merry Christmas everyone – I hope that 2021 brings renewed fortunes for us all.

Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief, *Fleet News*

HAVE

EDITOR'S PICK

FLEET INDUSTRY

'We all have a responsibility to act'

ISTOCK.COM/LAYLABIRD

Tom Delaney wrote:
Having read 'Women feel under-represented in automotive leadership roles' (fleetnews.co.uk, December 1), it's great to see so many organisations shining a light on these issues in the automotive industry.

The industry has seen greater diversification over the past 20 years, but it still has a long way to go.

It is particularly disappointing and worrying to see that 40% of women working in the industry would choose a different one if they could go back.

Meanwhile, 50% said they would leave the automotive industry altogether due to lack of promotion opportunities, organisational cultural norms, poor work-life balance and an uncertain industry future.

We all have a responsibility working in the industry to change what is currently a very depressing picture and ensure there is greater equality and more opportunities.

• THE EDITOR'S PICK IN EACH ISSUE WINS A £20 JOHN LEWIS VOUCHER

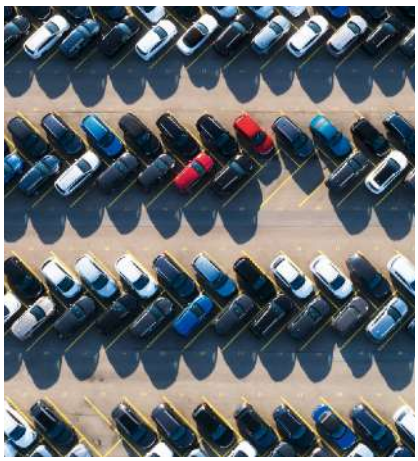
PARKING SPACES

Size really does matter

H Brace wrote:
Having read 'Car size increase creates parking bay squeeze for drivers' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 26), I don't think anybody who drives a car could possibly disagree with these findings.

It really is quite unbelievable that the parking bay guidelines have not been updated to keep pace with the growth seen in vehicles.

There would be fewer 'hit while parked' damage reports to deal with from company car and van drivers if they had.



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Charging infrastructure key to electric switch

Sally Rodgers wrote:
Having read 'New petrol and diesel car and van ban confirmed' (fleetnews.co.uk, November 18), the new date is no surprise and will prove more challenging to some fleets than others, but the charging infrastructure has got to be vastly improved if we're going to be able to make the switch.

I agree with the BVRLA, the UK needs a comprehensive strategy on charging infrastructure, which must include an adequate supply of affordable, accessible and reliable public charge points and incentives to unlock private sector investment.

KP added:
I agree with the SMMT, this new deadline is a massive challenge for the industry and one wonders how achievable it will be and what it may mean for the used petrol and diesel market in the future.

The one saving grace is certain hybrid systems will be available until 2035. But, in typical Government fashion, there's little detail on which hybrid systems will be allowed and which won't. For van fleets perhaps facing two replacement cycles before having to make the switch, clarity for the fleet industry is, as ever, vitally important.

Sid Flowers continued:
I'm not against bringing forward the ban date, but the Government must put its money where its mouth is with this.

Plug-in grants and low company car tax rates help, but there are so many more fiscal incentives it could give to drive uptake, including a VAT cut for electric vehicles.

Don't just tax people out of petrol and diesel cars and leave electric motoring for only the rich.

The Engineer added:
A typical petrol station can accommodate 15 customers at once who take five to 10 minutes each.

Suppose you convert petrol stations into recharging stations for the millions that won't have access to home charging or who are undertaking longer trips.

High speed chargers up to 350kw would be possible, but for just three chargers you are looking at an astonishing 1MW supply needed.

Those three customers will also need 15 to 20 minutes each.

It's already easy to get a queue at petrol stations. Imagine only having a fifth of the pumps and taking four times longer to use them.

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Burning question:
Which series of TV programmes would you like to binge-watch (if you haven't already)?

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SIX TAKEAWAYS FROM THE

1 RADICAL CHANGES WILL BE MADE

Sweeping changes will be made to transport in order to address climate change, according to transport minister Rachel Maclean.

"We are on the cusp of making radical changes in the future of UK transportation, from the cars we drive, to how we get our goods and, more fundamentally, the way that we travel and how we access services," she said.

The Government has been working on an over-arching decarbonisation plan, encompassing all modes of transport, due to be published soon.

It will "set out the path that we'll take to deliver our net zero objectives, together with our partners across the transport sector," said Maclean.

Government, industry and academia all need to come together in a revolution that will be "no less historic than the coming of the railways or commercial aviation", she added.

Maclean also highlighted how Covid-19 has had "a huge impact" on the country and on individuals, and that some of the improvements that need to be made to transport are "within touching distance".

"People want change, they understand we can't go back to how things were before," she said.

"We've seen the desire of so many in these last few months to exercise more and travel more sustainably, we have grown accustomed to quiet streets in town centres. So, we now have a great opportunity to lock in and build on those benefits, making lasting changes to the way we travel to help make our country greener and healthier, and to deliver clean economic growth."

2 AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES TO SPRING A 'SURPRISE'

Connected and autonomous vehicles will have a significant – but maybe surprising – impact on the UK's transport system.

Ian Forbes, head of the Government's Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, said some of the predictions made a few years ago about when fully automated vehicles would be on the roads were "definitely over-ambitious and over-optimistic".

"That's typical of any new, exciting technology," he added. "I think it's probably fair to say people are now making overly-pessimistic projections about what might happen with the technology and pace of change.

"I think what's really important to note is that while all of these kind of projections are being made in the media, in the background the technology is being developed.

"And it might not develop in entirely the way in which everyone expects, but I fully expect this to have a really big impact on the transport system as people and nations find ways to enable the technology to be used safely."

3 EV INFRASTRUCTURE IS KEY PRIORITY

Ensuring the UK's electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure is ready for the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars should be a key priority for the Government.

"There is a big challenge in terms of the production of EVs, but it's clear the charging networks are going to be essential in delivering that low carbon economy," said Bridget Rosewell, a commissioner with the National Infrastructure Commission.

"The private sector will step up to that plate – and is already stepping up to the plate – but, as it's a network challenge, it needs Government support to get that done.

"We've got an established refuelling infrastructure for petrol and diesel vehicles that will continue to be around for quite a long time, and we need that EV infrastructure in place to give people the confidence to make the transition."

Rosewell said the Government needs to provide subsidies to create a national network of rapid charge points by 2022, and to enable Ofgem, DNOs and chargepoint providers to collaborate to identify investments which are needed.

4 ELECTRIC ROADS TO CUT HEAVY FREIGHT CO_2?

Electric roads – also called eroads, eHighways or electric road systems (ERS) – are a potential answer to decarbonising heavy freight vehicles.

The technology transfers electricity between the infrastructure and vehicle through either overhead cables or rails embedded in or on top of the road surface, or wirelessly through embedded coils in the road.

Bob Moran, deputy director head of environmental strategy at DfT, said more than half of the UK's commercial vehicles are les than 18 tonnes and he expects these to be electrified soon.

"As battery costs drop and as performance increases, that sector is really going to be taking off," he added. "The heaviest road vehicles are a bit more challenging, but the competing technologies are thinning out.

"As we see it now, hydrogen fuel cells, battery electric and possibly electric roads are the contenders. We've got to get that technology on to our roads and work with industry, operators and the energy sector as well as academia to work out which is the right solution for the UK."

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SMART TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

Decarbonisation and the future of mobility were on the agenda at the virtual event held by *Fleet News*'s sister brand. *Andrew Ryan* looks at some of the key messages

5

URBAN LOGISTICS IS 'MOST COMPLICATED' AREA

Urban logistics is probably the most complicated part of the logistics system and arguably the one that's changing fastest, said David Elvy, head of future of freight strategy at DfT.

"We have to balance land use and what may be significant changes to the way we live in urban environments," he added. "Decarbonisation and the environment is key, but it's also about local air quality, noise and congestion.

"We need to think about how we prioritise use of roadspace, how we manage the noise implications of night-time deliveries, for example, but also increase deliveries to suburban houses rather than into shops and supermarkets.

"How we manage demand for deliveries with space at the kerbside and make that more efficient is absolutely critical."

6

TRANSPORT DATA KEY TO INNOVATION

The UK needs to get better at collecting and opening access to transport data in order the boost innovation.

Dr Mike Short, chief scientific advisor at the Department for International Trade, said that without sufficient access to transport data, cities of the future simply cannot be smart.

"We see that innovation and management of our transport systems will depend even more on the availability of data," he said.

"From what we can see in Europe, there are already lots of initiatives on research and development for 5G corridors and highways. That increased connectivity speed will be an enabler to generate more transport data.

"Making your vehicles and infrastructure more connected might be obvious for transport planners, but as information starts flowing in, we need to make sure there is a way to open it up."

Short said he would like to see all connected vehicles with sensors being able to share aggregated and anonymised data to road managers and transport planners to help monitor road maintenance, plan routes and even weather conditions.

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DO WE STILL NEED CLEAN AIR ZONES?

Government decision to bring forward ban on sale of new ICE vehicles may have made CAZs obsolete, says *Dr Sarah Wixey*

ISTOCK.COM/IVANASTAR

The Government's decision to end the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2030 and hybrids by 2035 is good news for both climate change and air pollution, as well as the overall health of the public.

The impact from petrol and diesel cars on air quality and, thereby, health is horrendous, leading to premature deaths, higher risks of asthma, heart disease, strokes, lung disease and dementia. It can even affect unborn children and result in low birth weight, heart defects and infant mortality.

While legal limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particulate matter (PM) have been set to protect health, these are often breached. In response to this, the Government proposed the clean air zone (CAZ) programme.

A CAZ is an area where targeted action is taken to deliver improved health benefits and support economic growth.

There are two types – a charging CAZ (CCAZ), which imposes a fee on vehicles passing through it that do not meet minimum emission standards, and a non-charging CAZ, which does not impose fees, but sets out a framework for other measures to improve air quality.

The results of London's Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), a CCAZ, has led to gains in air quality. The Greater London Authority (GLA) reported a drop of between 3% and 9% in traffic flows in central London from May 2019 to January 2020 compared with 2018.

GLA's data shows there has also been a fall in older, more polluting vehicles in the ULEZ area – 17,400 fewer vehicles on an average day.

The wider roll-out of CCAZs to other cities was delayed due to the pandemic. Bath and Birmingham's zones have been postponed to March and June 2021, respectively.

The expansion of London's ULEZ to the North and South Circular roads will go ahead in October 2021 and Greater Manchester is consulting on its proposals for a 2022 launch.

While these cities finalise their plans, Leeds City Council has shown what can be achieved by introducing non-charging CAZ measures as well as their cost-saving benefits.

In comparison with the proposed CCAZ scheme, which was estimated to cost up to £40 million, the non-charging CAZ only cost the council £11.5m: £7.5m in grants for taxi drivers, bus operators and companies with HGVs to upgrade to cleaner vehicles and the balance for a new camera network.

These incentives caused hundreds of local businesses to upgrade their fleets to newer, environmentally-friendly vehicles, causing pollution levels to drop below legal limits.

> "LEEDS HAS SHOWN WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY INTRODUCING NON-CHARGING CAZ MEASURES"

Warrington Council examined the potential benefits and drawbacks of introducing a CCAZ. It estimated the cost of implementing a scheme would be £7m.

These costs are based on the procurement of enforcement technology and the back office system upgrades required, as well as broad estimates for the cost of replacing vehicles such as buses, taxis and goods vehicles with electric vehicles (EVs).

In addition, there are numerous ways to reduce pollution before resorting to costly CCAZ schemes.

For example, councils can look to offer incentives for companies to improve vehicles through upgrades and retrofit technology; build more zero emission recharging infrastructure and refuelling stations (i.e. hydrogen for HGVs); introduce measures to encourage more walking and cycling; change road layouts, and rollout emissions-based parking permits.

The original 2040 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles would have meant local authorities had 20 years before any likely significant change to the vehicle parc. At that time, the business case for implementing a CCAZ was more viable as the zones could self-finance for longer.

However, now the Government has brought the ban forward, councils are faced with an ambitious deadline alongside rising unemployment levels, tighter household incomes and dire council budgets.

This, naturally, leads to the overwhelming question as to whether CCAZs are currently economically viable.

Or, as in the case of Leeds, whether we would achieve the same outcome from implementing non-charging CAZ measures, investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and introducing road pricing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Sarah Wixey is the air quality expert and associate director at WVG (Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin), part of the Tetra Tech group, a provider of consulting, engineering, programme management, construction management and technical services

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF PROTECTING FUTURE VEHICLE NETWORKS

ISTOCK.COM/SOLARSEVEN

Vehicle manufacturers must conduct physical, on-road tests to prove system robustness, says *Peter Stoker*

The increasing risk of cyber attack – an unfortunate by-product of improved connectivity – means vehicle manufacturers must be able to prove system robustness.

Vehicles today are increasingly connected, moving beyond infotainment systems towards fleet monitoring, live navigation and traffic updates.

The capabilities of vehicles as a communications platform open up multiple new applications for the future. Vehicle-to-infrastructure, vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-network communications will facilitate earlier warnings of incidents and road conditions, as well as live data streaming.

This offers huge benefits to fleet operators in safety, vehicle management, prognostics, and even remote changing of vehicle parameters to improve economy and battery life. There are two main technologies being used for this communication, one using 802.11p Wi-Fi, the other using cellular communication.

This new age of connectivity and autonomy is not without its pitfalls. One of the biggest areas of concern in relation to connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) has always been cyber security. With enormous amounts of data being transferred in real-time between vehicles, infrastructure and beyond, there is little wonder there are concerns over hacking and privacy.

It is therefore essential that providers must also be able to conduct physical, on-road tests to prove system robustness in a safe and controlled environment. This is all the more important when you consider that, for vehicle manufacturers, future type approval will require evidence of cyber security assessment processes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Stoker joined Millbrook in 2012 and is now chief engineer for connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs). He led the successful bid for the Government's controlled urban CAV testbed and is now one of its key liaisons.

Valuable insight into tackling the threat of cyber-attack has already been gained – thanks in no small part to Zenzic and its associated organisations – but there is still much to be done.

Indeed, security considerations of the CAV ecosystem will require ongoing research and assessment as the technology and threat landscapes change.

And, let's face it, they will keep changing.

A fleet operator might be asking themselves how, exactly, could a security breach manifest itself?

The simple answer is that there are several security threats that can have an impact. This can include disruption of connectivity to prevent operation of CAV services (denial of service), data privacy issues (including data exfiltration and tracking), and the planting of malicious malware within equipment, both at source and by threat actors.

Evidently, the threats posed by a 5G cyber security breach are potentially far more serious than those of previous generations of the technology, such as 3G and 4G. The harsh reality is that, just as 5G is a step up in capabilities for its users, with enhanced broadband speeds, latency and connectivity advantages, those abilities also aid threat actors. They can extract data sets from systems quicker, increase the capabilities of botnets, and target more devices as 5G IoT (Internet of Things) devices become widespread.

Those are the threats, but what about the potential ramifications of a cyber-attack for the average road user or fleet operator? As we've learned, with vehicle systems becoming more sophisticated, the possibility of vulnerabilities existing within those systems increases.

Furthermore, increasing commonalities of vehicle components and use of commodity operating systems means manufacturers and researchers must guard against the possibility of attacks causing mass disruption of vehicles.

The industry is becoming aware that cyber security is not an end goal but an ongoing arms race and cyber resilience is the key. It is important we maintain an up-to-date understanding of the current threat landscape for the whole system. It is also essential that we keep revising security of the mobility entities through testing and analysis, especially when new breaches are reported.

The lifetime of any security certification may need to be continuous, or at least only be valid for short timeframes – say, six months.

ZENZIC CEO DANIEL RUIZ SAYS:

The UK contributed heavily to the development of two new cybersecurity regulations adopted by the UNECE's World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations earlier this year.

These are the first internationally-binding norms in this area, and they represent but one step of many we must take in ensuring future connected and autonomous vehicles are fortified against the continuing tide of constantly evolving cyber threats.

With the advent of self-driving vehicles, the sophistication and complexity of cyber defences will necessarily increase as thousands of vehicles, pieces of road-side infrastructure and connecting systems need to share data securely. We now have an opportunity for the UK to build on the decades of experience we already have and once again set the standards for the rest of the world to follow.

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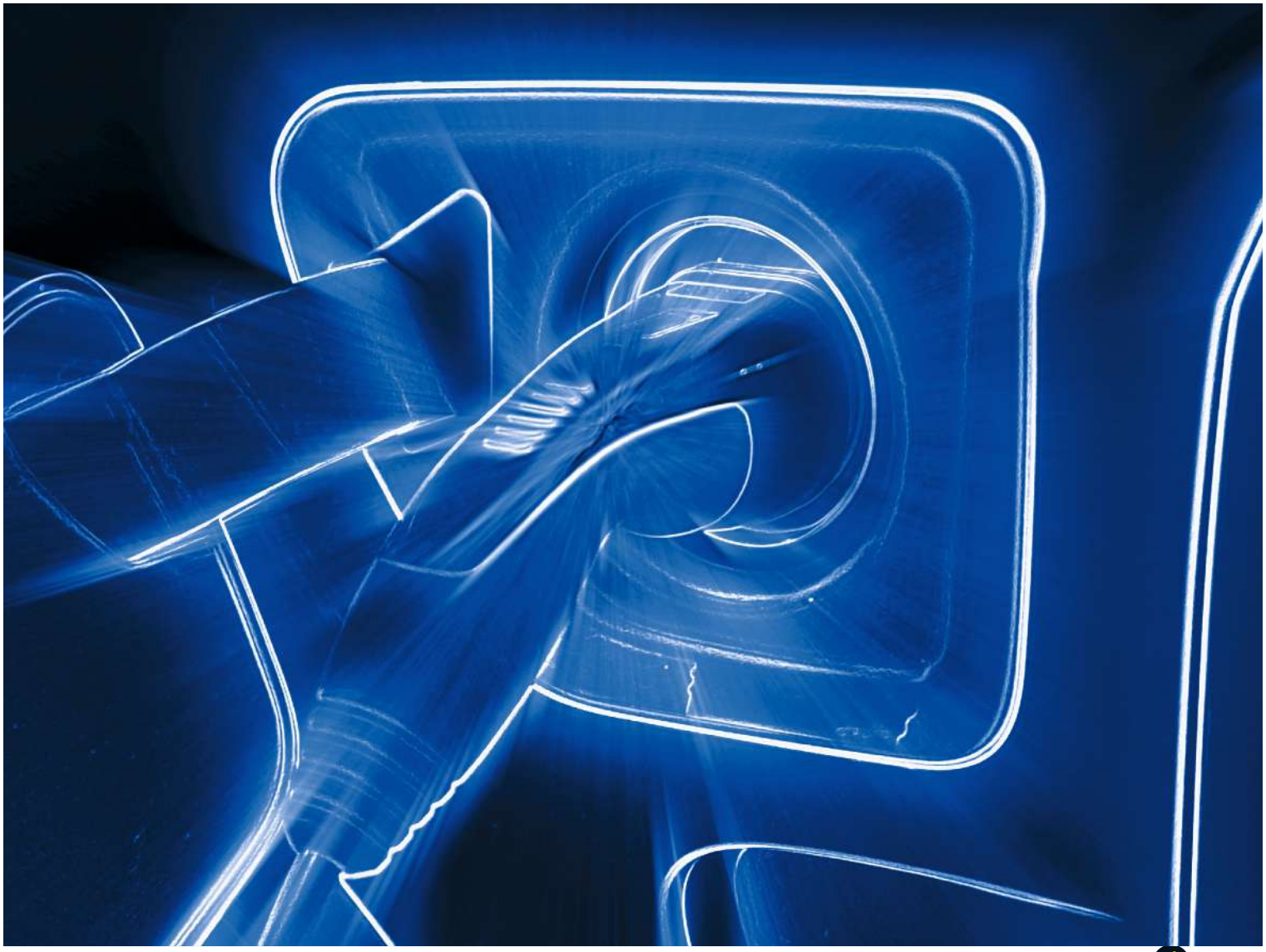

INSIDE

WHAT IS AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

As manufacturers consider a variety of ways to use electrification to reduce vehicle CO_2 emissions, *Andrew Ryan* highlights the different technologies

1 BATTERY ELECTRIC VEHICLE (BEV)

How does the technology work? A BEV has the most simple drivetrain out of all EVs, comprising of just two major components: a battery and an electric motor. The battery must be plugged into an external source to be charged.

Strengths/weaknesses: BEVs always produce zero tailpipe emissions and, because of this, are currently subject to a 0% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rate. Range used to be a major concern, but mainstream brands are now offering BEVs with ranges up to 270-plus miles. Perhaps the biggest drawback to running an electric car is having to charge it, with constant criticisms that the UK's charging infrastructure needs to be improved to allow widespread adoption of BEVs. The number of BEVs available is increasing rapidly.

Typical examples: Nissan Leaf, Peugeot e-208, Tesla Model 3

2 PLUG-IN HYBRID (PHEV)

How does the technology work? A PHEV features an ICE (internal combustion engine), usually petrol, a battery and an electric motor. PHEVs can be used as pure electric vehicles and be powered by the battery alone until the charge runs out when the car will be solely powered by the internal combustion engine (ICE). PHEVs also have 'auto' modes where the car will automatically switch between the two power sources – or use both at the same time – dependent on the circumstances and how the car is being driven.

Strengths/weaknesses: Current PHEVs tend to have electric-only ranges of up to 40 miles, but are sometime seen as offering the best of both worlds: zero-emission motoring, but also the convenience of an ICE vehicle when covering longer distances.

Typical examples: BMW 330e, Škoda Superb iV

3 EXTENDED RANGE ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EREV)

How does the technology work? An EREV has the same elements as a plug-in hybrid – an ICE, a battery and an electric motor – but uses them differently, producing less CO_2 than a PHEV. The range extender – usually a small petrol engine – is used only to charge a battery which then supplies the vehicle's motor with electricity to drive the wheels. The battery can also be charged from an external source.

Strengths/weaknesses: EREVs are considered to be the next greenest alternative to a BEV, but the technology is not widely available, with no EREV cars on sale in the UK at the moment. Previous examples include the BMW i3 Rex and Vauxhall Ampera, although the next-generation Nissan Qashqai, due next year, will use the technology.

Typical examples: LEVC VN5 van, Ford Transit Custom PHEV

4 HYBRID

How does the technology work? Hybrids have an ICE and an electric motor, and can be powered either directly by the engine, by the motor, or by both working together. The battery in a hybrid is smaller than in a PHEV and cannot be charge from an external power source. Instead, hybrids generate energy through the car's braking system – known as regenerative braking – and by their engines.

Strengths/weaknesses: The main advantages are that they should use less fuel and emit less CO_2 than a petrol or diesel vehicle, and are as convenient to use as they do not need to be charged from an external source. However, they are not as efficient as PHEVs or BEVs and do not qualify for the Government's £3,000 plug-in car grant.

Typical examples: Toyota Prius, Kia Niro

5 MILD HYBRID

How does the technology work? Mild hybrids have both an ICE and an electric motor, but use a battery much smaller – typically 48 volt – than that found in a hybrid. The battery stores energy generated by braking, but the electric motor cannot power the car on its own: it is used to support the engine during acceleration or cruising.

Strengths/weaknesses: Kia says the mild hybrid system in its Sportage increases fuel economy by 5.2% and reduces CO_2 by 15g/km compared with the non-mild-hybrid variant, but they do not offer the same efficiency gains as hybrid technology. Mild hybrids are generally cheaper than full hybrids and, unlike PHEVs or BEVs do not need to be plugged into an external source to charge.

Typical examples: Ford Puma, Kia Sportage

6 FUEL CELL ELECTRIC VEHICLE (FCEV)

How does the technology work? Unlike a BEV or a PHEV which has a battery that needs to be charged from an external source, an FCEV, effectively, has its own power plant on board – the fuel cell. Using a process called reverse electrolysis, the hydrogen, which is carried in the vehicle's fuel tanks, reacts with oxygen from the ambient air to create electrical energy, heat and water. This electricity powers a motor to drive the wheels.

Strengths/weaknesses: FCEVs have no tailpipe emissions except for water but take a fraction of the time to refill: it takes around five minutes to fill an FCEV with enough hydrogen for around 300 miles. However, the refuelling infrastructure in the UK is extremely limited, with just 17 hydrogen stations, while just two FCEV cars are currently available in the UK.

Typical examples: Toyota Mirai, Hyundai Nexo

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Adam Hall, Head of Electric Vehicles, Drax

It's little wonder so many businesses are transitioning their fleets to electric vehicles (EVs). Electrification helps companies tackle their sustainability objectives. It generates carbon-emission and cost savings and provides visible Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments.

But, if you're planning to take the journey on your own, you'll soon find that the route to electrification can be a complicated one. To get things rolling, you'll need a business case that shows you can integrate EVs into your existing fleet without adversely affecting operations or costs. And your plan will need to make allowances for ongoing management and optimisation to deliver a return on your investment.

An effective charging infrastructure is crucial. Charging locations, end-user types, charge-speed requirements… the number of factors affecting your infrastructure choices means that the right solution is always bespoke.

One EV model may get the best reviews. But that doesn't necessarily mean it's the vehicle to serve your operational requirements.

The logistics of charge point installations – connection practicalities, the impact of associated power demands on site capacity and the scope for future-proofing – can make or break your electrification investment.

There are more questions still. How do you track the benefits? How will you integrate your existing fleet's telematics with your EV data? Will you be covered for breakdowns and software updates?

Finding answers and foreseeing the bumps in the road is difficult. That's why the support of a dedicated electrification partner can be invaluable in making your EV transition as smooth as possible.

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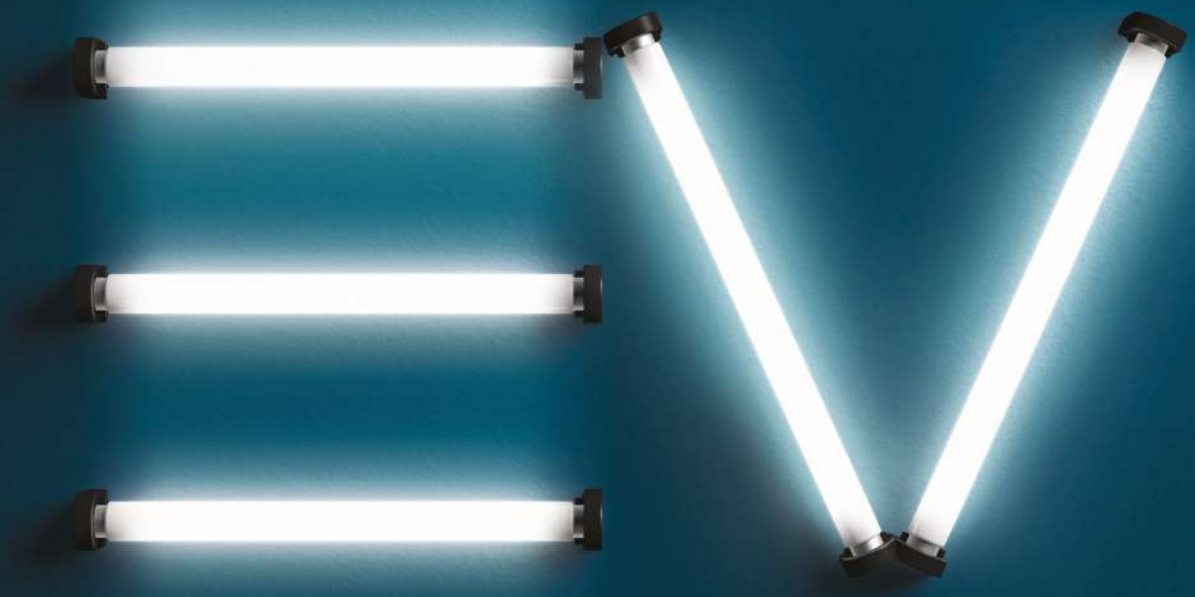

WHY SHOULD ORGANISATIONS USE BEVs?

Reasons an organisation should adopt battery electric vehicles can be boiled down to the three Es: economic, environmental and ethical. *Andrew Ryan* reports

ECONOMIC

Operating battery electric vehicles (BEVs) has the potential to save organisations thousands of pounds per vehicle each year, regardless of whether they are leased or bought outright.

BEVs have traditionally carried a price and leasing premium over petrol or diesel vehicles and although this may not be for long – analysts KPMG predict price parity in 2021 as the technology develops and the cost of raw materials falls – fleet decision-makers are urged to instead consider wholelife costs.

"Even if you have to pay more up front or if your monthly rental is a little higher, the running cost through electricity is much cheaper than petrol or diesel, and there is a reduced service, maintenance and repair (SMR) cost from the fact there are fewer mechanical working parts," says Helen Lees, head of Free2Move Mobility and connected services at Groupe PSA. "That can change the perception of pricing in the customers' minds."

The major cost advantage a BEV currently has over an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle is fuel. The cost of electricity to power a BEV for a mile depends on the electricity tariff used and the efficiency of the car, but starts at around 3.5p per mile (ppm) on the average domestic electricity rate of about 14p per kWh. This compares with 10ppm to 14ppm to fuel a typical diesel car.

Organisations which reimburse drivers for business miles using the Government's advisory fuel rates (AFRs) can also make significant savings by switching to BEVs.

EXAMPLE WHOLELIFE COST

Company car comparison 36 months, 60,000 miles (employee private mileage 24,000)							
	P11D	CO_2	Miles/kWh or MPG	Lease cost	NI	Fuel	Total
Nissan Leaf N-Connecta 40kWh	£32,790	0	3	£16,230	£131	£1,200	£17,561
Ford Focus 1.0 125PS Zetec Nav	£21,980	125	51.4	£13,706	£2,625	£3,181	£19,512
BEV saving vs petrol £1,951							

Source: EST/Alphabet

HMRC has an advisory electricity rate for BEVs of 4ppm. This compares with AFRs of between 10ppm and 17ppm for petrol cars and 8ppm and 12ppm for diesel models.

This means an employee driving a BEV for 10,000 miles a year will be reimbursed £400. If they were driving a petrol or diesel car, this figure would be between £800 and £1,700.

Organisations operating BEVs will also make significant savings in service, maintenance and repair (SMR). "Industry data providers suggest that a BEV will achieve an average 25% to 40% saving versus a petrol or diesel car," says Alison Bell, marketing director at Venson Automotive Solutions.

"There are a total of 20 items used in petrol and diesel cars but not in EVs that require inspection, maintenance or replacement over a vehicle's 10-year/150,000-mile life."

These include the alternator, power steering fluid, radiator and assorted pipework, spark plugs, starter motor, thermostat, timing belt and a water pump.

Additionally, BEVs require no oil changes, air filter, transmission fluid, exhaust pipe or radiator hoses.

There are also tax benefits for organisations running BEVs. Current benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates mean BEV drivers pay no company car tax in the 2020/21 tax year, 1% in 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

As the Class 1A National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for company cars is calculated using the BIK rate, organisations will pay no Class 1A NIC on pure electric vehicles in 2020/21, increasing slightly in the following tax years.

In an example provided by EST (see table alongside), this would mean a fleet would save £2,494 in NIC over the three tax years if it operated a Nissan Leaf N-Connecta 40kWh instead of a petrol Ford Focus 1.0 125PS Zetec Nav from the April this year.

"In our experience, many fleets don't consider NIC when comparing vehicles and ➲

the savings with the latest rules make it absolutely essential for calculations to include those savings," says Ian Featherstone, account manager, supply chain, at EST.

In addition, BEVs are fully exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED), as earlier this year the Government announced all zero emission cars will not be incur the VED 'expensive car supplement' until 2025.

This means BEVs costing more than £40,000 no longer face the £320 premium, which had been the only VED zero emission cars had been subject to.

Currently, cars with CO_2 emissions of less than 50g/km are eligible for 100% first year capital allowances, which means those organisations which outright purchase electric cars can deduct its full cost from pre-tax profits. On a car costing around £40,000, this could amount to a tax relief of £7,600 in the first year.

This changes in April next year, when only zero emission cars will be eligible for first year allowances and the main rate of 18% will apply for cars with CO_2 emissions of 1-50g/km.

In step with this, from April 2021 the lease rental allowance, which can be deducted from a company's corporation tax charge, will be 100% up to 50g/km (currently 110g/km) and 85% above that figure.

Also from April 2021, the van benefit charge changes and there will be a nil rate for zero emission vans (currently 80% of the full charge).

A further potential cost-saving fleet decision-makers could consider is that BEVs are exempt from charges relating to the ultra-low emission and clean air zones which are being increasingly adopted in towns and cities across the UK.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Road transport is said to account for 27% of the UK's CO_2 emissions, and switching from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to low-emission electric vehicles (EVs) can reduce an organisation's contribution to this.

They are also seen as a key weapon in the fight to reduce local air pollution – ICE vehicles are a major source of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and particulate matter which are recognised as a serious public health issue.

This is not an issue with EVs when running in full-electric mode, although given EVs are heavier than ICE cars there is an increasing focus on the harmful particulate matter generated from their tyres and brakes.

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Critics point to the pollution created by the power stations which supply electricity to the national grid, but this, too, is changing.

Figures from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy show that in Q2 this year, the share of generation from renewables (44.6%) exceeded the share of generation from fossil fuels (35.1%).

Organisations can also switch to renewable energy tariffs to further counter this argument if the EVs are charged at the workplace.

ETHICAL

Organisations should also consider the corporate social responsibility (CSR) element of electric vehicles, especially the staff well-being and broader social benefits element, says energy company EDF.

Many businesses which use BEVs say their employees prefer to drive them instead of ICE vehicles as they are quieter and smoother to operate.

"EVs can encourage sustainable living and are an enjoyable and real-world solution to the challenge of vehicles emissions and air quality," says EDF.

Organisations can also boost their reputation by being seen to be an environmentally-conscious business working to lower their overall carbon footprint.

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HOW DO YOU INCREASE EV UPTAKE?

Opting for an ultra-low emission vehicle can unlock significant savings for company car drivers. *Andrew Ryan* reports

For some environmentally-conscious company car drivers, the prospect of running an electric vehicle (EV) for its green credentials alone will be a compelling argument.

But for others, the key persuader will be the enormous savings they can make by choosing an EV over a petrol or diesel model.

For example, employees opting for a battery electric vehicle (BEV) pay no company car tax in the 2020/21 tax year, while the benefit-in-kind (BIK) rates for a plug-in hybrid begin at 2%, increasing to 14%, dependent on the electric-only range of the vehicle (see full BIK table, P34).

"If you drive a BMW 320d and switch to a Tesla Model 3, how much BIK do you save a year? It's £4,500 take home," says Simon King, director of sustainability, social value and fleet at Mitie.

"So, if I take away your BMW 3 Series and give you a Tesla instead, that's the same as giving you an £8,000 pay rise assuming you are a 40% taxpayer. What's not to like about that?"

The BIK rates for zero emission BEVs will increase to 1% for the 2021/22 tax year, and 2% for the following three years.

Energy Saving Trust (EST) says this means a driver who took delivery of a Nissan Leaf N-Connecta 40kWh instead of a petrol Ford Focus 1.0 125PS Zetec Nav in April this year would save £3,614 in BIK over a three-year replacement cycle.

Drivers would also make significant savings in the cost of fuel. If the employee used their company Leaf for 24,000 personal miles, they would save £1,321 due to the lower cost of powering an EV, says EST, leading to overall savings of £4,935.

This example assumes a petrol price of £1 per litre and an electricity tariff of 16p per kWh.

On top of this, drivers would be exempt from ultra-low emission and clean air zone charges if they enter those areas on personal journeys.

"It's a really great deal for employees," says Ian Featherstone, account manager, supply chain, at EST. "It's no wonder that many leasing companies are reporting a big uptake in pure electric car sales."

Many organisations report that drivers who had opted out of their employer's company car scheme to take cash allowances now want to return to take an EV, not only for the savings, but the convenience.

"We had seen a mass migration to the cash allowance but, from talking to our drivers, most of them didn't want to do that, they like the comfort of a company car, but didn't want to pay the tax," says Matt Hammond, head of fleet at Altrad Services.

"A lot of those employees had company cars for 10, 15 or 20 years and suddenly they've gone out into this big bad world of insurance quotes and running a car and they don't like it, they want to come back again and go electric."

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INCREASING EV UPTAKE

There are a number of ways organisations can encourage EV take-up, such as revising company car choice lists.

"Historically, what we see with a lot of organisations is they looked at car banding predominantly based on lease cost or lease and maintenance," says David Raistrick, senior manager at KPMG in the UK.

"But what we are starting to see with clients is, effectively, a change in how they think about the cost of vehicles."

This sees them adopt a wholelife cost (WLC) model, where the significantly lower tax, fuel and SMR expenses are taken into account, enabling EVs to be offered in many more company car grades.

"WLC can provide access to more prestige or larger vehicles than may otherwise have not been affordable within an employee's grade," says Claire Evans, head of fleet consultancy at Zenith.

Employers should be flexible with the amount drivers can contribute to the car scheme to ensure a range of EVs are available at all grades, she adds.

For example, if the WLC of a Tesla Model 3 Long Range is £600 and a company's WLC entitlement is £500, then without a driver contribution the vehicle would not be available.

"However, if the driver could pay £100 contribution towards the Tesla, they would pay £0 BIK and yet still be in a better total cost position, compared with the average BIK cost of £300-£400 (40% taxpayer) for equivalent petrol and diesel cars within their entitlement," says Evans.

"The driver gets a £200 to £300 a month saving and the opportunity to switch to cleaner technology at no extra cost to the employer."

Despite the cash and convenience benefits increasing the appeal of an electric company car, research consistently finds there are aspects of EV ownership drivers are always worried about: charging and vehicle range, in particular.

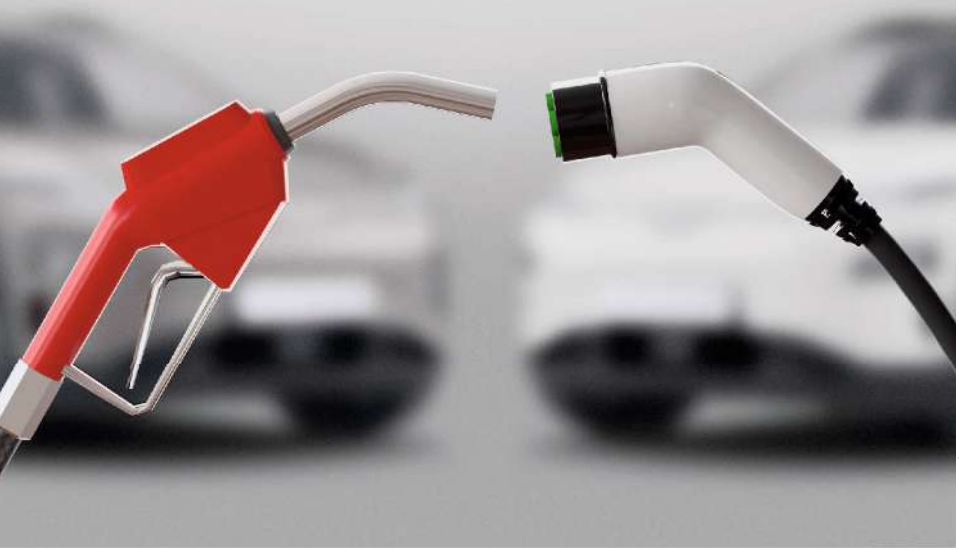
Many fears are unfounded and Evans says can alleviate these by focusing on designing policy and issuing clear communications to help to inform employee choice and remove these perceived barriers.

"Engagement and education are pivotal to successful uptake," she adds. "Successful policies with good uptake offer driver support and education about available vehicles and how to optimise the use of home, work and public charging."

Some organisations arrange roadshows where local dealers or leasing companies take EVs to workplaces so employees can look at the vehicles, drive them and ask experts about them.

BENEFIT-IN-KIND TAX RATES FOR PLUG-IN ELECTRIC CARS

CO_2 (g/km)	Electric range	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
0	n/a	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%
1 to 50	>130 miles	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
1 to 50	70-129 miles	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
1 to 50	40-69 miles	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
1 to 50	30-39 miles	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
1 to 50	<30 miles	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%



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SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By David Savage, Regional Manager, Geotab UK & Ireland

We see a shift in consumer preference, away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and towards electric drivetrains. This is reflected in the Department for Transport's statistics for new vehicle registrations in Q2 2020.

While diesel vehicle sales fell by 81% compared with the same quarter of 2019 and petrol fell by 72% over the same period, there was a 30% increase in the sales of EVs.

This also marked the first time that more EVs were registered than new diesel cars, with EVs making up 7.8% of all new registrations.

To date, light-duty fleets have most successfully incorporated EVs. Of those, EVs are best positioned to succeed in depot-based fleets, particularly last mile carriers and field service operations. The routes and driving patterns of these vehicles are generally predictable and many operate over moderate distances and return to depot after the shift.

Overall, fleets with high vehicle utilisation rates will be in the best position to make the transition to electric. With every electric mile, you save. Higher utilisation makes fuel costs a greater proportion of the total cost of ownership (TCO) of the vehicle, significantly reducing the comparative cost of an EV compared with ICE vehicles.

Since most fleet managers are likely to make a gradual transition to electric, this leaves them with a potentially challenging middle ground, where they are running some ICE and some EVs.

This can present hurdles when it comes to monitoring and reporting, which can be circumvented by choosing the right telematics platform that spans across all drivetrains, and is able to support your EVs.

Managers can then compare fuel-efficiency (equivalent) and other performance indicators across the entire fleet, while also monitoring EV-specific metrics such as battery state of charge all in one platform.

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The growing importance of electrifying your fleet

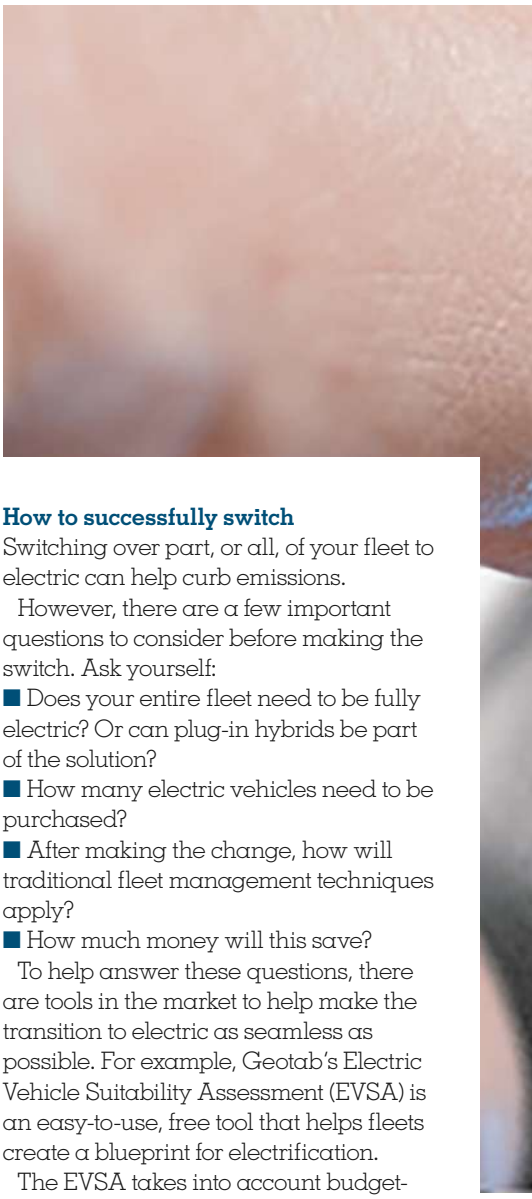
Electric vehicles (EVs) have become increasingly popular across the world in the past few years. And while globally, almost every industry has been disrupted to some level due to the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, EVs have continued to stay important and are playing a key role in meeting net zero carbon and local pollution goals in the UK.

The rise of EV fleet management

Using fleet management tools and software during times like these has also become important. Regardless of how big or small your fleet is, getting ahead of your competition and recognising the power that EVs can bring when combined with telematics will help enable you to become more efficient and save costs.

The UK is a part of Europe's largest markets for electric vehicle sales, with more than 10% of car registrations in 2020 being for hybrid and plug-in vehicles. Alongside this, EVs are also eligible for Government grants and help fleets meet overall sustainability goals. The UK became the first major economy to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050, which requires all greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to zero. EVs will play a significant role in helping consumers reduce their carbon footprint while also helping fleets meet Government mandates.

> "With electrification on the rise, it has become increasingly important and easier than ever to reduce carbon emissions and save on fuel costs"



How to successfully switch

Switching over part, or all, of your fleet to electric can help curb emissions.

However, there are a few important questions to consider before making the switch. Ask yourself:

- Does your entire fleet need to be fully electric? Or can plug-in hybrids be part of the solution?
- How many electric vehicles need to be purchased?
- After making the change, how will traditional fleet management techniques apply?
- How much money will this save?

To help answer these questions, there are tools in the market to help make the transition to electric as seamless as possible. For example, Geotab's Electric Vehicle Suitability Assessment (EVSA) is an easy-to-use, free tool that helps fleets create a blueprint for electrification.

The EVSA takes into account budget- and fleet-specific information to help uncover the vehicles in your fleet most suitable for swapping to EVs. It uses vehicle trip data and engine diagnostics to provide EV recommendations that fit each individual vehicle's driving profile.

With insight such as this, fleets can better understand how much their carbon emissions will go down and how much of an impact EVs will have on the operational budget, plus much more.

Three key factors to consider

Before making the switch to electric vehicles, consider these three factors for maximum results.

1. What are your current costs?

Understanding the current costs associated with the vehicles you are looking to replace will help when

choosing an EV. By analysing and understanding your current expenses, it becomes easier to compare that number with possible future costs. Then, it will be easier to determine whether you are breaking even or reducing the overall fleet budget by switching to EVs.

2. Where and how long does your vehicle dwell for?

Knowing the answer will help when implementing an infrastructure strategy and it will help your fleet vehicles fully charge when they are dwelling. It will also help fleet operators understand the range of their EVs. Since each fleet's dwell time and locations are different, it is a good idea to analyse fleet data when planning the infrastructure strategy for your overall EV adoption.

3. What is your maximum range?

This is a important. Knowing the maximum range a vehicle in your fleet completes in one day, will make it easier to choose the EV you require. Whether it is a short- or long-range battery, it is important to take all factors into account when choosing what kind of EV is needed. Analysing the maximum range of distance driven by vehicles will help provide a better understanding of the EVs needed and help with a simple pass or fail gate when making decisions.

Tools such as an EVSA provides businesses with all the information required to answer the questions above by using your own fleet's data. This will help confirm that you are putting the best-fit EVs into your fleet.

What the future looks like

With electrification on the rise, it has become increasingly important and easier than ever to reduce carbon emissions and save on fuel costs.

Having a telematics platform that can help monitor your vehicles, both conventional and electric, will help organisations stay ahead of the competition while also maximising the return on investment.

Having all your information in one place can strengthen your business strategy and empower fleet managers to optimise all available resources.

Geotab offers a fleet management platform along with many EV-related resources to help fleets adapt to the changing world.

ement, visit www.geotab.com/uk or contact infouki@geotab.com

How Drax Electric Vehicles drove the benefits of electrification for SES Water

The energy expert's partnership approach fast-tracked SES Water's electric vehicle (EV) trial – and helped extend the utility's electrification investment.

The road to carbon neutral

SES Water – supplier for 700,000 people's water needs – uses as much energy as 13,000 homes. The utility, however, made a significant sustainability commitment by moving to 100% renewable source electricity in 2018.

Alongside its electricity supplier Drax, SES Water identified fleet electrification as the next step in reducing its carbon emissions.

The case for electrification

Drax knew that SES Water would need a compelling business case to secure board-level approval.

Understanding existing fleet usage enabled the energy experts to identify the opportunities and potential of electrification.

An EV suitability assessment gave SES Water the confidence to approve a trial involving the replacement of 10 diesel vans with EVs.

The assessment, based on existing-vehicle telematics data, showed that operations wouldn't be adversely affected. It also provided a comprehensive total-cost comparison.

Impartial insights

Drax isn't aligned to a particular vehicle producer or charging hardware, so based its recommendations purely on detailed market knowledge and its analysis of the existing fleet.

Fleet drivers and stakeholders were also given the chance to try the recommended vehicle – Nissan's eNV200 – for themselves.

To develop tailored charging infrastructure recommendations, factors such as SES Water's vehicle selection, the trial's scale, the intended end-user types and relevant sites' power capacities were considered.

On-site, on hand

When planning the charge-point installations, Drax carried out electrical site surveys to understand connection practicalities and build in future-proofing.

They also organised hardware purchases, scheduled and managed works on-site, and provided a single and consistent point of contact for all SES Water stakeholders.

Delivering the goods

Supporting beyond setup, Drax identified a suitable, EV-only leasing partner, facilitated a smooth EV transition, and made sure that the trial delivered its intended benefits.

Additional partnership benefits included maintenance and servicing cover, the integration of telematics with SES Water's existing function,

The trial resulted in a carbon saving of

43 tonnes of CO_2 per year

and a commitment to 'update, detect and correct' charge-point software.

Electrification expansion

Eager to capitalise on the trial's success, SES Water – with Drax's support – expanded the number of active EVs and connected sites, and boosted charge-point numbers to 42 during 2020.

These investments are helping SES Water accelerate towards its target of full-fleet electrification by 2030. Attitudes are changing internally, too. As the utility's Energy and Carbon Manager, Henrietta Stock says, **"Three years ago EVs weren't on the radar but now people are asking for their next company vehicle to be electric."**

Benefit optimisation

Having helped SES Water maximise driving economies based on telematics findings, Drax is also supporting the utility's preparations for capitalising on new opportunities. For example, a trial focused on home-based charging facilities for fleet drivers is in discussion.

Drax continues to monitor vehicle launches and developments such as vehicle-to-grid charging, which will soon offer revenue streams for EV adopters.

drax | Electric Vehicles

WHAT'S THE CHARGE?

Ensuring an electric vehicle has enough charge in its battery to carry out necessary journeys is critical, but what options are available? *Andrew Ryan* reports

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Analysts say that between 70% and 80% of fleet electric cars are charged at home

Charging is regularly identified as being one of the biggest concerns both fleet decision-makers and drivers have about operating battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

A BEV with a flat battery is unusable, while fears over an inadequate public charging infrastructure are likely to fuel anxiety over range and increase any mistrust in the technology.

However, the Government and private sector companies are investing tens of millions of pounds in charge points at homes, workplaces and public locations to help ensure a smooth transition to EVs.

Here we look at these three areas and what they mean to fleets.

HOME CHARGING

Analyst KPMG suggests 70% to 80% of fleet electric cars are currently charged at the employees' homes overnight, meaning this is an area fleet decision-makers should take an active interest in.

This rings particularly true for those organisations whose van drivers who take their vehicles home at the end of the working day, as they will need to be able to charge them before setting off for work the following morning.

The Government's Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) will provide a grant of up to £350 towards the cost of purchasing a home charging point. To qualify, a person must own, lease, or have ordered a qualifying vehicle (including as a company car) and have dedicated off-street parking at their property.

Through the Energy Saving Trust Scotland, the Scottish Government offers Scottish residents and additional grant of up to £300, on top of EVHS.

Some fleets, such as DPD, pay the remaining cost of the charger.

"That's part of our initiative to get the buy-in for electrifying our fleet," says Olly Craughan, CSR general manager at DPD Group UK.

"Our owner-drivers are self-employed and we see it as an incentive to have a home charger paid for; it is theirs to keep."

WORKPLACE CHARGING

As the uptake of BEVs increases due to favourable benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bills and increasing vehicle availability, it will become more important for organisations to introduce charge points at workplaces.

To implement a successful scheme, there are a number of factors to consider.

One of the first is how many charge points are needed. To determine this, a company will need to consider the number of EVs operated both currently and in the future, the number of available parking bays and the available budget for the installation.

They also need to consider what speed of charger is required and this will depend largely on the amount of time the vehicle is parked. If it can be charged overnight, for example, a slow charger may be sufficient, but if the turnaround required is faster, a rapid charge point may be needed. Consider also the speed with which the vehicle can draw the charge – it varies considerably and ➲

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Public charging infrastructure needs to improve to encourage greater EV uptake

ISTOCK.COM/SIMONKR

battery size is not necessarily a reliable indicator.

The cost of buying and installing charge points varies massively: a 7kW charge point capable of charging two vehicles at the same time can cost from £4,000 to install, while a 150kW unit is upwards of £100,000.

The electricity capacity of the site should also be taken into account. If demand for energy exceeds supply to a site then a substation may need to be installed at significant expense.

The Government does offer financial support towards the upfront cost of the purchase and installation of charge points under its Workplace Charging Scheme.

This contribution is limited to 75% – or £350 per socket – of these costs, up to a maximum of 40 sockets per company. These can be on different sites.

PUBLIC CHARGING

The public charging infrastructure has a key role in the successful uptake of BEVs, whether it is used by motorists for a top-up during longer journeys, or if the driver does not have access to another form of charging, for example.

However, it does come under a lot of fire for being inadequate for current and future needs, but there are signs this is changing.

Department for Transport statistics show that in October there were 19,487 public charging devices available in the UK, an 18% year-on-year increase. Of these, 3,530 were rapid devices.

Huge investment is being made to improve the infrastructure, with the Government, for example, providing £500 million over the next five years, while private sector companies are also spending significant amounts.

Another key area for the public infrastructure is payment. "It's not typically as simple to recharge your EV and pay as it is rolling up to a petrol station," says Aaron Berry, deputy head, energy and infrastructure at the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

"Sometimes you need a special app, sometimes you can't use a credit card. These sorts of issues can be really frustrating for EV users and that's something Government ministers are keen to address."

Solutions are becoming available with Zap-Map, for example, launching a Zap-Pay app which will allow users of a number of charge point providers to pay using a single app.

Also, all rapid charge points installed from spring this year (2020) should provide debit or credit card payment.

Reliability can also an issue, with OLEV saying 7% of chargers can be out of action at any one time.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO CHARGE A VEHICLE?

This depends on three factors: the speed of the charge point, the size of the vehicle's battery and the speed of its on-board charger.

Charge points tend to be split into three categories:

- **Slow – typically from 2.3kWh to 6kWh, and include domestic 230v household sockets and lamppost chargers. A 3.7kW charger will add up to 15 miles of range per hour.**
- **Fast – typically between 7kW and 25kW. A 7kW charger will add up to 30 miles per hour, while a 22kW unit adds up to 90 miles in the same time.**
- **Rapid – these have been 43kW AC chargers or 50kW DC chargers, but faster options, including 150kW and 350kW, are also becoming available. A 43kW-50kW charger will add up to 90 miles in 30 minutes, compared with a 150kW unit's 200 miles.**

It is not just the speed of the charge point which affects the time it takes to charge a car: the power rating of a vehicle's on-board charger will also determine this.

"You could plug a car into a 150kW rapid charger but if its on-board charger takes 43kW, it would still take the time that a 43kW charger would take," says Rob Anderson, senior fleet specialist at Cenex.

As an example of this, the Hyundai Kona Electric with a 64kWh battery takes nine hours 15 minutes to charge from a 22kW charge point when fitted with 7.2kW on-board charger. If the same vehicle is specced with a 10.5kW on-board charger, this time falls to six hours 50 minutes.

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GIVE IT A SPIN: THE BENEFITS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR FLEET MANAGERS

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Environmental and economic benefits of EVs are clear, says *Poppy Welch*, head of Go Ultra Low

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused major disruptions to our behaviour, from increased homeworking to changes in how we move around our towns, cities and rural areas.

The fleet industry is no exception, with recent research revealing an increasing desire for company car vehicles from employees.

As mobility habits change, it's important that fleet managers consider how an increase in company car use can align with sustainability targets.

One solution is ensuring that employees are offered electric vehicles (EVs) as company cars and are made aware of the financial and environmental benefits they offer.

EMPLOYEE APPETITE FOR EVs

Employees are likely to be receptive to this, as Go Ultra Low research recently found office workers are keen for their employers to take environmental action, with 69% agreeing that the business they work for could do more for the environment.

Despite these positive findings, 33% admit they are better at taking care of the environment at home rather than at work.

Recognising there is room for improvement in terms of workplace sustainability, electric mobility was an area in which they saw an opportunity to make a positive environmental choice.

Our research found that 70% of employees thought that companies should offer EVs as company cars, with two-thirds (63%) happy to drive an EV.

It's clear that UK office workers want further action from employers and are keen to access the environmental benefits of driving EVs, which improve local air quality as they produce zero tailpipe emissions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For the past five years Poppy Welch has been head of Go Ultra Low, the joint Government and industry campaign to promote the uptake of electric vehicles. Its website can be found at Goultralow.com/fleets-and-businesses

GOING GREEN TO STAY AHEAD

In terms of the finances, EVs are highly cost-competitive for company car drivers. Employees often chose to forgo company cars due to their tax implications. However, in April this year the Government reduced benefit-in-kind (BIK) taxes for fully electric vehicles from 16% to 0%.

EVs also provide cost reductions over the lifetime of ownership. When comparing running costs, an EV can be driven for as little as 1p per mile, compared with 8-10p per mile for even the most fuel-efficient petrol and diesel vehicles.

They also have fewer moving parts than conventionally-fuelled vehicles, providing long-term maintenance savings.

> "THERE IS STILL CONFUSION ON THE SAVINGS EVS OFFER TO BUSINESS FLEETS"

In addition to these day-to-day savings, switching to an EV fleet can save further money for businesses as they incur reduced national insurance contributions (NICs).

Yet, despite these changes having taken place in April, research from LeasePlan UK revealed that half (49%) of HR bosses and senior business leaders thought that an EV salary sacrifice scheme would actually add extra cost to their organisation – showing that there is still confusion on the savings EVs offer to business fleets.

DRIVING FORWARD

The environmental and economic benefits of EVs are clear, while improving vehicle ranges, an ever-growing charge point infrastructure and an increasing number of models available are giving drivers further confidence to switch.

As a result, we've seen a surge in EV demand – registrations of fully electric vehicles in 2020 have risen by 169% so far – showing how the UK is embracing electric mobility.

While it may take some businesses time to transition to a fully electric fleet, they can start by switching a proportion of their vehicles to electric. Only by testing the technology will companies be able to experience both the commercial and reputational dividends EVs offer.

MAKING THE SWITCH

When protecting the bottom line has never been more important, EVs provide financial benefits for employees and businesses alike.

What is more, they also offer fleet managers a more sustainable option at a time when employees are demanding action on the environment.

The Government's announcement to bring forward the ban on the sales of new diesel and petrol cars and vans to 2030 has brought that date sharply into focus for the fleet industry.

But it was already at the forefront of Severn Trent Water's mind as it last year committed to operating an entire fleet of electric vehicles by then.

This is part of its triple carbon pledge, which will also see the water and waste company achieve carbon neutrality and use 100% renewable energy by 2030, well ahead of the Government's 2050 target.

The organisation has already recorded a number of successes – it already generates more than 50% of its energy through its own renewable sources and procures renewable backed electricity for the remainder. But, transitioning the fleet of around 400 cars, 1,500 vans and 150 HGVs and tankers to electric brings its own challenges.

"Before the triple carbon pledge we were trialling electric vehicles (EVs) and charge points, but this (Government announcement) has ramped up our ambitions," says David Gibbin, energy flexibility manager at Severn Trent Water, which is a member of the EV100 group.

One of its first steps was to commission a fleet review from low-emission vehicle consultancy Cenex (see panel, p46), to identify what vehicles were available, the timescales involved in electrifying each vehicle segment and the roadmaps around new technologies.

"That provided some real clarity for us about what was possible now and what areas might be more difficult," says Gibbin.

Severn Trent Water's sustainability report, published earlier this year, outlines some of the actions it will take.

These include buying only electric cars from now on, reaching 100% in use by 2026 in line with its fleet replacement programme, while the company also began purchasing small electric vans for shorter trips this year.

Larger vans – as well as light commercials which can tow – are identified as more of an issue through limited availability, but Severn Trent Water expects greater numbers of suitable models to go on sale in the next few years and plans to buy only electric vans from 2023 onwards.

The organisation will also explore how it

SEVERN TRENT WATER TARGETS ELECTRIC-ONLY FLEET BY 2030

Water and waste company commits to zero carbon future and to use 100% renewable energy. *Andrew Ryan* reports

can weight its fleet towards smaller vans – for example, by carrying less kit – to speed this process.

It has already identified vehicles which could now be changed for EVs and these tend to mainly be the ones which have well-defined routes and are left at Severn Trent Water sites overnight where they can be charged.

"Those are definitely the low hanging fruit, but we have still got an operational base that is very reactive to jobs such as a pipe burst in the middle of a field in the middle of nowhere that requires a lot of tools and equipment," says Gibbin. "They can't go electric yet as we need the vehicle technology, range and payload to improve, so there's a balance for us."

Severn Trent Water's sustainability report says, based on today's outlook, electric options for its HGVs and tankers may not be available by 2030.

"There will have to be a shift in technology to hit the pledge we made for those, but we have identified there'll be some sort of alternative fuel for them which will still fit in with the overall ambition to decarbonise the fleet by 2030," says Gibbin.

Among the low-carbon options Severn Trent Water is investigating are hydrogen and biogas. The organisation may be able to produce the latter from its own operations.

It already generates the equivalent of more than 50% of its energy needs through solar panels, wind turbines and anaerobic digestion, which is a by-process of sewage treatment.

"We have a real opportunity not only to fuel our own vehicles on our sites, but actually fuel them in a green way and there's a push to make the most of this opportunity," says Gibbin.

A key part of Severn Trent Water's fleet electrification is to demonstrate value for money: its sustainability report estimates the EV strategy will begin to deliver wholelife cost benefits

> "THAT (FLEET REVIEW) PROVIDED SOME REAL CLARITY FOR US ABOUT WHAT WAS POSSIBLE NOW AND WHAT AREAS MIGHT BE MORE DIFFICULT"
>
> **DAVID GIBBIN, SEVERN TRENT WATER**

Severn Trent Water plans to buy only electric vans from 2023 onwards to replace its existing diesel vehicles

from 2022, helping to lower operating costs.

"Our finance team has built a cost model that looks at the overall total life cost of the vehicle, breaking down the options we had to build our strategy," says Gibbin.

"That is crucial, really, to say 'yes, we can do this and it is worth us doing it', not only from an environmental perspective, but from a business perspective.

"Ultimately, we're a regulated business, our customer bills go towards us running the company, so we have to be careful to use their money in the most sustainable and cost-effective way."

Severn Trent took on its first electric vans – seven Nissan eNV200s – two years ago to trial and also operates a number of electric all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on its sites.

At the beginning of November, it expanded its electric fleet with 19 Hyundai Kona Electric models and will take delivery of nine more electric vans before the end of the year to give it 35 EVs.

In May, it announced it had teamed up with EVBox to install 352 chargers at its sites, with this project due to be completed by the end of next year.

As well as being used by operational vehicles, the workplace chargers should encourage grey fleet drivers to switch into EVs as they will help remove any charging anxiety employees may have, says Katherine Hawker, transport manager at Severn Trent Water

"Everybody has the same barriers with EVs – it's always cost, charge and range," she adds.

"If you can provide a charge point at work, that almost takes away one barrier."

While Severn Trent Water's initial uptake of EVs may appear low, Gibbin says the company is using this time wisely.

"Over the next couple of years we'll learn a hell of a lot about charging, and also about the vehicles themselves as we put more out on the fleet to a point where we're ready for the big uptake in our numbers," he adds.

ANALYSING REAL-WORLD DATA IS ESSENTIAL BEFORE RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE MADE

Cenex's review of Severn Trent Water's fleet identified reductions of 52,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions and 80,000kg of NOx when the transition to a fleet of low emission vehicles is completed.

"The overall aim of a review is to help a fleet identify which low carbon technology fits which vehicle in which operation," says Rob Anderson, senior fleet specialist at Cenex.

Key to carrying out a review is accurate data. This includes the vehicles currently on the fleet, the mileage they cover, their duty and replacement cycles and fuel use, as well as information such as the weight commercial vehicles carry.

Anderson says Cenex analyses this using data from real-world vehicle trials it has managed and this also covers factors such as whether the vehicle is being operated in urban or rural areas.

A review aims to identify a roadmap of what vehicles can be transitioned to electric and when, as well as outlining what charging infrastructure needs to be installed.

"Some organisations, say, give us two cases: total cost of ownership (TCO) neutrality, or an analysis if money was no object to put the right low emission technology across the entire fleet," says Anderson.

"With TCO neutrality, in some instances you'll get cars and small/medium vans which will make significant TCO savings. Those savings can be used to offset the increased costs of low emission technology in other vehicle segments, so it balances the books."

Anderson recommends fleets run trials to help build acceptance of EVs. "If you are getting two or three vans in for three or four months, share them out so different people can drive them and understand the technology," he adds.

"There's fear, there's uncertainty, there's doubts, but we find most of those can be overcome as soon as people drive an EV and understand the technology."

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Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Vivaro-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 205 miles (WLTP). Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Grandland X Hybrid range 165kW – 221kW (225 – 300PS). Combined mpg (l/100km): 192 (1.5) – 204 (1.4). CO_2 emissions: 29 – 31g/km. Electric range: up to 35 miles (WLTP). Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Mokka-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 201 miles (WLTP)*. Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Corsa-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 209 miles (WLTP).

*Provisional data. The range and electric consumption figures mentioned comply with the WLTP test procedure, on the basis of which new vehicles are type approved from 1 September 2018. They may vary depending on actual conditions of use and on different factors such as: vehicle load, accessories fitted (post registration), speed, thermal comfort on board the vehicle, driving style and outside temperature. The charging time depends in particular on the power of the charger on board the vehicle, the charging cable and the type and power of the charging station used. Please contact your Vauxhall Retailer for further information. Vauxhall Motors Limited reserves the right to change, amend or withdraw sales allowances and/or amend pricing at any point in time in anticipation of any tariffs, duties taxes or other costs that Vauxhall Motors believes may increase its cost of importation and/or supply of vehicles after the 31 December 2020.

COMING SOON

Matt de Prez looks at the response from manufacturers to growing demand for electrification

ALFA ROMEO

Tonale: Alfa is on the back foot when it comes to electrification. The Tonale compact SUV, due to launch early next year, will be its first plug-in hybrid and is expected to use the same powertrain as the recently launched Jeep Renegade 4XE.

CITROËN

e-C4: It's not the first electric Citroën, but the e-C4 is the brand's first mainstream EV. Priced just shy of £30,000, the SUV-inspired hatch promises a 217-mile range and is fitted with a number of Citroën's Advanced Comfort features. By 2025, the brand will offer an electrified version of every car in its model range.

AUDI

Q4 e-tron: Joining the existing e-Tron SUV, the new Q4 e-tron will be a smaller fully electric model with an expected range of up to 280 miles and prices from £40,000. Audi says it will launch 20 EVs and 10 new plug-in hybrids by 2025.

CUPRA

El-Born, Formentor PHEV: Electrification is a key part of Seat's performance off-shoot brand, Cupra. The el-Born shares a platform with the VW ID3, promising a range of more than 300 miles and a strong focus on driver engagement. The new Formentor crossover will also launch with a plug-in hybrid.

BMW

545e, iX3, i4, iX: The first new electric model to join BMW's line-up in 2021 will be the X3-based iX3. The brand will also launch a new electric version of the 4 Series, known as the i4, as well an X5-sized flagship EV called iX. In addition, the 5 Series will gain a more potent six-cylinder 545e plug-in hybrid. By 2023, the group will offer no fewer than 25 electrified models.

DS

DS9: Armed with a promise of going 'electrified-only' by 2025, DS's new saloon car will be available with a range of plug-in hybrid powertrains shared with other models in the Groupe PSA stable.

FIAT
500: The iconic Fiat 500 is going fully-electric in 2021, with an all-new high-tech model. It offers two battery options with a range of up to 199 miles and is priced from £22,995.

FORD
Mustang Mach-E: Ford may have used a historic name for its new electric SUV, but the rest of the car is thoroughly modern. It will go on sale in 2021, priced from around £40,000. There will be two battery sizes available and rear- or all-wheel drive, giving a range from 260-370 miles.

JAGUAR
XJ, E-Pace and F-Pace PHEV: Jaguar's next electric model will be the XJ luxury saloon. There's no word on specs yet, but we'd expect big power, long range and rapid charging speeds. While there doesn't appear to be any plug-in hybrid versions of the current XE and XF on the horizon, Jaguar is bringing the technology to the E-Pace and F-Pace SUVs.

JEEP
Compass 4XE : Jeep might not be the first brand that comes to mind when thinking about efficiency, but following its plug-in hybrid debut with Renegade, the brand will also introduce the powertrain on its Compass model.

LEXUS
UX300e: Lexus is no stranger to the electric motor, but the UX300e is its first car not to pair one with a combustion engine. The £43,000 SUV offers a range of up to 196 miles and develops 204PS.

MAZDA
MX-30: It might look more like a concept car than a production model, but the MX-30 will shortly arrive in the UK, priced from around £30,000. The modest range of 130 miles will be boosted by the introduction of a range-extender version in about a year's time.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Nicola Austin, senior fleet analyst at Zenith

Reducing emissions and moving to electric vehicles (EVs) is one of the hottest topics and it's not just in fleet, we're also seeing consumer focus switch to electric.

Manufacturers are offering more EV choices, which is great news for fleets looking to fast-track their sustainability targets.

From a driver's perspective, little beats the excitement of a brand-new car, especially when it's electric, with significantly reduced benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax and vehicles packed with innovative technology.

Over the past quarter, one-in-three car orders at Zenith was for an EV.

With the rise of EV, fleet managers are looking for assurance that electric choices will not only meet current and future business travel needs, but will also suit their employees' differing lifestyles.

So, how do you guarantee a successful transition to a cost-effective, attractive and future-ready EV fleet? The key is having access to EV Gurus to provide expert knowledge and support, enabling managers and drivers to navigate the world of EVs.

With their expert knowledge, EV Gurus offer insight into everything from the rapidly developing charging infrastructure to tax and Government initiatives. Drivers typically need support with understanding range and how to charge their EV – a significant shift from current practice of simply driving to a filling station.

By working with Zenith, you and your employees will gain access to our own EV Gurus. We're here to help drive your business forward.

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MERCEDES-BENZ

EQA (pictured), EQB, EQE and EQS: Mercedes-Benz is expanding its range of EQ electric vehicles with six new model additions to its range, the first of which are expected to arrive in dealerships next year. The EQS, a fully-electric version of the new S Class will be the first to launch. It will be followed by the EQE executive saloon plus a pair of related SUV models. An EQA compact SUV and larger EQB will also begin production next year.

AVAILABLE NOW: EV CARS BRAND-BY-BRAND

Make	Model	Price (P11D)	Grant	Range (WLTP)	Fastest charging time (20-80%)
Audi	e-Tron*	from £60,545	£0	176	30 mins
BMW	i3*	from £35,970	£3,000	188	40 mins
Citroën	e-Spacetourer	from £48,426	£3,000	148	20 mins
DS	DS3 Crossback E-Tense	from £33,935	£3,000	200	20 mins
Honda	e	from £30,105	£3,000	136	30 mins
Hyundai	Kona EV*	from £33,095	£3,000	180	30 mins
	Ioniq EV	from £33,895	£3,000	194	40 mins
Jaguar	I-Pace	from £65,140	£0	292	40 mins
Kia	e-Niro*	from £32,540	£3,000	180	40 mins
	Soul	from £37,240	£3,000	280	40 mins
Mercedes-Benz	EQC	from £65,665	£0	259	30 mins
	EQV	from £70,610	£0	213	30 mins
MG	ZS EV	from £28,440	£3,000	163	40 mins
	5 EV	from £27,440	£3,000	214	40 mins
Mini	Hatch Electric	from £27,845	£3,000	144	30 mins
Nissan	Leaf*	from £29,790	£3,000	168	30 mins
Peugeot	e-208	from £28,970	£3,000	211	20 mins
	e-2008	from £32,010	£3,000	206	20 mins
Polestar	P2	from £49,845	£3,000	292	20 mins
Porsche	Taycan*	from £83,580	£0	252	20 mins
Renault	Zoe	from £29,940	£3,000	245	40 mins
Seat	Mii Electric	from £22,745	£3,000	161	40 mins
Smart	ForTwo	from £20,295	£3,000	84	2 hours
	ForFour	from £21,880	£3,000	81	2 hours
Tesla	Model 3*	from £43,435	£3,000	254	20 mins
	Model S*	from £74,925	£0	379	30 mins
	Model X*	from £82,925	£0	314	30 mins
Vauxhall	Corsa E	from £30,610	£3,000	205	20 mins
	Vivaro-e Life	from £37,590	£3,000	144	20 mins
VW	ID3*	from £32,935	£3,000	263	40 mins

** alternative models with longer ranges are available. Range shown is for cheapest version*

ŠKODA

Enyaq: Sharing a platform with the upcoming VW ID.4, the Enyaq SUV will provide more than 300 miles of range and be priced from £33,450. It will be the first of five new Škoda EVs to launch by 2025.

SUZUKI

Across: Suzuki will expand into the plug-in hybrid market for the first time with its Toyota RAV4-based Across SUV. With 300PS, it's the most powerful production Suzuki and, at £45,599, it's also the most expensive.

TESLA

Model Y – The seven-seat Model Y is already on sale in America, with UK sales expected before 2022. It is likely to cost from £35,000 when it arrives on British roads and will have the ability to 'supercharge' 75 miles of range in five minutes.

TOYOTA

Rav4 PHEV – Expanding the already popular Rav4 line-up in 2021 will be a new plug-in hybrid version that promises an electric-only range of 46 miles and has a 300PS power output.

VAUXHALL

Mokka-e: Following the launch of the Corsa-e and Vivaro-e, the Mokka-e will be next all-electric Vauxhall to go on sale. It has a range of 201 miles and shares a base with the recently-launched Peugeot e-2008.

VOLVO

XC40 Recharge: Volvo has already almost entirely electrified its model range, but the XC40 P8 Recharge will be its first all-electric model. It serves up 400PS, with a 260-mile range, for just shy of £60,000.

VW

ID4, Tiguan PHEV, Arteon PHEV: VW will expand its electric-only ID range in 2021 with the new ID4 SUV. Like the smaller ID3, it will be sold with a range of power outputs in rear- and four-wheel drive guises. The brand is also introducing plug-in hybrid engines for the Arteon and Tiguan.

AVAILABLE NOW: PHEV CARS BRAND-BY-BRAND

Make	Model	Price (P11D)	CO_2	EV range	BIK %	Charging time (hrs)
Audi	A3 TFSI e	£33,005	24	41	6	4
	A6 TFSI e	£53,285	35	34	10	2
	A7 TFSI e	£60,235	40	31	10	2
	A8 TFSI e	£85,005	57	29	14	2
	Q5 TFSI e	£49,665	55	26	14	2
	Q7 TFSI e	£65,180	72	28	17	3
BMW	225Xe	£36,420	39	28	12	2
	330e	£39,390	30	37	10	3
	530e	£47,980	35	36	10	3
	745e	£78,410	46	33	10	3
	X1 25e	£38,145	41	31	10	3
	X2 25e	£38,735	39	35	10	3
	X3 30e	£48,450	44	28	12	3
	X5 45e	£64,690	27	54	6	7
Citroën	C5 Aircross Hybrid	£35,315	32	34	10	2
DS	DS7 Crossback E-Tense *	£42,970	32	34	10	2
Ford	Kuga PHEV	£33,370	32	35	10	4
Hyundai	Ioniq PHEV	£30,195	26	39	10	3
Jeep	Renegade 4XE *	£32,545	49	26	12	2
Kia	Niro PHEV	£30,210	31	36	10	3
	Ceed Sportwagon PHEV	£29,940	33	29	12	2
	Xceed PHEV	£30,640	32	30	10	2
Land Rover	Discovery Sport P300e	£45,315	44	38	10	0.5
	RR Evoque P300e	£43,795	44	41	6	0.5
	RR Sport P400e	£72,915	75	30	18	2
	Range Rover P400e	£89,230	78	30	18	2
Mercedes-Benz	A 250 e	£32,925	23	44	6	2
	B 250 e	£35,225	27	42	6	2
	CLA 250 e	£37,395	23	43	6	2
	C300 e	£40,814	33	34	10	2
	C 300 de	£42,960	32	34	10	2
	E 300 e	£46,175	37	34	10	2
	E300 de	£47,425	33	34	10	2
	GLA 250e	£39,940	32	37	10	3
	GLC 300 de	£48,635	49	27	10	2
	GLE 350 de	£61,305	19	66	6	3
MG	HS PHEV	£29,940	43	32	10	3
Mini	Countryman PHEV	£32,925	39	26	12	2
Mitsubishi	Outlander	£35,760	46	28	12	0.5
Peugeot	3008 Hybrid *	£36,545	30	36	10	4
	508 Hybrid	£34,890	29	33	10	4
Porsche	Cayenne Hybrid *	£68,358	89	27	20	4
	Panamera Hybrid *	£83,718	74	32	17	4
Renault	Captur E-Tech	£30,940	34	30	10	3
	Megane E-Tech	£30,940	30	30	10	3
Seat	Leon e-Hybrid	£30,915	27	40	6	4
Škoda	Octavia iV	£30,710	22	43	6	4
	Superb iV	£33,535	28	35	10	4
Toyota	Prius PHEV	£32,645	28	31	10	3
Vauxhall	Grandland X *	£32,335	30	35	10	4
VW	Golf GTE	£35,905	36	32	10	4
	Passat GTE	£36,735	28	36	10	4
Volvo	S60 Recharge	£45,175	38	32	10	3
	V60 Recharge *	£45,175	41	32	10	3
	S90 Recharge	£55,250	42	31	10	3
	V90 Recharge	£55,250	47	31	10	3
	XC40 Recharge *	£39,075	47	28	12	3
	XC60 Recharge *	£50,625	55	29	14	3
	XC90 Recharge	£67,550	63	28	15	3

** alternative models with longer ranges are available. Range shown is for cheapest version*

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Glow on charging cable for illustrative purposes only.

Dundee City Council corporate fleet operations manager Fraser Crichton

Dundee united in the battle to banish chronic air quality

City lies in bowl of an eroded volcano which stops gases escaping. A decade ago the council embarked on an EV journey to counter health threat. *Stephen Briers* reports

Once consumed by issues of range anxiety and cost, today the biggest quandary for fleets considering the introduction of electric vehicles (EVs) centres on charging infrastructure – and, specifically, workplace charging.

On paper, it seems simple enough: get a supplier to install a few points at the office and away you go.

However, the complexities of local grid capacity, charge point power outputs, number and type of charge points required and negotiating with office landlords, exacerbated by worries about the availability of public charging to provide supplementary support, mean many companies are fearful of even starting the process.

One recommended course of action is to turn to those that have already bought the t-shirt. And there is, arguably, no better place to start than at Dundee City Council.

Dundee began its electric journey 10 years ago, initially with its own council fleet, then with businesses and residents city-wide. By 2035, it intends to be a fully electric city. Along the way it will have tested, trialled and invested in every type of charger to power its own fleet and those of local businesses and residents.

Almost £6 million has already been spent with another £5m earmarked over the next few years in depot chargers, hub chargers, pop-up chargers, rapid chargers, high-powered HGV chargers, solar-powered car park chargers and pay-as-you-go schemes, as well as the EVs themselves.

There have been many learnings for Fraser Crichton, Dundee City Council corporate fleet operations manager and architect of its EV strategy. An early one taught him the importance of understanding an individual vehicle's charge capacity.

"Our bin lorry has five 60kW battery packs, so we naturally assumed we needed a big charging capacity," he says. "But it can only take 40kW per hour! In comparison, a coach can take 135kW. You have to understand the vehicle and what it can actually pull."

He adds: "It was a big learning curve – and not just for us. The manufacturer put the charging point halfway down the bin lorry – it would require an eight-foot cable! So, it's also a learning curve for the manufacturer. We can help to develop new products, but it needs to be a partnership that starts earlier in the production development cycle."

Dundee's electric story was forged from a need to address its chronic air quality. The city sits in the bowl of an eroded volcano which prevents poisonous exhaust gases from escaping its centre. It had some of the most polluted streets in Scotland.

Crichton's electric epiphany was two-fold. He attended a climate emergency meeting where the finger of blame was pointed at transport and, at around the same time, he took delivery of his first Nissan Leaf.

"It was a game-changer," he says. "As a result, I decided to pilot four vehicles and four chargers at our depot on a six-month trial."

Ironically, one of the elements which exacerbates Dundee's high pollution levels is also its EV saviour: its 150,000 people live in an area measuring just eight miles by five. Such a condensed population results in low mileage which makes it ideal for early adoption of EVs.

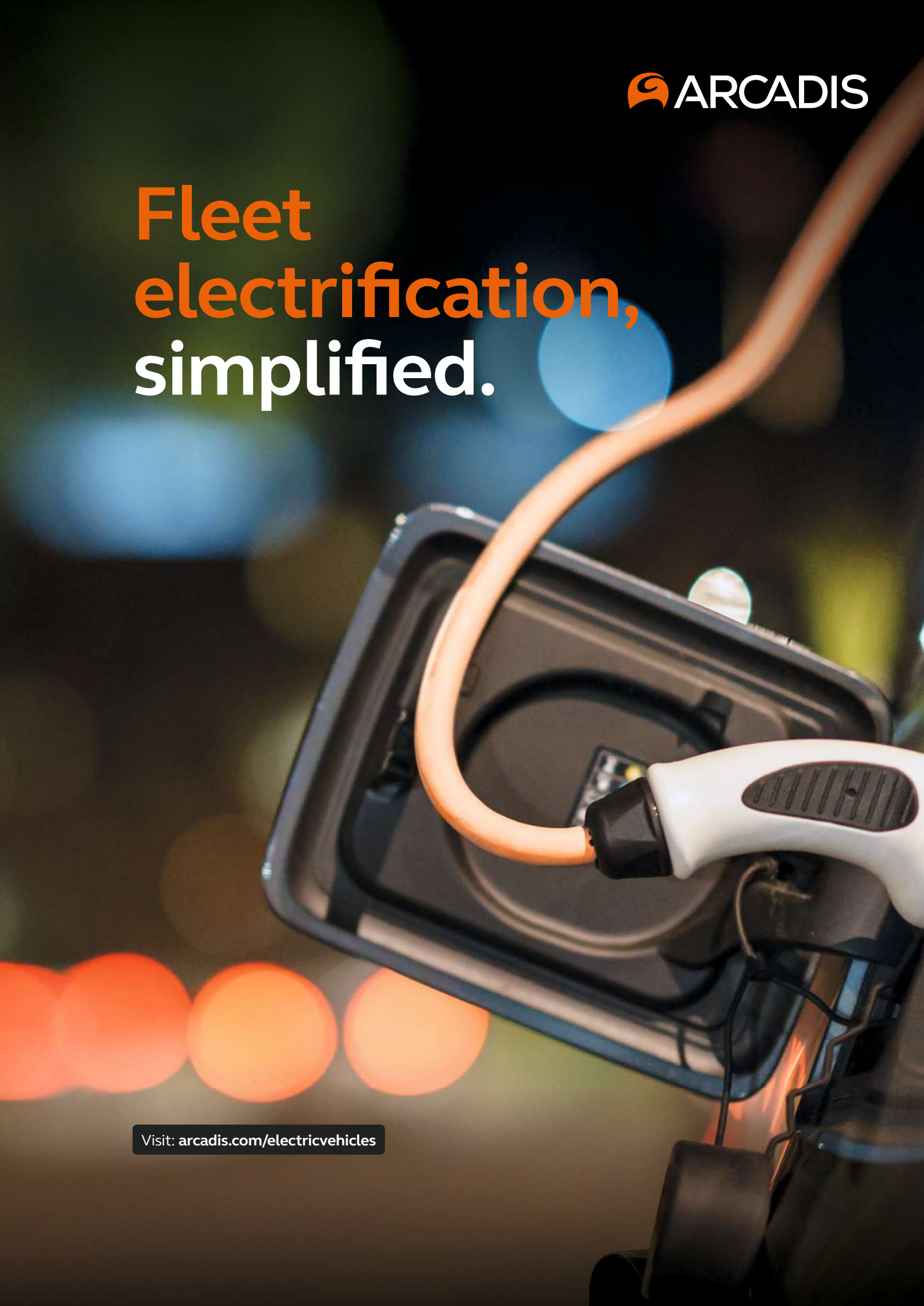
"After two or three years we had 20-30 EVs and infrastructure in our depots, but we realised that the council could only do so much," says Crichton. "If we were serious about it, we had to engage other partners, such as the NHS, taxis, other councils and local universities and colleges."

Crichton attended *Fleet News* events to learn from other fleets and from manufacturers about their EV plans. He also travelled to Oslo to learn about hub charging. That was another lightbulb moment.

"It was key because 51% of Dundee's population lives in tenements so we have charging issues," he says. "We also have a big taxi fleet and that's where the concept for the hubs became a viable strategy."

Oslo was also a lesson in sustainability. To turn Dundee green, the city would have to look to renewable energy to reduce its reliance on the grid.

Its projects now focus on solar and second-life batteries for storage, such as the flagship Princes Street, one of three solar-powered charging hubs in the city (a fourth is due to ➲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The Princes Street facility is one of three charging hubs in the city with solar power

open soon). Over the course of a year, they are exceeding 100,000 charging sessions – almost 300 per day on average.

Many of these sessions are taken by the city's 180 electric taxis – which account for 26% of the local taxi fleet. They typically spend six-to-eight minutes on a charge between fares two or three times per day.

Location was critical when it came to the hubs, ensuring they were accessible to as many fleets and drivers as possible. The council spent two years in the planning stages, engaging local businesses and the community, undertaking surveys on various options and getting buy-in to its plans.

The Princes Street hub took 13 weeks to build and was completed in 2018 with funding from a £1.86m grant from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles.

It consists of six 50kW rapid and three 22kW fast charging units which can charge two vehicles simultaneously, giving total capacity for 18 vehicles. On-site photovoltaic cells provide 36kW of power with the battery storage solution allowing 90kWh capacity. The solar system allows the EV hub to reduce demand from the national grid at peak times to take advantage of off-peak charging tariffs.

"We will increase each of our hubs with 150kW chargers – they are already prepared with future-proof thicker cabling," Crichton says. "But the 150kW chargers will be for business only, not the public because it will just cause queues. People naturally go to the sites where there are multiple chargers and then head for the most powerful because they think it is always quicker."

A second hub, targeting the public, is sited on the outskirts of the city in a train station car park next to a cycle/walking path.

> "(CHARGING OVERNIGHT IN MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKS) GIVES A SAFE OPTION"
>
> **EMMA WEST, DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

"This is our multi-modal hub," says Crichton. "We want them to leave their vehicle there and have the option of train, bike, including e-bike, or walk into the city."

Not everyone can, or will, walk or cycle, particularly in poor weather, so the council has started adding charge points to multi-storey car parks nearer the city centre. Powered either by solar panels on the roof or solar 'buckets' on the floor which feed into a battery storage system, their dynamic load charging systems mean they can be run entirely off renewable energy. At night, residents are given preferential charging rates, which takes their cars off the road.

Emma West, low carbon project assistant at Dundee City Council, says: "This gives residents a safe option to leave their car overnight and it's a solution for people in tenements or those with no off-street parking so they can also switch to electric cars."

Crichton is now developing a park and charge app for the multi-storey car parks which will enable him to adjust pricing in real time and influence where drivers head to park, thereby reducing congestion levels in the city.

He is also adjusting to the impact of Covid-19, which has seen traffic fall as more people work from home.

"We have offered monthly passes, but we're seeing changes to working patterns with perhaps three days in the city and two at home," Crichton says. "So, we will give them credits to encourage them to use our renewable charging infrastructure rather than charging at home off the grid."

In its enthusiasm to transform the city's air quality, the council made a mistake: it didn't charge local companies from the beginning. Speed of uptake was the primary concern.

"We only charge 15p per kilowatt – with discounts for residents – to keep the cost low and encourage uptake, but it was hard to introduce a tariff from nothing," says Crichton.

"I recommend others charge from the start. Companies had based their business costs on free charging so, when we introduced the charges, they had to change their calculations."

While the city centre infrastructure is extensive, there are still areas where owning an EV is not possible. Again, Crichton is working on a solution: pop-up chargers.

"We can put the infrastructure into the streets," he says. "We looked at lampposts, but they are too far from the kerb, so they become a trip hazard. We saw the pop-ups

More pop-up chargers will be introduced over the next few years

CORPORATE FLEET OPERATIONS MANAGER: Fraser Crichton
LOW CARBON PROJECT ASSISTANT: Emma West
FLEET: 150 cars, 315 vans, plus HGVs
FUNDING: cars – 75% leased, 25% outright purchase; vans outright purchase
OPERATING CYCLE: 3-4 years lease, 5-6 years purchase; EVs 8-10 years

in Oxford and started our own trial in October. We think it will solve the residential issue."

Activated by app, the 7kW Urban Electric chargers sit flush to the floor when not in use enabling full pavement access. The trial will last nine months.

Building the EV infrastructure is just the first step. Equally important has been the publicity campaign to encourage business and residents to make the switch to electric. A notable milestone for Dundee came when council leader John Alexander swapped his two internal combustion engine (ICE) cars for a Nissan Leaf and got on the campaign trail to promote the new charging infrastructure.

"It requires a huge media campaign to tell local people and businesses what you have done," says Crichton.

The council could at least draw on its own vast experiences when extolling the virtues of EVs. It has more than 200 on fleet, ranging from cars to vans to refuse trucks, and can offer extensive insight into creating a workplace charging infrastructure.

"The rule of thumb is when you get to around eight vehicles you need a rapid charger – we have 50kW at our depots, but we are going up to 150kW now – with slower chargers as back up," advises Crichton.

"Basic 7kW chargers are enough for just a few vehicles, but we need to be able to give vehicles a quick charge, especially when they've not been plugged in properly overnight."

He adds: "If you have 16 electric vehicles, you need eight charge points. A Leaf will do around 150 miles so that's two days' worth – it's roughly a 50% calculation. But that ratio will reduce as the battery range increases."

However, it isn't simply about charge point power. As Crichton previously discovered, draw down capability is key, even for cars: the Kia Nero accepts 96kW, the Nissan Leaf 64kW, for example. And you can't simply install lots of 150kW charge points because of the demand on energy. It's also a significant investment, each costing around £64,000; a 50kW charger is a relative snip at £22,000.

"You need a mix of different chargers, including standalone, wall-mounted, fast and rapid," Crichton says. "In the next two-and-a-half years, we will have a full infrastructure that will allow a complete fleet changeover."

That means all the council's 150 cars and 315 vans will be electric, while its entire fleet of heavy commercial vehicles will make the switch within seven-to-eight years.

As the number of EVs on a fleet rises, so the demands change. "When you get into the 40s and 50s, you have to have proper management of the chargers. For example, with HGVs, the manager will have telematics that tells them how much charge is left on each vehicle and who needs to charge next so they can prioritise," explains Crichton.

The council operates 150 charge points with 15-18% of charging via renewable energy sources. However, it is installing more solar panels on council buildings, which should enable it to get to 35-40% over the next couple of years.

The business case for EVs is forever strengthening as prices come down. Service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs are typically 30% lower than ICE vehicles, while comparable running costs are around 2-3p per mile versus 17ppm.

The council also includes emissions in its business case, incorporating figures from the NHS which show the impact of air quality on health. Supported by grants to install the infrastructure, the payback comes quickly.

"We get payback on an electric van versus a diesel van within three years," Crichton says. "For HGVs, the annual fuel saving is £15,000. And one electric bin lorry saves the CO_2 of 20-25 vans."

Operating cycles can also be lengthened for the EVs. Dundee keeps its leased cars for three or four years, but it has Peugeot Ions dating back more than eight and is enjoying excellent residual values (RVs) when they are remarketed.

"We could keep electric cars for 10 years because we're not seeing huge degradation in the battery – the capacity has only reduced to 85%," Crichton says. "The RVs are incredible – we're getting £4,000 for the Ions and up to £10,000 for the (Renault) Zoes. We are seeing big demand from students."

He also anticipates keeping electric vans for an additional two or three years above the usual five-to-six-year term.

Crichton has encountered obstacles along the way (see panel), from planning to engineers to local grid capacity, but determination and an admirable belief in the need to tackle environmental and air quality issues have seen them swept aside. Sitting at the heart of the fleet department also helped.

"I'm the transport manager so I can move things more quickly," he says. "Some other cities rely on air quality people and it leads to a disconnect between fleet and the infrastructure requirements."

CRICHTON ON...

...avoiding the 'porky pies'

Fleets need to be wary of "roadblocks" when it comes to investing in a charging infrastructure, including in the planning stages and from engineers, according to Fraser Crichton.

"You have to be able to manage around them," he says. "Set goals on where you want to be."

Procurement was a case in point. "We got 17 companies in and whittled them down to eight. We had to do a lot of due diligence because we heard some porky pies about their system abilities," Crichton says.

Dundee City Council opted for Austrian technology group Swarco.

"It has to be a partnership. If a charger goes down, it's either the hardware that isn't good enough or the service maintenance isn't good enough," he says. "We have 98% operability of our charging network and our own service engineers, so any downtime is sorted quickly."

He adds: "The DNOs (distribution network operators) struggled with the idea of renewable energy to start with. You need to get them on board from the beginning."

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ARI 'challenges status quo' following business review

New UK managing director Nick Caller sets out an 'aggressive' plan for growth focused on finance lease and fleet management services. *Stephen Briers* reports

Amid all the chaos and uncertainty of Covid-19 and the double lockdown, ARI has found a little quiet time for some introspection.

With a new man at the helm of the UK operation since September 2019, the chance to reflect on the broad portfolio of services and take soundings from long-standing customers has led to a more focused business. All energy is now put into its core proposition of fleet management and the growing opportunity offered by finance lease funding.

UK managing director Nick Caller describes the previous 15 months as "a time of learning". He came from outside the industry, having been a customer of ARI while head of procurement at HP. His purchasing background stretches back 21 years.

"This enabled me to challenge the status quo," Caller tells *Fleet News* during his first media interview. "If you ask the 'stupid' questions, you often get interesting answers."

His introduction to the business has been complicated by the pandemic. But changes to working practices throughout the UK, with many people spending more time working from home, did shine a light on the need for exceptional communication.

"It was clear that customers were demanding more communication. Our core strength is our transparency, but we had to communicate even more than before," Caller says.

ARI set up bi-weekly customer forums where it provided company updates. But the meetings also became a vehicle for peer-to-peer communication among its customers. Problems were resolved, such as the fleet which had a shortage of vehicles connecting with another business that had a surplus – they ended up sharing assets.

One of the biggest challenges was managing network logistics among its 500-plus independent service and repair workshops. ARI frequently had to shift vehicles from one site to another due to Covid-induced closures. And with a large proportion of its circa 120 customers labelled as essential services, volumes remained high.

"However, the lockdown has offered us the time to look at our core areas. For good intent, we had in the past tried to be all things to all persons. We wanted to delight our customers," Caller says.

"If I look at it through a buyer's lens, you want suppliers to be experts in their core fields and not

COMPANY: ARI
UK MANAGING DIRECTOR: Nick Caller
TIME IN ROLE: 15 months
CUSTOMER BASE: circa 120 fleets
No OF VEHICLES: circa 100,000
KEY PRODUCTS: Complete (cars and vans); Complex (trucks/O-Licences)

be all things to all people. You are looking for operational excellence in that area of expertise."

This moment of enlightenment led the business to start assessing how it could standardise its products. "We asked customers and we gave them what they wanted, not the nice-to-haves. I didn't have an agenda about what great looked like – I let our customers tell us."

KEY SERVICES AS STANDARD

ARI's two products are branded 'Complete' for fleets operating cars and vans ("our traditional sweet spot") and 'Complex' for those with trucks and O-licence requirements. Key services are included as standard with a menu of optional extras, including accident management, compliance management and 24-hour support.

"We shifted a lot into options and said this is what we are focusing on as our core. Core is what we offer to 80% of our customers and the other 20% is the flexible add-ons," Caller says.

"Traditional SMR (service, maintenance and repair) is still at the heart of what we do; we are still a fleet management business."

Coronavirus didn't just create the space in which ARI could review its core proposition; it also put the spotlight on its funding business – a flexible alternative to traditional funding, says Caller.

"It highlighted that our finance lease product is disruptive. We were able to help customers with their lease portfolio and minimise their costs," he says. "It (Covid) reinforced that this is another core area that we want to focus on – it is a product that I want to aggressively grow.

"There are more corporates out there looking at the opportunity to outsource their fleet management and funding. Often, this is driven by fiscal pressures. The current environment has identified new customers that we didn't envisage going to market due to those fiscal pressures."

His growth aspirations will be driven by funding over the next three years, targeting cars, vans and trucks.

LOW STARTING POINT

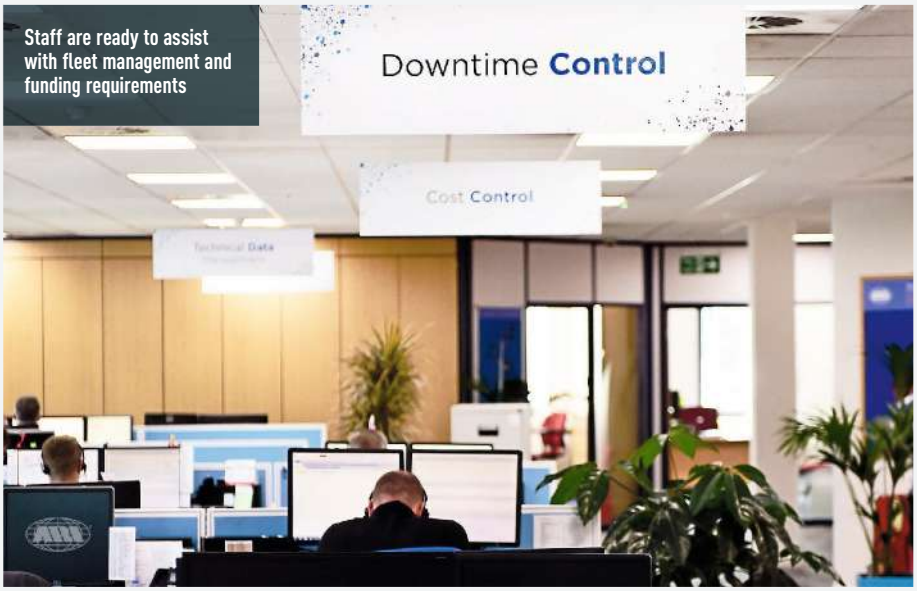
The current base point is low; "several thousand units" is all the detail Caller is willing to divulge. "I expect us to grow that five times within three years," he adds.

"We have a KPI (key performance indicator) that is aligned to the *(Fleet News)* FN50; we have mapped out our aspiration to be a top 10 player within five years."

That would require a funding book of at least 50,000 vehicles, based on 2020 figures. The expectation is that those fleets would also be fleet management customers, meeting ARI's goal of providing a "wraparound service to our funding product".

To reinforce that proposition, ARI is investing heavily in its portfolio management service, a

ARI's UK headquarters is in Chippenham, Wiltshire



Staff are ready to assist with fleet management and funding requirements

standard part of both Complete and Complex products. It provides the added value dazzle and has data at its heart.

"We have our own data from 100,000 (UK) assets and company data from two million global assets," says Caller. "It gives customers insight into, for example, when parts are likely to fail on a vehicle or the optimal time to replace a vehicle.

"We can say to a customer 'come out of that vehicle in two months because it will either cost you more in maintenance or the residual value will give you the most back'. Or we can say 'stay in that vehicle because now isn't the best time to replace'."

A crucial element is the Insights management platform which is being developed to better bring together data and knowledge to provide fleets with actionable insights that lead to clear outcomes.

Cars, vans and trucks remain at the heart of the ARI business and its growth aspirations. The 100,000 vehicles under fleet management are split 80% under Complete (cars/vans) and 20% under Complex, "although they are 80% of the work", says Caller.

Both sectors have plenty of potential, although ARI only targets companies operating at least 25 vehicles and stays away from freight. Its preferred market has around 2.5 million cars and vans and 400,000 HGVs.

"Generally, the traditional Complete business is often an entry point, but that conversation quickly morphs into the heavies. The Complex side could become a greater share of our overall business, but I don't ever see it getting to parity," Caller says.

"We also expect to see a continued move away from company cars, be that to affinity schemes or cash. And this leads to the mobility agenda. The past few months have given people cause to reflect on mobility and what it means. There are still lots of unknowns."

REASONS FOR CAUTION

Those unknowns give Caller reason to take a cautious approach.

He explains: "I don't want us to be at the forefront of mobility. There's a lot to be shaped yet about what the customer actually wants. I'm happy for others to make the big investments and we will look at the outcomes, while partnering at a global level across the supply chain."

ARI parent company, US-based Holman Enterprises, has been working closely at the global level with manufacturers on vehicle connectivity, having identified the benefits to fleet management of having access to reams of real-time data.

"I look at the car of the future as being a mini data centre; an aggregator of data that we can share real time," Caller says.

"Locally, we are wait and see; globally we are investing. We will be able to leverage that as we move forward."

Jo Vickers, head of fleet and accident management (second from left), and Adrian Bewley, assistant vice-president, Enterprise Holdings, collected the award from Christopher Macgowan OBE, chairman of the judging panel (right) as event host Steph McGovern looks on

Award-winning adaptability helps shape Enterprise Covid response

Customers were called on a daily basis to help ensure business stayed relevant. *Gareth Roberts* reports

Enterprise Rent-A-Car's ability to adapt its business to changing customer demands helped it win the Best Rental Company accolade at this year's Fleet News Awards.

Since then, this adaptability has also enabled Enterprise to navigate its way through some of the trickiest trading conditions, due to the coronavirus crisis, the company has ever seen.

Adrian Bewley, assistant vice-president for European business rental at Enterprise Rent-A-Car, says: "I wouldn't underestimate how quickly the world changed in March (when the first lockdown was introduced). Demand from our customers changed almost overnight."

The expectation of service demand and delivery, according to the sector customers operated in, had gone. People were not travelling any more.

One of the biggest issues for the industry was providing customers with the confidence that they would not catch Covid-19 by renting a car.

"Customers were saying 'I will continue to rent vehicles from you if I know I'm safe and secure, and I won't catch the disease'," Bewley continues.

"We needed to restore confidence in the market and that's one of the reasons we've seen such a high adoption rate during the crisis based on our ability to provide a safe product."

Enterprise reinforced its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness back in May by announcing the Complete Clean Pledge for its car rental operations, as well as its commercial vehicle rental, retail car sales, car club and vehicle subscription services.

Paul McCorkell, assistant vice-president of business rental UK and Ireland, explains: "Our pledge has just become a way of life now. It includes a 20-point inspection process, which is followed every time. Customers need to know and feel confident that we're doing these things."

Fleet News: So how else has coronavirus changed the rental experience for customers?
Paul McCorkell: What we're seeing now is to have as much of a 'low touch, no touch' approach to rental experience as is possible. Ultimately, low touch is going to lead to a no touch contactless rental in the coming weeks and months.

It's something we've been working towards, but it's now been expedited during this time of crisis. We've just continued listening to our customers and one of the key things we heard back from them and our employees was they wanted as minimal contact as possible during the handover.

FN: How else have you had to adapt services during the pandemic?
PM: We've had to respond to the fact that people are just travelling differently.

We saw a lot of customers want to use rental cars and car clubs as an alternative to public transport, especially when the lockdown was first lifted.

Customers were also looking to hire vehicles for longer periods of time to add to their own fleet. We've really had to react and adapt to the changing circumstances.

Our branch staff, the people on the frontline, have been phenomenal. They've shown real compassion and empathy to our customers and adapted really well.

FN: Are more fleets looking to flexible rental rather than contract hire because of the crisis?
PM: All organisations now are having to make tough decisions about their capital investment; should they purchase vehicles for the long term, if so, how many?

They've got so many questions that are quite difficult for them to answer at the moment and, because of that uncertainty, organisations are looking for more flexible alternatives. We've seen a massive rise in that area.

It works both ways, with organisations wanting to take on additional vehicles, because of increased demand and others may want to reduce their fleet due to reduced demand. Our Flex-E-Rent division allows them to add or remove vehicles at very short notice.

FN: What about people working from home, what impact has that had?
PM: One of the areas we're seeing growing demand is from organisations wanting to help us deal with their grey fleet.

As more and more people are starting to work from home, it changes the way our corporate customers are going to travel.

Previously they might have used a pool car, but now they're working from home and that option is not available to them, they're much more likely to use their own vehicle.

We're working with customers to help them introduce travel management solutions, such as Enterprise Travel Direct, our online travel management tool.

FN: How difficult has it been understanding changing customer needs?
Adrian Bewley: We found a way to be relevant as often as we possibly could. We talked to our customers at least once a day to find out what the challenges there were on that particular day and how we could help.

By being proactive it enabled us to understand how we might form that new level of relevance.

We were very resolute, we kept asking our customers questions, 'how are we going to move people and goods around in the future, how will it look different?' and we've heard some creative ideas from our customers which have allowed us to adapt.

By being in private ownership, it's given us the privileged position to think about it and it's given us some valuable information of how things might look a year or two hence, but there is nothing happening right now that I can say this is going to be a change for the future.

FN: How dramatic is the change you've seen in the market and do you think it's here to stay?
AB: We have noticed a monumental shift. Business travel may have changed for good – I don't know yet – but people who would travel on a plane to go to a meeting now aren't doing that.

We've changed our approach by listening to people and adjusting our services based on their requirements, while complementing other services to simply move people around.

Maybe 10 years ago we would have seen ourselves competing with trains and buses, we don't any more.

It is more about providing a complementary service based around the fact that people will decide the best way to travel.

We're there to support an already established infrastructure.

PM: For example, we've partnered with LNER to place vehicles at key stations along the mainline train route.

We've also got car club bays within 500 metres of 181 UK train stations.

We're continuing to focus on accelerating our transportation solutions. In the past 10 years, we've invested nearly $3 billion (£2.3bn) acquiring mobility companies across the globe, we're working with municipalities to develop mobility as a service solutions for cities, we're board members of the pan-European MaaS Alliance and we chair the working group that provides guidance for cities for implementing MaaS.

New software from Enterprise Rent-A-Car now also gives fleets detailed benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax information from daily rental and car clubs.

The new functionality on the rental company's Enterprise Travel Direct platform aims to ensure drivers and employers are compliant with HMRC rules.

Organisations can use the management information provided through ETD to investigate exceptions and to create reports in case of an HMRC audit.

Employee car clubs can have BIK implications if employees use the vehicles for private mileage.

Businesses must therefore keep an accurate record of mileage, origin and destination of each trip taken in a dedicated car club vehicle, ensuring no private use, which Enterprise's platform now automates as part of the booking process.

FleetNews AWARDS 2020

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

Enterprise has a comprehensive rental and mobility service with plenty of innovation. An excellent all-round performer, with true 24/7 service support for fleets, the company is piloting next-generation mobility as a service technology to enable fleets to consider the best multi-modal travel solutions across bike, train, car club and rental. An impressive, sector-leading service provider.

> "CUSTOMERS WERE SAYING 'I WILL CONTINUE TO RENT VEHICLES FROM YOU IF I KNOW I'M SAFE AND SECURE, AND I WON'T CATCH THE DISEASE'"
>
> **ADRIAN BEWLEY, ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR**

COMPANY: Enterprise Rent-A-Car
ASSISTANT VICE-PRESIDENT FOR EUROPEAN BUSINESS RENTAL: Adrian Bewley
ASSISTANT VICE-PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS RENTAL UK AND IRELAND: Paul McCorkell
UK HEADQUARTERS: Egham, Surrey
NUMBER OF BRANCHES: 450-plus
FLEET SIZE: 100,000-plus vehicles
AVERAGE VEHICLE AGE: 11 months

BUSINESS BENCHMARKING TO ENHANCE SAFETY

New online process will allow fleets to measure progress anonymously. *David Williams* reports on behalf of DfBB

Benchmarking appears simple on the face of it. Look it up in any dictionary and you get a range of straightforward, broadly similar definitions.

The online Collins English Dictionary says a benchmark is 'something whose quality or quantity is known and which can therefore be used as a standard with which other things can be compared'. By way of example, it adds: 'The truck industry is a benchmark for the economy', offering a range of synonyms including 'reference point', 'gauge', 'yardstick' and 'measure'.

The one synonym it omits is the very one – famously – many transport professionals adopted as shorthand for costs borne by industry in terms of collisions; 'the KitKat'.

It passed into road safety lexicon after food giant Nestlé – which produces the chocolate-covered wafers and that operates more than 30,000 vehicles globally – calculated it needed to sell 235 million KitKats to cover its fleet insurance costs each year. That was 15 years ago and Nestlé has since made huge strides in road safety.

Other benchmarking yardsticks are also the stuff of legend. One DIY giant reportedly calculated the number of cement bags it needed to sell to offset delivery truck door-mirror damage costs. A logistics firm calculated how many paperwork shipments it had to make simply to cover fleet damage costs.

All of which demonstrates the extent to which UK industry has traditionally gone its own way when it comes to measuring, costing and recording at-work collisions (30,692 in 2019, according to the Department for Transport – DfT).

PANEL OF EXPERTS

It's a major challenge now facing Fleet Safety Management founder Andy Price, one of a panel of transport experts pioneering a new online benchmarking process. Under the wing of RoadSafe, in partnership with *Fleet News* and in support of Driving for Better Business (DfBB), the DfT-funded project aims to overhaul how fleet managers, bosses and business owners measure their individual road safety and environmental performance, against other organisations.

The programme will, for the first time, let organisations, large and small, compare and contrast their achievements against similar fleets, giving them ammunition to improve their own performance. Benchmarking will provide participants with new comparative data to support internal business cases and provide valuable sources of information for sustainability reporting programmes.

The programme will encourage organisations to use DfBB's existing Online Gap Analysis. This comprises more than 60 questions probing road safety management procedures, organisational leadership and culture, journey and mobility management, vehicles, distance travelled, collisions, driver recruitment and other key metrics. On completion, users automatically receive feedback which allows them to benchmark against good practice.

Before the new benchmarking process can even begin however, Price faces the herculean task of analysing vast quantities of data from scores of fleets to calculate precisely what the average performance of a UK fleet is, broken down by vehicle type (cars, motorcycles, heavy commercials and light commercials).

This analysis will underpin the online benchmarking tool, allowing users to overlay their own data, determine their own performance, and react accordingly.

Price has many years' experience in the fleet insurance sector on which to draw. The task is, nevertheless, monumental because, to date, UK fleets have used wildly differing indices to measure performance.

Many have focused not on road safety metrics, but client satisfaction metrics. As transport professionals attest, some fleet operations neglect even basic record-keeping.

"Some don't know how many vehicles they have, don't carry out driver licence checks, or accurately record collision data," says Price. Others might record the cost of collisions, but not frequency; others measure frequency, not costs.

ISTOCK.COM/URFINGUSS

ISTOCK.COM/BAJINDA

Nestlé opted to characterise its fleet insurance costs in terms of how many KitKats it needed to sell to cover the outlay

The discrepancies – which until now have made it impossible for firms to benchmark their performance against their peers – run even deeper.

"There are so many variables just with fleet make-up for example," says Price. "They could be operating different types of vehicles – cars, vans, heavy goods vehicles, or different types of heavy goods vehicles. There could be a different vehicle age profile or different costs for those cars. Then there are different journeys they're making and whether that's predominantly urban, inter-urban or mostly motorway. Every organisation is different, even ones nominally performing a similar role. Then you've got different make-up of the drivers, different geographical locations...".

EFFECTIVELY SELF-INSURED

Even insurance statistics can be of little use. Each firm has a different insurance programme; a different deductible or different excess, says Price. Are they measuring the total cost or just claims that come above the excess?

Some are, effectively, self-insured because their excess would be in the multiple thousands of pounds. When it comes to insurance, you're not comparing apples with apples.

"Trying to marry this lot up is quite a challenge," admits Price, who formerly headed up Zurich Insurance Group's European fleet safety practice.

One of the first measurement challenges will be defining what a collision is. Some organisations count only insurance claims. Vehicle damage, possibly from multiple minor incidents, sometimes isn't recorded until the end-of-life vehicle returns to the lease company.

"There's now a role for us to define what a collision is," says Price. "I would suggest anything involving a moving vehicle is probably a collision but should you include damage while parked? Do you include windscreen claims? One argument is we include everything, which gives us a better handle."

Even then, there are challenges to overcome. "You can have two almost identical crashes, but with totally different outcomes," says Price. "Driver 'A' loses control and leaves the road. Driver 'B' makes an identical error but hits a pedestrian, hugely skewing the cost of that incident."

After lengthy deliberation, the panel has decided to launch the tool with two key criteria: collisions per million miles and the average cost of a collision. It will be down to Price to standardise the data (which will be anonymised), so it reflects a true picture of fleet safety – and costs – today.

"We shouldn't underestimate the challenge just getting a handle on those two measurements, however," says Price, who says the tool will need regular updates, to keep it current as underlying patterns evolve.

POTENTIAL AWARDS ARE SIGNIFICANT

Launching the tool will require significant manpower, experience and know-how. But, Price believes, the potential rewards are significant too. "Given the over-representation of work-related journeys in collision statistics, anything organisations can do to improve road safety should have a knock-on effect on overall collision statistics in the UK," he says.

Adrian Walsh, RoadSafe executive director, agrees: "Harmonising all the data is a challenge but it will be a function of the project to even it out – and then make it clear whether or not an individual organisation is making progress," he says.

Eventually, Walsh wants additional layers of information incorporated. "I would like to see good management information including factors like fuel costs, the length of time people are employed, the amount of time they are driving, that kind of thing. It's those sorts of risks, the human risks, that need to be compared. What we need to do is put in mechanisms for benchmarking – measuring – good practice.

"The two things that will make roads safer are improving the safety of vehicles and of the infrastructure; those are the big wins. Reducing the risk that drivers pose to themselves, by influencing things like their driving hours, distraction, workload wellbeing, all make a difference so from that point of view those things will help to make the roads safer – but you have to be able to benchmark them first."

Finance, too, enters the equation. "The reason we're doing benchmarking is to get people to understand where they sit relative to others," says Simon Turner, DfBB campaign director. "Put simply, if you tell organisations they can test themselves against the measurements, and discover how to improve, instead of crashing, they will also save money. If you have a management problem and you can fix that, you perform better, more safely, more efficiently - and control costs."

Regardless of whether it's measured in bags of cement, boxes of documents – or KitKats.

The Driving for Better Business online gap analysis tool will help businesses identify any areas within their current management practices that could be improved. It will also show you what activities are considered to be a minimum standard for legal compliance, and what leading employers and regulators would consider to be good practice.

ISTOCK.COM/MALERAPASO

THE VIRTUAL FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

The first ever Virtual Fleet & Mobility Live show brought together 900 visitors from across the fleet sector over three days to learn from some of the UK's top experts, legislators and policymakers, and network with leading suppliers and manufacturers

Baroness Vere of Norbiton, parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Department for Transport, welcomed delegates to each day in a specially recorded video message.

Recognising the challenges presented by the coronavirus and the "absolutely vital" role played by fleets, Vere said: "Your efforts ensured that people could still access essential goods and services and that workers who needed to, could continue to work safety and maintain and support our vital infrastructure."

She added: "The fleet industry continues to be the beating heart of the UK economy, driving productivity and remaining at the leading edge of our decarbonisation and mobility agendas."

Virtual Fleet & Mobility Live hosted 24 seminar sessions, running across three key themes: mobility, electric vehicles and operational excellence (which covered safety, cost savings and Covid management). Total seminar views topped 3,500 at an average of almost four per visitor.

Meanwhile, 40 exhibitors showcased their products and services in two halls, plus seven manufacturers in the EV and Hybrid Showroom (p26 for details). Combined, they entertained 6,365 visits, with each delegate visiting, on average, seven booths.

Decarbonisation was a hot topic throughout the three days, featuring heavily in both the mobility and electric vehicle (EV) session streams.

Presenting on day one, Darren Handley, head of infrastructure grants at the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), said 2020 had seen a "turning point" for zero emission vehicles with demand driven by company car taxation, Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) exemption and the plug-in grant scheme.

"This year has been transformational," he said. "We've seen a rocketing number of ultra-low emission vehicles registered, up 175% compared with last year."

However, Handley recognised a key challenge was the charging infrastructure – workplace, home-based and public.

"To help with the grid, we have smart requirements; we continue to see what we can do with new building regulations to make new homes have EV+ charge points; and then we have our schemes to help build up that infrastructure," he said.

"We have grants for installing charge points at home and workplaces. The workplace charge point scheme is there for staff use or depots.

"We also have an on-street residential scheme which provides money to local councils to fit charge points."

The decarbonisation theme was also taken up by Polly Billington, director at UK100, the network of local government leaders that have pledged to shift to 100% clean energy by 2050.

Billington called for "seamless access to EV charging infrastructure across the UK" to accelerate the uptake by UK businesses and public transport operators.

"If we want to give people confidence that buying or leasing or hiring an electric car is the right thing to do, then the infrastructure needs to be there," she said. "We certainly know that is a key part of transforming our transport system."

Ahead of COP26 next year, UK100 will "ask Government to change the rules at national level to enable more net zero action to happen at a local level", Billington added.

Mobility is widely discussed but not fully understood by many UK businesses. The public transport infrastructure for mobility as a service (MaaS) lags behind other countries with competing operators unwilling to share timetable and passenger data to enable universal smart ticketing and booking.

Virtual Fleet & Mobility Live delegates heard from global category manager Jarno Pajunen, based in Helsinki, Finland, about how his organisation Nokia was tackling the mobility challenge.

Nokia has more than 10,000 company cars worldwide which are leased and managed by the leasing/fleet management companies in the various countries.

It began looking at mobility in 2017, starting with car sharing. Pajunen said the impetus came from young, environmentally-conscious employees who were joining the business.

Nokia ran some pilots and "we realised quite soon that it is not a solution for the need, but it can be part of something bigger", he said.

The pandemic has sped up work on MaaS solutions as cars are in little use during lockdowns. It's about offering employees flexibility – including renting a car, using a taxi or using public transport.

Nokia is looking at bundling together all company

benefits, including gym membership and health insurance as well as mobility, into one platform ("a benefit-as-a-service platform", said Pajunen).

"We are very open; we don't have the solution by ourselves," he added. "We need to partner with other companies to find a solution and the mobility area is so fast developing. We need to find the correct partners that are the developers."

Pajunen's session was one of the most popular at the show which also saw Feras Alshaker, deputy director highways at the Office of Road and Rail, outline the safety and efficiency improvements made by Highways England to the strategic road network in its first five years of operation.

Alshaker said Highways England successfully achieved 95% of its commitments for the delivery of major improvement schemes in Road Period 1, which ended in April.

"We want to see new efficiencies in Road Period 2 from new initiatives. Clearly that is a challenge, but it's absolutely necessary. We want to see an improved focus on customer need," Alshaker added.

Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at National Grid, attended all three days: "It was a herculean effort by everyone, and I thoroughly enjoyed it – I probably listened to more seminars than I would have done at the live event!" she said.

Chris Connors, head of facilities and fleet at Countryside Properties, added: "The interaction with the suppliers in chat was very good and it enabled me to catch up with a few people that I hadn't spoken to in a while.

"One of the big benefits to me is the ability to still be able to watch the content that I missed. There were a couple of key seminars that, unfortunately, I was unavailable to make; however, I am now looking forward to catching up at a suitable time."

Like Connors, you can still access all of the seminar sessions via our catch-up service which is available until December 18. Simply visit fleetandmobilitylive.vfairs.com

MINISTERS' MINDS FOCUSED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FREIGHT

David Elvy, head of future freight strategy at the Department for Transport (DfT), said the National Infrastructure Commission's report – *'Better delivery, the challenge for freight'* – published in spring 2019, highlighted how the industry had been overlooked by Government.

He explained: "The headline theme is that in the past, and indeed sometimes in the present, Government has been 'freight blind'.

"That's to say it's focused on the passenger and the private motorist, but it has not really tried too hard to get into how our freight system works and how better policy, better investment in infrastructure, could support the freight sector."

Covid-19 and Brexit has helped focus ministers' minds on the importance of freight and persuade Government to create a new status for the industry, according to Elvy.

They are drawing up a Government and industry freight forum, which will be chaired by Rachel McClean, minister for the future of transport and decarbonisation.

The aim of the freight strategy is to establish a well-functioning market for freight that serves the interest of its customers, but one that also supports the delivery of the Government's wider societal, environmental and economic objectives.

Elvy said: "We're trying to improve internal governance of our approach to freight and to logistics and our supply chains. We're not looking to unpick what's gone before."

He said he hopes to publish the strategy in May or June 2021.

TALK OF THE TOWN

"Very impressed with the Virtual Fleet And Mobility Live event. Excellent choice of suppliers to engage with and some really clever tech to make it an enjoyable user experience. Well done guys!"
Colin Jones, fleet manager at Cancer Research UK (Twitter)

"Some great discussions all around decarbonisation and how organisations are looking at plans to meet the Government's targets."
Mike Gadd, managing director at AssetWorks (Twitter)

"Great day yesterday at Virtual Fleet And Mobility Live, really interesting and thought-provoking seminars."
Alison Moriarty, fleet risk director at DRiiVE (LinkedIn)

"Thoroughly enjoying the Fleet And Mobility Live virtual conference today. Interesting and insightful discussions with virtual stands and knowledgeable guest speakers."
Lorna Carpenter, fleet manager at Western Union (LinkedIn)

"In such times, it is great to see this event still going ahead. Albeit slightly different to previous years."
Richard Parker, corporate sales manager at Webfleet Solutions (LinkedIn)

"Fantastic to be part of such a well organised and exciting virtual event."
Matt Goodstadt, divisional sales director at Civica (LinkedIn)

"We have enjoyed meeting delegates of this year's Virtual Fleet & Mobility Live."
Richard Hipkiss, managing director at Fleet Operations and TraXall UK (LinkedIn)

"It's been a great couple of days at Virtual Fleet And Mobility Live."
Steven Lewis, corporate sales manager at Webfleet Solutions (LinkedIn)

"While nothing can beat physically being at an event to experience everything it offers, the first virtual Fleet And Mobility Live offered benefits that would not be possible otherwise."
SG Fleet (LinkedIn)

"The software to enable interactions looks really slick. In our view, it could actually make it easier to meet and engage with people."
The Fleetworks Software Company

MANUFACTURER ROUND-UP

Reporting by Matt de Prez

BMW

With three fully electric vehicles (EVs), plus a number of plug-in hybrids, BMW Group had plenty to share with delegates at VF&ML.

Rob East, general manager Corporate Sales at BMW Group, described "a really exciting 12 months with some product that we believe will resonate with fleet".

The brand has a commitment to have 25 electrified vehicles by 2023, with 13 of those pure electric.

It is also launching Inside Edge, a new customer engagement portal to give company car drivers a brand experience similar to that of a retail buyer.

"The more we can understand the needs of the company car driver market, the better we can support them. It's a rewards-based programme that includes number-plate recognition and allows us to have a more meaningful relationship with company car drivers and better understand how they use their car," East said.

With an expectation that more people will look to re-enter company car schemes in the coming years, East summarised: "We want to continue to be easy to work with, consistently innovative and to deliver the very best customer experience."

FORD

Ford is on the brink of launching its first mainstream production EV, the Mach-E, which will be followed soon by its first electric Transit van.

These will be key models for fleet and crucial for Ford to achieve its 2021 CO_2 emission targets.

Neil Wilson, fleet director at Ford, said the brand has a lot of electrification technology coming next year, including hybrid engines for the S-Max, Galaxy and Kuga.

Updates to existing models, such as the Focus 1.5 diesel, have led to total cost of ownership of around £1,000 during the vehicle's lifecycle and its RDE2 compliance means benefit-in-kind tax is lower too.

With new electrified models in the pipeline, Wilson said there are new benefits to educate drivers about and that education process will be a priority for Ford's fleet team.

"I think we will see a movement back into company cars with new electric and plug-in hybrid models," he added.

Ford has several other initiatives to help fleets in 2021. It is investing heavily in uptime management and will be expanding its fleet service centre, working closely with its dealer network to know when a vehicle is off the road, and expanding its mobile service network.

FCA

A showcase of the all-new electric Fiat 500 was among the highlights from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) at this year's event.

With the first of its electrified products coming to market, the brand says it is now better placed to serve the needs of the fleet sector.

Iain Montgomery, fleet, business and remarketing sales director at FCA, said: "We've seen a real advancement in our electrification strategy with 500 BEV, Ducato BEV and Jeep PHEV, all of which really give us the opportunity to break into that market with some exciting cutting-edge product."

He believes the new line-up gives FCA the opportunity to engage with new customers that it has previously not been able to.

In order to ensure it has the right level of resource to deal with fleet customer requirements, FCA has partnered with CPM which will give it a dedicated field-force fleet team and backroom support.

Montgomery said the brand has also worked hard with residual value (RV) setters to make sure it gets the best RVs to give its new models the best start in the market.

Additionally, its newly launched Fleet Hub provides a one-stop shop for customers to look at how FCA models compare with competitor products.

MG

With record sales already achieved this year, MG has been busy launching new products to further boost its model line-up. The MG 5 EV and HS plug-in have just gone on sale, joining the existing ZS EV to give the brand a trio of fleet-focused electrified models.

Geraint Isaac, national fleet sales manager at MG Motor UK, said: "We have a momentum and growth plan which is built upon growing our volume organically – through our dealer network and new products – but we also target sales channels individually, so we focus on good solid fleet business, building strong foundation long-term business and that, obviously, protects our residual values."

One of MG's priorities is to grow its customer base. It has already secured a place on the choice lists of some big organisations and is talking about supplying vehicles for their essential car users.

When looking at total cost of ownership, Isaac said the new MG 5 EV has lower wholelife costs than some comparable petrol and diesel products, making it ideal for fleets.

The brand has secured strong supply volumes of all its EVs, meaning vehicles are available with short lead times. Issac also highlighted that as MG's cars come from outside the EU, its future pricing will not be affected by the outcome of any EU trade deals.

TO WATCH THE **FULL INTERVIEWS** WITH THE FLEET BOSSES, GO TO **FLEETANDMOBILITYLIVE.VFAIRS.COM**

RENAULT

Renault is part way through a major product launch plan, which has a focus on electric technology. The new Clio Hybrid, Captur plug-in hybrid and Megane plug-in hybrid are the most recent additions.

Next, the Arkana will arrive with the same hybrid technology as the Clio, in early 2021, strengthening the brand's C-segment position.

Mark Dickens, fleet director at Groupe Renault UK, said: "A lot of hybrids on the market assist the petrol engine, our hybrid is an EV-first so the petrol engine helps the electric motor."

The newcomers sit alongside the fully-electric Renault Zoe and the brand's electric van range.

As more fleets look to switch to EVs, Renault has launched a new division named Elexent to help businesses with charging solutions. It provides fleet managers and business owners with access to advice on how to integrate EVs into their fleets and the necessary infrastructure.

Renault is also establishing a direct sales unit, using an agency model. Dickens said it will enable the brand to provide a "personalised solution" as it aims to re-establish itself in the C-segment with EVs.

VOLVO

For Volvo, 2021 will be all about plug-in vehicles. It has plug-in hybrid powertrains available across its entire range, plus the launch of its first fully electric car.

By 2025, the brand plans to have a million electrified cars on the road and half of all its sales will be fully electric.

Dominic Gill, national leasing and residual value manager at Volvo Car UK, said: "Our first fully electric vehicle is coming, it will be the first of five such models being launched over the next five years."

It's not just the cars that are becoming more sustainable. Volvo is also making use of virtual meetings and dealing with its customers through digital platforms where possible.

"It's about making life less complicated for our customers," added Gill.

With a good supply of batteries, he said the brand will not be affected by supply constraints. The XC40 Recharge T4 is Volvo's first plug-in model to be priced at less than £40,000 and it's expected to be popular with fleet customers.

Gill said: "We are seeing excellent growth in plug-in hybrid sales because people are seeing the benefits of those as a company car."

TOYOTA & LEXUS

Having introduced hybrid technology across the majority of their model ranges, Toyota & Lexus are further expanding their powertrain choices in 2021 with new plug-in hybrid Rav 4 and fully electric UX 300e.

Stuart Ferma, general manager fleet at Toyota & Lexus, said the two brands will introduce 40 new or updated models across all powertrain technologies by 2025, including 10 zero-emission vehicles.

The second-generation Mirai will also arrive next year, offering a zero-emission alternative to a full EV with the refuelling time of a conventional petrol or diesel.

Toyota Professional will also expand its range in 2021 with the launch of the Proace EV – a vehicle to suit small businesses and medium-to-large fleets.

Ferma added: "It's been an interesting and challenging year, but our self-charging hybrid vehicles have made sure we've remained relevant. With the demand for diesel falling and an increased desirability across EV and hybrid models, our range of 22 alternative fuel vehicles mean we have a vehicle for all users."

Data acquired from more than 110,000 trips shows that, on average, Toyota & Lexus hybrids spend up to 50% of the journey running in electric mode.

VIRTUAL FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE BY NUMBERS

6,365
Total number of booth visits

4,675
Total number of unique booth visits

3,507
Total seminar views across the live dates

900
Total number of unique visitors

40
Number of exhibitors

7
number of manufacturers

7.07
Average booth visits per visitor

3.89
Average number of seminars watched per visitor

Shell TapUp

No more hassle

Have you ever looked at how much time your team spends fuelling your fleet? Refuelling an entire fleet takes time, generates admin and often means driving more.

Meet Shell TapUp. Shell TapUp refuels your fleet on location. We come to your depot so that your team no longer needs to spend time refuelling their vehicles. This results in a time gain of 15 to 30 minutes per refill and reduces your annual mileage.

Alternative fuels

Did you know that in addition to Shell FuelSave Diesel, you can also opt for a more sustainable fuel like Shell GTL Fuel or HVO45 / HVO100?

All fuel delivered by our TapUp vehicles is offset using Shell's carbon offsetting programme. This allows you to drive carbon neutral as part of our service.

Calculate your savings

LEARN MORE

Visit our website and calculate what you can save by letting us fill your fleet.

WWW.SHELLTAPUP.CO.UK
INFO@SHELLTAPUP.CO.UK

"A fleet that is always full, a nice and easy bill at the end of each week, and happy drivers!"

Asher Budwig, MD Lola's Cupcakes

REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT WITH ON-SITE FUEL DELIVERY

Shell TapUp delivers 7 days a week to the site of Lola's Cupcakes to refuel their fleet. This saves Lola's Cupcakes many long, costly and energy-wasting trips to service stations. Find out how Shell TapUp is supporting Lola's Cupcakes in their transition to a cleaner fleet.

Lola's Cupcakes is ambitious. They not only purchased 4 electric vehicles but have also equipped their vans with solar panels to reduce the amount of grid electricity that their vans require to recharge. Unfortunately, they ran into a problem with their 3.5T box vans that were not suitable for an electric setup. A problem that was tackled by a collaboration with Shell TapUp.

Shell TapUp is one of the first companies in the UK to refuel vehicles on site. For Asher Budwig, Managing Director of Lola's Cupcakes, this was a no brainer. "Naturally, having the vehicles filled on-site means that drivers are not deviating from a planned route to fill up, so that saves 25 vans each day driving an extra mile to fill up, which in the long run will add up to a significant saving in fuel and ultimately carbon emissions."

Just as it is for Lola's Cupcakes, the sustainability of the fleet is high on the agenda of many fleet operating companies. Although the transition to a more sustainable fleet can often come at a high cost, with Shell TapUp, you can reduce your carbon footprint with your existing fleet. We are looking forward to partnering with more fleet owners like Asher to help them with their energy transition and give them back the world's most precious resource: TIME!

After a tumultuous 2020 with UK business pushed to the limits (and, sadly, in some cases beyond) by the Covid-19 pandemic and repeated nationwide lockdowns, *Fleet News* has revisited its 2019 Reader Recommended winners to find out how they have been supporting their customers over the past nine months.

The annual Reader Recommended programme allows fleet operators to have their say about the companies they believe offer the best service.

However, times of hardship test relationships like no other, so how have a selection of our 2019 favourites fared this year?

Over the next 11 pages, Alphabet, Fleet Logistics, Jaama, Kwik-Fit, Teletrac Navman and Northgate let you into their world to discover the various ways in which they have supported their fleet customers.

This feature starts, though, with a four-page insight into how the fleets themselves seek out and value strong partnerships with suppliers.

READER RECOMMENDED

Alphabet
FleetLogistics
jaama
fleet, leasing and hire software innovators
KwikFit
Teletrac Navman
NORTHGATE Vehicle Hire

HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUPPLIERS

Partnerships are proving crucial as fleets negotiate the coronavirus pandemic and plan for electrification, but they demand a long-term approach that prizes value over price, reports *Jonathan Manning*

During this year, of all years, the strength of partnerships between fleets and their suppliers has been tested like never before. The need for flexibility, whether postponing orders, extending contracts or rapidly upscaling deliveries to meet urgent demand at a time of disrupted supply, has tested relationships to the maximum. Moreover, the fact that communication during these high pressure months has largely been virtual rather than face-to-face has added even more strain to the links that bond provider to client.

If traditional purchasing was driven by a focus on cutting costs and boosting short-term profits, today's strategic procurement is shifting the emphasis from transaction to relationship, concentrating instead on securing longer term value.

It's a development that is forcing fleet decision-makers to decide which products and services can be treated as 'widgets' and bought for the cheapest price; and which are so mission-critical that the quality of service makes a material difference to their operations.

SUPPLIER DELUSION

On the other side of the negotiating table, suppliers are having to take into account much more profoundly how their performance is being measured by clients – is it on price alone or a balance of cost and quality of service? In a much cited academic paper, Professor Lynette Ryals from Cranfield University, identified 'supplier delusion', in which providers have a much higher opinion of the quality of their relationship with a client than the client does.

"Salesperson or account manager feedback is notoriously bad as an indicator of customer satisfaction," says Ryals. "Customers tend to give overly-flattering reports about their suppliers. Still worse, satisfaction is a poor indicator of repurchase; customer loyalty is only 75% even at the highest levels of satisfaction."

She suggests that customers are much more likely to receive world-class service if they behave like world-class customers.

The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) says building a trusted relationship

with suppliers is a critical skill for procurement and supply chain specialists, and one that needs nurturing – all the way down the supply chain.

While CIPS accepts that products of low value may be a 'catalogue' transaction, a simple buy and sell, it advises that for core, strategic items, the relationship must be much closer.

"Face-to-face communication, regular site visits and regular performance reviews will keep conversation flowing, but it cuts both ways," says a CIPS spokesperson.

"Beating down suppliers is not ethical or responsible procurement and it stores up problems further down the line. Business models can change and develop and that's why soft skills are becoming increasingly important in procurement and supply chain professionals if supply also has to change."

The importance of good communication was highlighted by all of the fleet decision-makers contacted for this article.

This extends from honest day-to-day conversations between operational fleet teams and their supplier counterparts to strategic review meetings, but it also encompasses candid "off the record" discussions between fleet chiefs and their opposite numbers at providers to iron out problems that risk escalating into more serious issues. As more than one fleet chief mentioned, if they have to resort to the terms and conditions of a contract to get what they want, the relationship is probably doomed beyond recovery.

BUILDING ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Business relationships that have survived the constraints and pressures of the pandemic will have been built on solid foundations, with the first stones laid before any contracts were signed.

CIPS recommends developing supply agreements jointly, with transparency to the fore as both sides disclose their issues and challenges.

"Sharing company objectives, policies and direction with critical suppliers can support both parties to form a win:win relationship and both parties benefit," says the CIPS spokesperson.

At British Gas, one of the UK's largest fleets, the relationship with suppliers has been a key focus for Steve Winter, head of fleet, heavily influencing his choice of providers.

He adds innovation as a specification in many supply contracts, and is looking for evidence of where a supplier adds value to elevate its product or service above those of competitors. A supplier that simply delivers the basic terms of an agreement will find British Gas returning to the market at the end of the contract.

"We like to measure people during a contract to ask: 'Where are you going to innovate? Where are you going to add value?'" says Winter. "Where has a supplier added so much value that it's great news for us to renew the contract?"

He is particularly keen to forge these relationships throughout the supply chain, not simply with British Gas's primary providers, and the utility's use of recycled vehicle parts offers a prime example of how uniting suppliers has delivered efficiencies and cost savings.

"We recycle our vans. So, if we have the misfortune to write one off, we recycle it," says Winter. "A salvage agent takes it and we buy those parts back. We have got a fleet management company that buys the mechanical parts and an accident management company that buys body parts. This has significantly reduced our downtime – if we have an accident and need a new door we can buy a secondhand door that is already painted in our blue and has our livery on it and we can have it the next day, so the

ISTOCK.COM/DATAWA

van goes back on the road quickly. It saves us cash, but reducing the downtime is the key."

He also acknowledges the role that British Gas has to play in building and sustaining these relationships, beyond paying invoices. In a similar three-way initiative, the fleet has worked with both a manufacturer and leasing company to deliver on its objective of converting to zero emission vehicles as soon as possible.

His openness about British Gas's electrification intentions saw the company test drive the new Vauxhall e-Vivaro at the turn of this year and secure first place in the queue for supply when the van became available – placing an order for 1,000 of the zero emission vans, kickstarting Vauxhall's sales.

Winter also makes no secret that he has a business plan approved and funds ready to buy a large electric panel van as soon as a suitable vehicle is available.

In return, he expects suppliers to be open and honest in how they assess their own performance at review meetings.

"We'll encourage the supplier to give us a warts and all on that performance. 'Where do you think you should have done better? Where have you learnt that you could have done something differently?' Ultimately, that period has gone so what I'm interested in is what is going to happen in the next six months or a year. 'Where do you see this developing? Have you got a proposal ready for your contract renewal?' I'm more interested in what is going to happen in the future," says Winter.

SUPPLIERS REPRESENT THE FLEET

Abandoning adversarial relationships, decision-makers at large fleets are highly aware of how the performance of a supplier can reflect on their own departments.

Stewart Lightbody, deputy chairman of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), says: "I want to work with suppliers who understand me and what my organisation is trying to achieve and who buy into the same thing. Some of my best and longest relationships I have seen as extensions to my own team because what they do can impact directly and indirectly on how my internal customers see me and my team's performance."

Key to this is seeing past the sales pitch and trying to establish an accurate appraisal of how the supplier will actually manage the account. With a number of suppliers operating the 'hunter-farmer' approach, where one team wins the business and a second team delivers it, the risk of over-promise and under-delivery is acute.

"What I try to do when the supplier comes in to present, and I've even put it in my tender documentation, is to ask who the account manager will be, assuming they are successful," says Lightbody. "That way I know that they have already thought about who we are, what we do, what kind of customer we are likely to be, and they have aligned their internal service provision in advance. What works really well is when they bring the account manager into the pitch."

At fleet consultancy VS360, director Chris Joyce says the critical element of a hunter-farmer approach is implementation.

"Your new business person has to have an

implementation team that works with them, takes the customer on, and becomes part of the glue that hands the customer over to the operational team and relationship manager who will look after the customer going forward," he says.

WIN:WIN IS VITAL

But, adds Joyce, a supply agreement only succeeds if it works for both parties.

"It's beholden on everyone involved to put themselves in the other person's shoes, to understand what each party is trying to get out of the relationship, and to make sure that each party is getting enough out of it," he says.

Nailing a supplier down on price, for example, may reduce the scope for flexibility further down the line if circumstances change. As the pandemic has illustrated, flexibility in extending contracts, delaying new orders and even suspending payments can be extremely useful.

"You might not factor flexibility for pooled mileages or fees for changing contracts into your decisions up front, but, after 2020, fleets might take these into account," says Joyce.

"If you have really pushed the price to the limit is that supplier going to be putting itself out for you?"

A more open, trust-built relationship, however, would allow a fleet to share its objectives and disclose its budgetary constraints, so both parties can "put their heads together to work out how to deliver a service that meets the customer's needs within the budget that's affordable", adds Joyce.

This style of transparency is very much the strategy of Countryside Properties, where Chris Connors, head of facilities and fleet, says drivers, the internal fleet team and the service provider should all be considered as stakeholders in the relationship, with the car viewed as a shared asset between all parties involved.

"We don't want to be seen as just a client, we want to be seen as if we're in it together," he says. "We try to understand the provider's business, how they want to operate, what schemes and mechanisms they use, and how they make their money. So we can then try to work out how we can get some shared objectives."

This involves treating cost and value as two separate entities in the decision-making process, and attributing a similar weight to both.

"The key driver for us is employee experience; we don't want them to feel like they're dealing with a computer," says Connors. "Our company is very good at supporting its employees, so we don't have to worry about cost as the only driver, it is about quality of service."

> "IF YOU HAVE REALLY PUSHED THE PRICE TO THE LIMIT IS THAT SUPPLIER GOING TO BE PUTTING ITSELF OUT FOR YOU?"
>
> **CHRIS JOYCE, VS360**

Establishing the value of good service is difficult, he adds, but "is getting slightly easier with more data being available. We are starting to be able to measure performance in an evidence-based, fact-based way, rather than just gut feel".

Adopting a positive mindset, Connors says Countryside Properties is trying to establish service level agreements that evidence good service, such as speed of response to vehicle breakdowns, and minimising vehicle downtime, "because if a vehicle is off the road it means the driver is in a courtesy car, so they're not going to be happy, or we're incurring costs for a temporary vehicle".

PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Moving beyond a transactional relationship to a genuine partnership would appear to be more difficult for public sector fleets that source vehicles and related services through centrally-negotiated Crown Commercial Service (CCS) frameworks. In addition, the demand for absolute probity when spending taxpayers' money means there's no scope for prejudice or unconscious bias in selecting or ruling out a supplier from a tender, even if the provider has previously let down the fleet.

There is, however, scope for public sector fleets to get involved in the development of CCS frameworks and abundant opportunity to forge partnerships once contracts are signed, says Dale Eynon, director, Defra Group Fleet Services.

He explains that the frameworks, effectively, save fleets the first two steps of a tender process by pre-qualifying potential suppliers: Are they fit and proper? Are their finances sound? – and by laying basic ground rules. A leasing framework, for instance, might establish terms for early termination fees or wear and tear charges.

"When you go to market you can send a tender to whomever is on the framework, but then negotiate beyond the framework. It's the starting point or bare minimum," he says.

"We will tell them our vision for the next five years and what our operational or financial constraints might be, and look to the supplier to see if they can help us get to that place. It might be working in a different way, having a different finance model to service it, or even looking at profit share."

In common with all of the fleet decision-makers interviewed for this article, Eynon is happy to accept that suppliers are not volunteers and that they need to make a profit. His remit is to ensure this profit is clear, transparent and reasonable, and not disguised or hidden in another area of the contract.

"If suppliers want to provide us with some additional services, and it's a benefit to us, then we'll do it. It's about making sure they are getting something out of what they are delivering. We want to see what they can do above and beyond what's written in the contract," he says.

With vehicle supply, for example, this might involve how quickly manufacturers can supply demonstrators, whether they can hold stock, and whether they will prioritise Defra in the supply of vehicles that are in short supply, a pressing industry issue with high demand and limited availability of electric vehicles.

But, inevitably, there are also in-contract incidents where the strength of the relationship gets tested. A vehicle recall, for example, could see an entire batch of vehicles grounded, at which point a supportive manufacturer would step up and provide temporary replacement vehicles while they deal with the issue.

Defra is also looking to build relationships with businesses that align comfortably with its own strategic corporate aims in areas such as sustainability, diversity, equality and inclusion.

"What can they do to prove to us that they are doing all they can to support sustainability within their own business? What are their plans to green their own fleet?" asks Eynon.

Having supplier partners that share your company's brand values will help both organisations achieve their business goals with a long-term relationship.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) explains how to build and maintain a successful partnership between fleet and supplier

1 Pre-contract – meet up and visit a supplier's premises and develop the agreement together, honestly and with transparency in mind, where both sides share their issues and challenges too.

2 Establish a clear commitment from both parties on what is expected from each side at the start of the relationship to avoid subsequent misunderstandings. Draw up a clear, concise and realistic contract.

3 Organisations seeking differentiation in the market will want to look for true value across the supply chain, not just cost. Beating down suppliers on price is not ethical or responsible procurement and stores up problems further down the line.

4 Maintain regular contact: face-to-face communication, regular site visits and frequent performance reviews will keep conversation flowing.

5 Keep reviewing service levels on a regular basis.

6 Share data; it's an important aspect of transparency and supporting each other.

7 Work collaboratively – have open discussions about where savings could be made without compromising on quality or other important aspects of the partnership.

8 Try to understand each other so well that one side can predict how the other will react to a particular challenge, creating a symbiotic relationship.

Personalised service is at the core of all our leasing solutions

Sometimes it requires a crisis for suppliers to reveal their true colours. Here, at Alphabet, we didn't blink when coronavirus brought the UK to a standstill. As a business mobility specialist, we continued our best-in-class programme of proactive reviews to guide customers through fleet and travel solutions during the pandemic.

By immersing ourselves in our customers' businesses to identify and understand first-hand the challenges they face, we have been able to create a seamless, personalised fleet management solution for each customer.

"We are proud that our commitment to a customer-first approach has once again seen us acknowledged as a Fleet News Reader Recommended leasing company," said Gavin Davies, Alphabet General Manager, Customer Account Management.

Alphabet's work with CityFibre, the UK's third national digital infrastructure platform, is a prime example of this approach.

CityFibre needed a safe and cost-effective solution for its in-field staff to travel around the cities where they are based.

Following consultancy with us, the firm opted for a pool fleet that would maximise utilisation rates and avoid vehicles standing idle. We supplied CityFibre's new MINI Coopers and Ford Transits on a fully outsourced contract hire basis, including maintenance, accident management and even external cleaning.

The vehicles include our AlphaCity technology which enables employees to book the cars and vans online, then access them via keyless entry.

Unique storage solutions

We've provided urgent assistance for key workers and essential businesses, such as Medequip Assistive Technology, which needed a fleet of vans with unique storage solutions to support its work providing community healthcare equipment. The 48 new Renault vans needed to be easy to clean internally and include adjustable, divided cargo.

Alphabet worked with Medequip and its conversion partner Modul System to design this bespoke solution, creating 360-degree images and videos of the vans so the process could proceed without delay despite the difficulties of lockdown.

CityFibre opted for a pool fleet

"During lockdown, we have been busy developing Alphabet Motion, a new online platform that enables customers to effortlessly browse, request quotes and order vehicles online"

Peter Gaunt, Fleet Manager at Medequip, said: "Working with Alphabet as a partner has been perfect for our requirements, providing us with strong guidance and support throughout the entire process. The team understood our specific requests, steering us towards the right make and model of vehicle that would be the best fit for our needs and accommodate the equipment our workers are transporting. The speed at which this was executed also helped us to keep costs in check before new regulation came into force at the end of this year."

Throughout the pandemic, we have kept our collective finger on the pulse of employee attitudes to mobility so we can advise customers accordingly. Our report, Fleet Streets: Accelerating changes to travel and transport in the UK, revealed how coronavirus has irreversibly transformed travel habits. Our findings included the fact that 37% of workers would reconsider having a company car rather than a cash benefit, to avoid using buses and trains. We also discovered a fast-growing appetite for plug-in cars, with nearly a quarter (24%) of consumers saying their next car choice would be pure electric or plug-in hybrid.

For cash-benefit employees looking for a new car, we have developed Alphabet Motion, a new online platform that enables personal contract hire customers to generate quotes and order vehicles.

Institute of Customer Service

This constant investment in new products and services goes hand-in-hand with our decision to join the Institute of Customer Service (ICS), an independent body that works with businesses and the public sector to position the UK as a world leader in service.

As an ICS member, we gain access to new research, insights, conferences, and networking opportunities focused on the delivery of excellent customer service. Membership also underlines our commitment to do everything we can to help rebuild a strong economy, adapt to the mounting challenges of Covid-19 and to uphold service standards across fleet.

Top tips for fleets in a pandemic

During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, reviewing mobility options, reducing operating costs and keeping drivers safe have all been of critical importance for fleets. Here, Sue Branston, Country Head for Fleet Logistics UK and Ireland, identifies top tips to help fleet operators manage their fleets more effectively.

1. Use this time to begin the mobility journey

Review the powertrain mix and assess whether you can you adopt EVs earlier than planned. At the same time, review driver profiles to identify early adopters to trial mobility budgets and build different scenarios taking into account current use and future needs.

Gather data on how commutes and business journeys now look for different locations – such as urban areas where walking and cycling have been adopted. Build the case for change looking at financial aspects, CSR and carbon emissions. Review the market to see what solutions are out there for each city/country and learn from other countries.

2. Look at contract re-writes

More reliance on working from home will undoubtedly affect the contract and type of vehicles chosen. There may be major savings to be had from re-writing contracts based on accurate actual mileages for each driver, given that many will now be doing fewer business miles than previously. This is particularly relevant to fleets still writing contracts on benchmark parameters.

During the restrictions that many areas now face, more vehicles will be off the road, meaning this year's mileage may be even further reduced. Businesses should carefully identify those under-mileage drivers and the contracts that can be re-written, as the savings can be considerable.

3. Avoid early terminations

Early terminations incur a penalty charge so should be avoided if at all possible. If no other solution can be found, vehicles should be returned as close to the end of their contracts as possible to minimise the charges. Investigate re-allocating or swapping vehicles to different parts of the business, or between drivers, to avoid these potentially punitive charges.

4. Extending contracts

Fleets can ask their leasing company supplier for informal or formal vehicle contract extensions, rather than returning vehicles at the end of contract and replacing them. Leasing companies are ready to offer support to both their business and personal clients.

5. Vehicle safety

It is important to ensure that vehicles are maintained, serviced and MOT'd for driver and public safety, and in line with manufacturer warranties to preserve cover. This aspect has never been more important as, despite coronavirus, vehicles must still be kept in a roadworthy condition.

6. Train your drivers

Fleet Logistics believes now is the perfect time to train drivers as downtime or furlough presents the perfect opportunity, especially as an employers' duty of care to its employees remains during social distancing.

Fleet Logistics Group is offering support to fleets with one of its health and safety partners which comprises free-of-charge training for a period of three months.

The offer is through a partnership with Applied Driving Techniques (ADT), a multi-award-winning, global provider of driver safety and risk management solutions. Details here: https://www.fleetlogistics.com/en/industry-update/

The offer includes three training modules on Driver Fatigue, Speed Awareness and Emotional Distractions, which also includes reporting, an audit trail and ADT customer service.

Sue Branston adds that there are still many challenges facing businesses.

She says: "The complexity of operating a fleet is increasing all the time, and businesses need to consider whether they feel confident in tackling these challenges themselves.

"Or do they feel that it makes sense to consider the advantages of getting advice from an independent fleet management partner, with the knowledge and experience to help guide them through these unprecedented and challenging times."

Pandemic fuels interest in Jaama's Key2 capabilities

Jaama is pleased to receive a preferred software supplier accolade as part of *Fleet News*'s 'Reader Recommended' initiative. Readers vote for the suppliers they believe offer the best service in their sector and Jaama's recognition comes as its Key2 fleet management software has kept fleets compliant during 2020 and through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jaama's Key2 fleet management software has been at the heart of keeping fleets on the road and compliant during the pandemic. This includes logistics and blue-light fleets, which have worked around the clock during the year to keep the country safe and moving along, with leasing and rental fleets that have Jaama's Key2 system to manage their businesses.

Jaama has seen many more new customers choosing Key2 as fleets aim to tighten up their operational spend and compliance administration.

Vehicle and driver compliance has been at the top of fleet agendas during Covid given more employees are now working remotely in addition to many fleet teams being slimmed down.

"Companies have faced many driver and vehicle challenges over the past months and we have seen the pandemic speed up the gestation period of adopting new fleet management systems. The slight adaptation of our internal processes has enabled us to implement systems and train users remotely in order to help customers meet their business objectives," explained Martin Evans, Jaama's managing director who is also a director of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP).

Jaama managing director Martin Evans

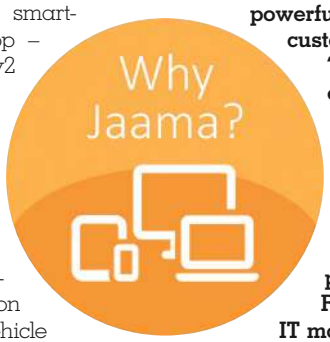
Achieving a paper-free operation has been an objective for Jaama and many of its customers, not only to reduce the risk of spreading the Covid virus between driver paperwork and office-based staff, but it also helps enable remote working and generally streamline processes.

This objective has accelerated the adoption of Jaama's award winning smartphone app – MyVehicle App – that fully integrates with Key2 and enables drivers to carry out vehicle inspections and log defects via their phones.

Information captured in the app transfers in real-time back to the fleet team, giving an immediate audit trail and alerts of vehicle problems, which can be acted on immediately to reduce vehicle downtime.

The upsurge in vehicle demand coupled with limited replacement vehicle availability has meant that keeping vehicle downtime to a minimum has never been more important. Grey fleet usage of the app has also seen a third more traffic as many drivers switch from public transport to their own vehicles for business travel.

All Jaama customers continue to benefit from a raft of new features and improvements in functionality every six months as part of its continued multi-million annual system investment. That means once you are a Jaama customer you are always using the latest version of the product with no need to budget for costly upgrades during the life of the software.



TESTIMONIALS

Jon Lawes, managing director of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, which runs 70,000 funded and 14,000 fleet-managed cars, vans, trucks and plant assets, said: "Key2 gives us the complete truth on what is happening with vehicles on our fleet which is very powerful for us and our customers.

"Data can be easily extracted from Key2 using its powerful reporting tool in real time. We can access our data more quickly and it takes fewer people to compile it, which frees up more people to act on it."

Rhianna Greaves, group IT manager, Go Plant Fleet Services, which runs a combined fleet of 3,100 LCVs and specialist vehicles and 600 items of plant, said: "Key2 demonstrated that we could adopt a system that enabled us to manage our cars, commercial vehicles and plant with the same rigour on one platform which we didn't know was going to be achievable.

"It's not just improving things from an operational perspective, Key2 provides us with a full end-to-end solution which includes finance integration. Finance and operational users are now using the same platform for the first time. There is now full cost transparency at every step of our business processes."

Continuing to keep you safe on the road in challenging times

As we experience another period of lockdown, our centres will remain open, ensuring peace of mind motoring for all customers.

Our centres have adopted COVID-safe protocols in order to protect our workforce and our customers. Our teams use PPE including fitting protective seat and steering wheels covers, wearing gloves when driving vehicles in and out of our centres and using face masks or coverings in customer-facing areas; our receptions have been adapted in line with social distancing, we have fitted protective reception desk screens and hand sanitiser is available.

We have had to limit the amount of seating in reception along with making other adjustments to prevent congregation, such as turning off the coffee machine, a temporary measure in line with Government guidance in order to ensure everyone's safety.

Demand for Kwik Fit Mobile has been at an all-time high over recent months with many drivers choosing to have tyres fitted while they work at home. We have retained our Mobile 7 provision, offering Mobile tyre fitting from 8am-8pm, seven days a week, in selected areas.

MOT demand has also been at an all-time high, especially since the end of the Government MOT extension period on August 1. Our network of 540 MOT centres has been able to cater for the demand, with slots still being offered on a next day/48-hour basis in the majority of locations.


Rob Ellis, head of fleet sales

First time MOT pass rates remain consistently high, with nearly all fails able to be repaired and re-tested on the same day to minimise downtime.

We have seen many new customers along with many existing ones attend our centres for service, maintenance and repair (SMR) work in recent months. Kwik Fit has more than 600 centres across the UK that offer OEM- and menu-based servicing. Our customers have benefited from availability of slots on a short lead-time basis, despite high demand.

Kwik Fit centres use OE data and OE-matching parts for all servicing and repairs.

Our back office and support teams have adapted ways of working, embracing technology and using it to maintain communication and support to our customers. Our fleet team has used the medium of video conferencing to conduct meetings, reviews and day-to-day business communications.

In summary, Kwik Fit has met the various challenges across recent months and maintained a premium, professional service to our customers for tyres, MOT and SMR requirements.

Our centre environment has changed in order to protect employees and customers and we have embraced new ways of working and technology to maintain productivity and lines of communication. We have kept our centres open throughout the national and localised lockdowns in order to support drivers in challenging times.

Enquire about a Kwik Fit account here https://tinyurl.com/y2g699ew
We have what it takes to keep your fleet safe on the road.

Kwik Fit

NORTHGATE
for all vankind

WITH A **FULL RANGE OF VEHICLES, HIRE OPTIONS AND SERVICES** WE CAN DELIVER THE FLEET SOLUTION YOU NEED.

Futureproof your fleet with Northgate's unique mix of dependability, agility, and innovation. Northgate has been supporting the commercial vehicle needs of British businesses, the public sector and charities for nearly 40 years. We have supported our customers throughout the pandemic emergency every step of the way. As the country re-emerges, Northgate will continue to be there meeting tomorrow's fleet needs, too.

We understand that times are extremely challenging, and our customers' needs are always changing. That is why we are continually investing in our people, technology, systems, and products to ensure that we can address all our customers' fleet concerns. I'm extremely proud that we have been recognised for our efforts in this area and are Fleet News Reader Recommended Rental Company for the third year running.

Throughout the last year, Northgate has continued its transformation into a specialist B2B customer-centric LCV mobility provider with a full range of necessary support services for van users. We call it Vans as a Service (VaaS).

Customers can access a wide range of LCVs as standard – and any type of vehicle on request. We have also expanded our electric vehicle advice and offering. At the recent Fleet and Mobility Live virtual event, we announced that Northgate have agreed a deal with Peugeot for a further 250 e-Experts.

This addition to the Northgate EV fleet, enables us to further support our customers' transition to EVs. The evolution in technology means it is important when operating electric vehicles that whole life costs are considered, from initial capital outlay through to running costs and residual values.

In addition, our telematics options have been upgraded with improved dashboards and the addition of fuel card integration, enabling customers to see locations of fuel fill-ups, better detail on vehicle mpg, and identifying any potentially fraudulent activity.

Our New Accident Management service manages every aspect of incidents– from First Notification of Loss (FNOL) to vehicle repair, replacement vehicles and legal services – easing the burden of dealing with multiple incidents and helping to get drivers back on the road, whether a Northgate vehicle or not. All at reduced costs to you.

Our Vehicle Inspection App supports compliance through delivering daily vehicle checks electronically, saving administration and turning checks into a safer paperless exercise.

Driver Risk Management includes a 4-stage driver risk assessment to understand where additional training could be beneficial, reporting suite and range of e-Learning modules and bespoke training that can be used at any stage of the driver cycle from recruitment to reviews.

We believe commercial vehicles should enable businesses to do what they do best. Rather than become a drain on financial resources and fleet managers' time. Northgate customers benefit from services and agility not possible to those who buy, or contract hire their fleets. Whatever their needs, Northgate customers know they can rely on our dependability and flexibility.

Neil McCrossan,
Sales & Marketing Director, Northgate

FIND OUT MORE:

Visit us at northgatevehiclehire.co.uk
or call Northgate on 0330 042 0903

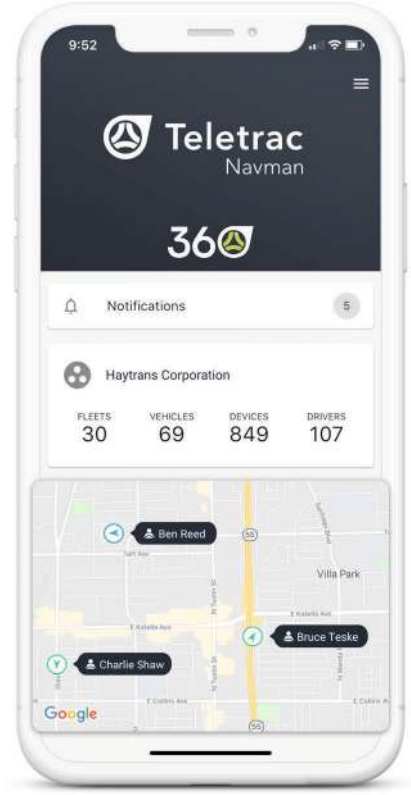
Telematics platform that tells you more

With the introduction of the first AI-powered platform, the ground-breaking TN360, Teletrac Navman takes efficient fleet management to a whole new level

The introduction of telematics systems transformed fleet management. Now, the launch of Teletrac Navman's innovative TN360 system is about to transform telematics with the first AI-powered platform, bringing together more data, improving efficiency and making effective fleet management much simpler.

More data means more intelligent insight

The new TN360 – the first system of its kind – uses a scalable cloud ecosystem to bring together data across all integrated systems such as engine information, driver behaviour, sensors, cameras, mobile and third-party applications in real-time, putting this wider range of information into context and offering more of an all-round picture.



"TN360 uses artificial intelligence to do all the number-crunching and makes the figures easy to understand"

AI-driven to turn data into decisions

But it's what the new Teletrac Navman TN360 system does with that data that's really innovative. Rather than leave fleet managers with a mountain of data to analyse and process, it uses artificial intelligence to do all the number-crunching and makes the figures easy to understand, allowing users to quickly make more timely decisions and recognise opportunities for improving efficiency in areas like route planning, logistic workflows, maintenance, driver behaviour, compliance and fuel management. It even features voice-command technology, so for the latest business intelligence metrics on your fleet data all you have to do is ask.

Transforming telematics

Using the new TN360 platform brings other important advantages too. Crucially, the TN360 collects all the information it uses in real-time, enabling managers to track second-by-second exactly what's happening across their fleet. And, just as significant is the fact that the TN360 integrates quickly and seamlessly with third party systems, such as IFTTT, Zapier and Amazon's Alexa, allowing transport businesses to custom-build their own workflow to improve efficiency – and profitability.

Putting power in the hands of fleet managers

Having real-time insights to hand in an easy-to-understand format on the TN360's dashboard means action can be taken when it can have the greatest impact rather than after the event – leading to better customer service, better safety, better maintenance and better compliance.

In short, the new TN360 system unleashes the power of telematics data, using smarter insights to simplify day-to-day operations – it's the next phase of digital transformation in the fleet management market, and a real step forward in advanced telematics.

To find out more about the TN360 system, contact Teletrac Navman on 0800 060 8298 or visit teletracnavman.co.uk/tn360

Teletrac Navman

VOLKSWAGEN ID3

The first of a new stable of electric cars from Volkswagen Group impresses with cool looks, funky interior and competitive pricing

By Matt de Prez

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there's plenty of talk about electric vehicles (EVs) in this edition of *Fleet News*. So, it's fitting that we've just spent time getting to grips with one of the most important examples: the new Volkswagen ID3.

Of all the cars launched this year, the ID3 is perhaps the one with the biggest weight on its shoulders. That's not because it's particularly revolutionary – there are already EVs on sale that 'technically' offer much the same – but, Volkswagen is the 'people's car' and the ID3 represents a lot more than just price, range and charging time.

The platform that underpins this unassuming electric hatch is the starting point for an entire stable of new EVs from the VW Group. If the ID3 fails to impress, it could sour the appetite for many new EVs to come.

It's the figurehead of VW's new ID sub-brand, of which the carmaker expects some three million registrations by 2025.

The good news is the ID3 certainly does not fail to impress. It's really rather good and in ways that you probably wouldn't expect.

Until now, electric cars have largely fallen into two camps: cheap and boring or expensive and exciting. The ID3's job is to appeal to the masses, providing affordable and easy-to-live-with motoring, while also entertaining those that have a deeper interest in cars.

Mass appeal with plenty of space for a family

Making an electric car fun isn't particularly difficult. But retaining that element while also delivering on the numbers and practicality is something that hasn't really been achieved by any carmaker yet.

With the ID3 there's a sense that we're getting there. It's got cool looks, a funky interior, plenty of space for a family and prices start at £33,000 – about the same as a Golf GTI.

There's all the usual amenities and driver assistance systems that you get in other VWs.

It can sit on the motorway at a sensible speed unflustered and, if you want to really drive the wheels off it, you can still have fun.

The model we have on test is the 1st Edition, which is powered by a 204PS electric motor and uses a 58kWh battery pack. It promises a 260-mile range and can accelerate from 0-60mph in around seven seconds.

Next year, the range will expand with cheaper options including a lower-powered 150PS motor and a smaller battery with a 205-mile range. There is also a long-range version with a 77kWh battery, which can travel up to 340 miles on a single charge.

Power is sent to the rear-wheels, which is not particularly common on run-of-the-mill family cars and makes the driving experience much more engaging. Primarily, this was done to maximise space at the front of the car. We were expecting the ID3 to feel numb and detached, but it isn't.

The handling characteristics have been dialled in well and, combined with the instant torque from the motor, enables the car to make swift progress.

	ENTRY LEVEL ID3 58kWh Life	LONG RANGE ID3 77kWh Tour	FLEET PICK ID3 58kWh Business
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£32,935	£42,235	£36,665
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0	0	0
Monthly BIK tax (40%)	0%/£0	0%/£0	0%/£0
Range (miles)	263	336	262
Fuel cost (ppm)	3.6	3.8	3.6
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0
Class 1A NIC	£0	£0	£0
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£12,000/36.4%	£15,250/36.1%	£12,750/34.7%
AFR (ppm)	4	4	4
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	33.2ppm	40.9ppm	36.9ppm

Go to www.fleetnews.co.uk for tax figures from April 2020-2022

RIVALS

	NISSAN LEAF 63kWh N-TEC	HYUNDAI KONA 64kWh Premium	CITROËN E-C4 50kWh Shine
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£36,240	£39,095	£33,075
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0	0	0
Monthly BIK tax (40%)	0%/£0	0%/£0	0%/£0
Range	239 miles	300 miles	217 miles
Fuel cost (ppm)	4.2	3.6	6.7
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0
Class 1A NIC	£0	£0	£0
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£9,975/27.5%	£12,350/31.6%	£9,900/30%
AFR (ppm)	4	4	4
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	40.1ppm	40ppm	39.1ppm

The steering is livelier than we've experienced on other VW Group models, helping to give an overall feeling of lightness to the car despite its not-inconsiderable 1,800kg kerb weight.

Provided you don't drive it too aggressively, the ID3 should achieve an efficiency of around 4mi/kWh giving a realistic range of roughly 230 miles. When it comes to charging, the car can achieve 80% capacity in 30 minutes when using a 100kW DC rapid Type 2 AC charger (or one hour on a 50kW). But will take nine hours for 100% fill on a normal 7kW home charging unit. On AC charging, the maximum charge speed is 11kW, so a 22kW fast charger still takes 5.5 hours.

In order to simplify the ownership experience, VW has kept things as minimalist as possible in the interior.

The majority of functions are controlled via the touchscreen, which uses the same software as the new Golf. In front of the driver is a smaller display for speed, charge level and range, while all the 'buttons' are actually touch-sensitive panels.

The gear selector is mounted to the right of the steering wheel and you simply push it forward to advance or pull it back to engage reverse. There's also a single-stage regeneration mode that can be switched on or off, although the car will automatically apply the system to slow itself down if you're coasting and the car senses another vehicle ahead.

Rear-wheel drive results in an engaging driving experience

Is the ID3 the perfect electric car then? Well, it is very good; but we aren't quite there yet. There's no doubt it will have mass market appeal, especially while benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax is preferential, and it is considerably more modern and better to drive than a Nissan Leaf.

However, VW needs to iron out a few software niggles, refine the ergonomics and wait for the rollout of more easily accessible rapid chargers before the ID3 will be ready to replace the Golf as the 'go-to' car.

ID3, we're already looking forward to your facelift.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward

I had a conversation recently that sent shudders down my spine. It was in relation to battery leases.

A few years ago I spouted on about this subject declaring that I was very much against the idea.

I had many conversations with Renault, even one in person with Carlos Ghosn (its then chairman and chief executive) in London.

I said it wouldn't work, for numerous reasons. Renault said it would. The industry was split.

Renault, initially, went down the route of battery lease only, whereas Nissan went battery owned only.

But that soon changed. Renault offered the battery included with the car in what it called 'i' models. Nissan then offered leased batteries and called them 'flex' models.

It appears you can now buy the battery, that was on lease, and the cost is based on a sliding scale. But you can't change the V5 into an 'i' model, so it will always show as a leased battery car.

This is now causing real confusion at dealers.

I spoke to one recently and asked if the battery was on lease or not. He didn't really know, but he thought it was an 'i' and wasn't sure how he could find out.

Another trader friend wanted to buy a lightly damaged Zoe, but it didn't have a battery. It was an ex-lease vehicle so it had been removed by the leasing company.

No used batteries could be found and he was quoted more than £11,000 to buy a new one. Add the cost of repair and the price was well over the price of a non-bumped car, so, in effect, the slightly damaged car was not worth repairing.

Battery leases have proven, as expected, to be a very complicated subject.

Now, what happened to my mate Carlos?

Problems down the line

The motor industry has been hit hard this year. UK new car sales are well down compared with 2019 although friends selling used cars tell me they have found sales are not much lower than last year.

In 2023, there is going to be an almighty lack of three-year-old stock and dealers must be prepared for this. Leasing company disposal managers must price their cars then, in line with any increased demand, and not let them go for silly low prices. Understanding the market throughout 2023 will be critical for maximum profit.

MERCEDES EQV

As MPV sales decline, the EQV provides van-size capacity with car-style interiors

By Matt de Prez

Time was that drivers who needed to carry lots of others would buy a people carrier. Makes sense, right? Then carmakers started fitting seven seats to their SUVs and all except the chauffeur and taxi industries moved away from multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs) in droves.

Recent Jato analysis shows MPVs now account for less than 4% of car sales across Europe. But, seven-seater SUVs are not really MPVs – it's a struggle to fit adults (and their luggage) in them.

Van-derived people carriers are more practical, but many user-choosers don't want to drive around in what is, essentially, a van.

Once you introduce electrification into the mix, the reality is that a van-derived vehicle like the new Mercedes-Benz EQV is the only solution available that can carry more than five people comfortably and with zero-emissions.

It's based, largely, on the eVito van; but comes with the more luxurious interior from a V-Class and a bigger 100kWh battery, providing a WLTP range of 213 miles.

Mercedes believes the EQV will appeal to private buyers and user-choosers as much as it will the commercial taxi and chauffeur businesses.

With pricing from £70,000, the EQV isn't cheap. It's designed to provide a luxurious car-like experience. So, there's plenty of leather, sound-proofing and high-tech equipment on board.

The interior can be configured so there's two seats in the middle and three at the back, or vice versa. Passengers can face each other, with a folding table between them, or all face forwards.

Up front, there's plenty of space. In fact, the EQV interior is so vast, it is difficult to reach the various storage compartments from the driver's seat.

A 10-inch MBUX infotainment screen provides the brand's latest in-car services, including live traffic information, digital and internet radio and smartphone integration.

The 204PS electric motor provides modest performance, with 0-62mph taking 12 seconds. The EQV doesn't set off with electrifying pace though – its throttle has been calibrated to ensure passengers are comfortable, which means setting off on busy roundabouts requires a thorough shove of the pedal to get it moving. There's plenty of power on the move to keep up with traffic and, of course, a refined and almost silent experience.

As a vehicle primarily designed to carry people and stuff, it's rather good. The electric sliding rear doors provide easy access, even in tight spaces and everyone on board should be comfortable.

It's not really a 'car', however. The footprint alone makes its tricky to navigate small streets and country lanes, while parking requires a higher-degree of skill. While the EQV is perfectly easy to get along with there's no escaping the fact it drives like a van.

During our testing, the EQV was achieving around 2.0mi/kWh, which would suggest a range of 180-200 miles could be comfortably achieved.

When it comes to charging, the EQV's big battery will take 10 hours to replenish using a domestic socket but it can achieve an 80% charge in 45 minutes using a rapid charger.

There's plenty of sound-proofing and high-tech equipment on board

FLEET PICK
MERCEDES EQV SPORT

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£72,840
Monthly BIK (20%)	0%/£0
Class 1A NIC	£0
Annual VED	£0 then £320
RV (4yr/80k)	£25,750/35%
Fuel cost (ppm)	6.75
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	70.68
CO_2 (g/km)	0
Range	213 miles

HYUNDAI i20

New sportier-looking version offers much-needed bold styling and new technology

By Murray Scullion

The new Hyundai i20 sets itself apart from its predecessor with bold styling and new technology – two things that are, seemingly, what every new car does to separate itself from older versions. The Hyundai needed them.

The previous i20 was no oil painting and felt 'old' alongside more modern competitors.

A lower roofline and a wider body give the new car a sportier look, while also increasing passenger space. Boot space has grown too, to 352 litres – giving the car a 60-litre advantage over the segment's best-selling Ford Fiesta.

Hyundai claims the new i20 is equipped with the 'most comprehensive' connectivity in the sector, and has a 'best in class' safety package.

Inside, it's a tech-fest. There's a customisable 10.25-inch digital cluster instead of old school dials behind the steering wheel, and another 10.25-inch centre touchscreen for the infotainment system. Wireless Apple CarPlay/Android Auto is also available.

	HYUNDAI i20 SE CONNECT
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£18,375
Monthly BIK (20%)	26%/£80
Class 1A NIC	£659
Annual VED	£165 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£4,775/26%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.4
AFR (ppm)	10
Running cost (4yr/80k)	30.2
CO_2 (g/km)	115
Mpg	55.4

A 10.25-inch touchscreen controls the infotainment system

New for the i20 is a 1.0-litre mild-hybrid petrol engine. It's the only engine available and has CO_2 emissions from 115g/km with the promise of around 55mpg, when paired with Kia/Hyundai's new six-speed iMT (intelligent Manual Transmission). It can cruise in neutral with the engine off to conserve fuel – with the driver not needing to do anything.

There's also a seven-speed automatic that we've only driven in prototype form, so we'll hold back our judgement until we've driven a finished version.

For everyday use, the i20 is more than fine. The first notable thing about the car's handling is how light the steering is. This is perfect for tight roundabouts, multi-storey car parks and sitting in traffic. It excels at these tasks.

It's not quite as fun to drive as a Fiesta, partially down to the steering that offers little in the way of feedback because of how light it is. But it's more rewarding to drive than the old car.

Despite the steering not 'speaking' much to the driver, the i20 changes direction quickly and the car reacts to all the driver inputs swiftly.

There are three models – SE Connect, Premium, and Ultimate. All are well equipped, featuring Hyundai's SmartSense safety equipment as standard. This includes lane-keep assist, autonomous emergency braking, driver attention alert, high beam assist, and intelligent speed limit.

Those after the latest technology will gravitate to the i20. Wireless Apple Car/Play/Android Auto and its suite of safety features are unusual in a car of this size – while the amount of space in the rear seats is noteworthy too.

Drivers after plush, high-end materials are better served by the likes of the Volkswagen Polo. While if you're after a diesel or a three-door, the i20 will also not be suitable.

The entry-level SE Connect spec car has a P11D price of £18,375 and will attract a monthly benefit-in-kind tax charge of £80. It's not quite cheap enough to beat the Fiesta Trend mild hybrid, however, which has an extra 25PS and costs £100 less. The Ford also has lower running costs of 0.5p per mile.

MERCEDES-BENZ A250E FIRST TEST

AMG LINE PREMIUM PLUS

By Luke Neal

Plug-in hybrids are a cross between an internal combustion engine (ICE) and an electric motor, meaning you have the option to drive electric-only on short city trips, or use the ICE (petrol or diesel) for longer journeys.

You have to plug in your car to charge the battery, but if you run out of juice the car will simply switch to the ICE which removes any range anxiety associated with fully-electric vehicles.

Another noticeable difference in plug-in hybrid cars is the responsiveness – the electric motor boosts the combustion engine under acceleration for smoother, more instant power.

Mercedes-Benz calls its range of electrically-assisted models EQ. It consists of fully-electric 'EQ' models, hybrid 'EQ Power' models and mild hybrid 'EQ Boosts'.

The £37,425 (P11D) EQ Power on test here has a combined power output of 221PS from its 1,332cc 162PS petrol engine and 103PS electric motor, an all-electric range of around 44 miles, combined fuel consumption of 256.8mpg and CO_2 figure of 26g/km. It can be charged at a 7.4kW wallbox with within one hour and 45 minutes and five-and-a-half hours at a domestic socket.

Some of the standard equipment highlights for the AMG line premium plus model are AMG bodystyling, 180° reversing camera, panoramic glass sunroof, heated electric front seats with memory function, augmented reality navigation, 10.25-inch digital instrument display with 10.25-inch touchscreen media display and voice control infotainment. Our car also comes with denim blue metallic paint at an additional £595 and driving assistance pack for £1,495 more.

The hybrid powertrain offers significant benefits to businesses and employees including 6% BIK, annual VED of £0 then £140, £310 Class 1A NICs and an overall running cost figure of 40.79ppm – around 7ppm cheaper than its equivalent ICE counterpart.

First impressions are positive, the cabin is luxurious with high quality materials throughout. However, due to a period of self-isolation, I have yet to fully enjoy all the A250E has to offer.

VOLKSWAGEN CRAFTER FAREWELL

CR35 TRENDLINE MWB 2.0TDI 140

By Trevor Gehlcken

Number two daughter was moving house recently which meant I had one of those now-familiar phone conversations that start: "Dad, you've got a big van on test haven't you...?" By now I know exactly where this is leading!

The upshot was that doting dad was called upon to lug a few loads of household stuff hither and thither, which, at least, gave me the chance to assess the business end of our long-term Crafter before it was returned to Volkswagen this month.

With 11 cu m of space available, we were never going to be short of room, that's for certain. And, as a six-footer, I could even stand up straight in the back, which was a boon. There's a non-slip load floor to stop untied cargo from wizzing about in the back and, while the van didn't have side play-lining, that fact did allow me plenty of holes for use with my collection of ratchet ties.

The rear doors fold right back to 270 degrees,

which is handy when loading in tight spaces and there's a step at the back and even two grab handles at the rear for workers to hoist themselves up. A nice touch that.

My only gripe is that the two roof lights don't give enough illumination on the load area when it's dark.

As can be seen from the picture, our van was nowhere near full when I took off with the first load. With not even a half load on board I reckon that we were getting pretty close to the maximum payload of 1,404kg and, despite my daughter's protestations, I declined to take any more on that trip.

And herein lies the big problem for fleet managers with vans like this. Unless your business is carting feathers back and forth (which is highly unlikely), it's all too easy to overload a vehicle of this size and thus risk the wrath of the DVSA, not to mention the courts.

Our advice is to fit one of those electronic weighing devices – there are several to choose from on the market. Admittedly, they cost a few hundred pounds per van but it's a price worth paying if the vehicle is to be kept safe and legal.

ŠKODA SUPERB

1.4 TSI IV 218PS DSG SE L HATCH

By Stephen Briers

We're back in our original Superb long-term test car after it spent a couple of weeks with Škoda for a repair to the charging system.

The mechanism on the car into which the charging cable fitted wasn't locking correctly, so it has been replaced. As an extra measure "to be sure the charger is working fully at its best", Škoda also advises to lock the car when charging, so it fixes the charger in place.

A rare trip to the office gave me the chance to check this out – everything is working normally. I was able to get 26 miles of charge into the Superb (around 76% of the 34-mile maximum fill) from empty over the course of just less than four hours from our 22kW charge point, sufficient to test the range capacity on my journey home.

Slotting the car into E-mode to prioritise electric-only driving, I managed the 17-mile trip home on silent running and reversed onto my drive with 13 miles left – four more than the original range suggested.

PEUGEOT 3008

GT HYBRID4

By Jeremy Bennett

It's all very well having the latest propulsion technology at your feet – with more below your seat – but, if it feels like you're driving a Flinstones' foot-mobile, the appeal will soon wear off.

Fortunately, should the 3008 Hybrid4 find its way onto your choice list, this will not be a problem.

There is a £20,000 gap between the lowest priced 3008, the petrol-powered 1.2 PureTech Active, and our range-topping GT Hybrid4.

This is because on top of the 82 features common to all 3008s there are at least as many more that push it into the luxury status as you upgrade.

Highlights include the eight-point seat massagers, panoramic opening glass roof, smartphone charging plate – and then, specific to the GT, Visio Park 360° colour camera and automated parking assistance, adaptive cruise control (with a stop-and-go function) and the Focal 10-speaker stereo system.

Given this car emits the second lowest levels of CO_2 in the range (at 29g/km) and so has a limited environmental impact, how will this 3008 impact on you? As Peugeot states, "any journey, no matter the distance, will leave you wanting for nothing".

VOLVO S60

T8 R DESIGN

By Matt de Prez

After 1,000 miles behind the wheel of our S60, it's fair to say I'm becoming quite attached to it. While saloon cars are a bit less practical than SUVs and estates, there's something satisfying about a sporty-looking compact executive and Volvo has got the proportions perfect on the new S60.

The driving position is low and, thanks to the high centre console, you feel cocooned inside the cabin with the steering wheel and pedals falling to hand (and foot) just as you'd like them.

Volvo is usually recognised for safety, but it's also a brand that puts comfort high on the agenda. Our R Design sits on firmer springs, but it still offers a graceful ride.

Creature comforts are in abundance too. All plug-in hybrid models get electrically adjustable front seats that are also heated, dual-zone climate control with remote pre-conditioning, adaptive LED headlights that move as you steer and parking sensors with rear-view camera.

Our car has been optioned with a few extras to make the experience even more enjoyable. The £450 Winter Pack adds a heated steering wheel, rear seats and front windscreen. All of which are welcome at this time of year.

While all S60s come with cruise control and an array of safety systems, the £1,600 Driver Assistance Pack adds Pilot Assist with adaptive cruise control, which can keep the car in its given lane and assist the driver in stop-start traffic. It also adds blind-spot monitoring that can intervene if it thinks you're going to cross another vehicle's path.

The Bowers and Wilkins Technology pack is probably the most extravagant option, at £2,500, but for someone that spends a lot of time in the car and likes their music, the 14-speaker 1,110-watt sound system is invaluable. It also includes smartphone integration via Apple Carplay and Android Auto.

Rounding off our S60's specification is the £1,975 Lounge pack. The highlights are a panoramic sunroof and 360-degree camera system. An autonomous self-parking feature also features, but we've yet to try it.

VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT

ESTATE GTE ADVANCE 1.4 TSI PHEV

By Gareth Roberts

There are probably more worthwhile things to obsess about, but the Passat's 'IQ Light' LED matrix headlights really are a clever bit of kit.

A £1,416 option, but standard on our GTE Advance long-term test car, the Passat is the second model after the current Touareg to be offered with the new technology.

The system's interactive light control makes night driving more comfortable and safer, thanks to the headlights using a matrix made of light dots that can be activated individually.

Dipped beam and main beam are generated via two LED projection systems. The inner module has seven LEDs for basic illumination; the main beam comprises five additional LEDs.

The outer module is the interactive LED matrix headlight, known as a pixel module. Its light is generated via a total of 32 individually controllable LEDs on a printed circuit, which form the LED matrix.

Interactive light functions, meanwhile, are activated via a total of 44 LEDs in both systems.

The responsible control unit uses signals from the front camera, the digital map data of the navigation system, GPS signals, the steering angle as well as the vehicle's current speed to precisely activate individual LEDs for optimum light in fractions of a second.

With myriad data feeds, the system intuitively illuminates the road ahead, making night driving a much more serene experience.

The driver activates the automatic continuous main beam function via Dynamic Light Assist by simply pushing the left-hand steering column switch forwards. The rest – dimming, main beam activation, city lighting, motorway light – is done by the Passat and done very well.

It really is very clever, illuminating the space around an oncoming vehicle, while dimming the light in the space it occupies. While some systems will have you scrambling to intervene after failing to identify a car driving towards you, Volkswagen's IQ Light technology gives you complete confidence.

The LED matrix headlights offer a total of eight light functions: city lighting, dipped headlight, motorway light, dynamic cornering light, partial matrix main beam, main beam headlights, sign glare control and a travel mode (when driving in right-hand traffic countries).

AUDI A6

50 TFSI E S LINE

By Andrew Ryan

One of the few unknowns when I was handed the keys to our Audi A6 long-termer was how well its plug-in hybrid technology would fit into my lifestyle: the answer to this has been 'very well'.

I currently work from home instead of doing a 75-mile round trip to the office each day. This has meant the A6's official electric-only range of 34 miles has allowed me to do perhaps 95% of my journeys without burning a drop of petrol.

I'm also fortunate enough to have a 7kW Pod Point charger at home, which – combined with the A6's 7kW on-board charger – can charge the 14.1kWh battery from empty to full in around two hours.

The PHEV powertrain has also changed my shopping habits. I worked part-time at Tesco when I was in sixth form and have remained loyal since.

It turns out, however, my loyalty can be bought and all it has taken is enough free electricity to drive 12 miles. That's how much charge I can put into the A6 when I shop at my local Sainsbury's. As, ironically, Tesco says, every little helps.

MAZDA CX-30

2.0 180PS 2WD SPORT LUX

By Sarah Tooze

Thanks to the latest Covid-19 lockdown in England, the Mazda CX-30 has barely turned a wheel, except for a weekly trip to the supermarket. On one such trip a 'service soon' warning light popped up. Not because I've been clocking up lots of miles, of course (it's currently done less than 6,000), but simply because the CX-30 was registered in November 2019 and has reached its first service.

I was pleased that I could book a service with my local dealer online. However, the system wasn't flawless. It let me select December 3 (the day after England's lockdown lifted) but I then received a phone call to rearrange to the following week. The website also didn't let me select a specific time (just am or pm) or any additional requirements like a courtesy car.

However, the dealer representative was quick to phone me (within minutes of the online booking) and was polite and friendly and solved all queries without hassle. He also offered a courtesy car and said our CX-30 would be washed and vacuumed.

I'll report in the next issue what my experience at the local dealer was like.

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SEARCH NEW VIVARO

Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the New Vivaro-e Elite L1H1 3100 75Kw (136PS).

The New Vivaro-e is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Range data given has been determined according to WLTP test procedure standard. The range you achieve under real world driving conditions will depend upon a number of factors, including but not limited to: the accessories fitted pre-conditioning and battery condition. For more information, contact your local Vauxhall Retailer.

WHAT CAR?

Van awards 2021

What Car?
Van of the Year

VAUXHALL

Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 205 miles (WLTP).

methodology. The figures shown are intended for comparability purposes only and should only be compared to other cars tested to the same technical (pre and post registration); charging frequency; personal driving style; vehicle payload and route characteristics; variations in weather; heating/air conditioning;

Challenges ahead if van operators are to achieve 2030 switch to EVs

'Get started now,' says Vanarama strategy chief as ban is 'just two replacement cycles away'

By Matt de Prez

Operators are being told they have 'no time to lose' to electrify their van fleets, after a ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol light commercial vehicles (LCVs) was brought forward to 2030.

Hybrid vans, which the Government has yet to define but says should be able to travel a "significant distance" with no carbon coming out of the tailpipe, will be banned from 2035.

Paul Kirby, head of LCV and EV strategy at Vanarama, said: "The reality is you need to get started now because, with the ban on diesel and petrol vans from 2030, that could be just two replacement cycles away."

While many fleets are just getting to grips with the idea of giving their drivers electric company cars, the transition to electric vans is not so straightforward as they need to consider the limited ranges and charging requirements of the vehicles more carefully.

Royal Mail operates the largest fleet in the UK and has an ambition to reduce its carbon footprint as much as possible, yet to-date it only has 295 electric vans on its fleet.

As demand for parcel deliveries booms, it faces a need to increase not only the size of its fleet, but also the size of its vans. It means there is little space at its depots for EV charging points and little opportunity for downtime.

Infrastructure problems

Speaking at Logistics UK's Future Van Conference, Anna Pearson, fleet innovation and environment manager at Royal Mail, said: "We are challenged with ageing infrastructure and limited space. Not all our buildings are owned so we need landlord permission before we can invest in upgrading our sites."

However, the business is committed to electrifying its fleet and is currently trialling a number of different vehicles, including the Arrival 6.5-tonne electric truck.

"It's important we choose the right vehicle, the right fuel type and the right location. It's definitely not a one-size-fits-all scenario," she added.

Hackney Borough Council has been operating EVs for 20 years, yet fleet manager Norman Harding still has a number of reservations.

"The vehicles are great but, in my experience, the charging infrastructure has not been as good. I think the general charging industry has got a long way to go before it gets to where it needs to be," he said.

When it comes to wholelife costs, Harding confirmed that electric vans

Royal Mail is committed to electric switch, but has a long way to go

are cheaper, despite their upfront purchase prices being higher. The issue comes when fleets try to establish their own charging infrastructure.

"To install charging infrastructure at your site could cost several hundred thousand pounds, dependent on where you need to draw your power supply from. The actual charging units themselves are not very expensive in rough terms, it's the civil engineering works to draw the power from the nearest power point that can stack up," he warned.

The cost of running the charging points is also high. According to Harding, each charging point costs him around £1,000 per year and reliability is poor.

He added: "I've just found that they're not as robust as you might think and that leads to quite a lot of downtime, which means that I've now got some people having to charge their vehicles on the street, which has similar costs to running a diesel vehicle."

Greater choice and rising sales

There were 3,204 electric LCVs registered in 2019 – a 223% increase year-on-year. "This year, we'd hoped for 8,750 (new electric van registrations), it's more likely to around 4,500," said Kirby.

"It's a relatively small percentage, about 1.7% (market share), but it is growing and there is interest in the marketplace."

Kirby noted the increasing choice of electric vans available, compared with the start of the year, when just two small plug-in vans, one medium-sized electric van and two large zero-emission vans were on the market. There are now 14 pure electric vans available.

"As the year has progressed, there has been a significant improvement in vehicles availability," he told the 'Let's Explore Commercial EVs' webinar, organised by Webfleet Solutions.

Vanarama has surveyed more than 1,000 van customers. They highlighted concerns over vehicle cost, range and charging infrastructure.

In terms of downtime, Neil Chamberlain, national EV manager at SSE, said: "The big difference is that (EVs) are off the road less, but when they go off road, they're off for longer.

"That's primarily because as soon as the vehicle goes off road, if it's anything to do with the battery, the vehicle needs to be fully discharged before any work can be performed – that could take half a day.

"The work then takes place and the van needs to be recharged before it can come back and not every dealer has an ultra-fast charge point, that's another half-a-day.

"It means that before a mechanic has even touched it you've lost a day."

However, the biggest potential barrier to adoption, according to Chamberlain, is people.

"It's building that confidence and knowing that one negative experience will affect the whole process exponentially," he said.

"Operational drivers need that confidence in the product, the (charging) infrastructure and, if they have home chargers, they need to know they're going to be repaid for the electricity they're using at home to charge their vehicle."

Chamberlain said it's also up to fleets like SSE to make their depot charging accessible to all or to have partnerships with organisations "so we can share that infrastructure".

> "THE (ELECTRIC) VEHICLES ARE GREAT BUT, IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE HAS NOT BEEN AS GOOD"
>
> **NORMAN HARDING, HACKNEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q My driver has updated his driving licence as he has changed his address. Is there a legal requirement to update his DQC, Tachograph and ADR cards as well?

A The DQC, Tachograph and ADR cards no longer show a driver's address as they are all related to the details on the driving licence. As your driver has already updated their licence, there is no further action required.

ISTOCK/MIGUEL PERFECTTI

Q I have received a penalty charge notice for an bus lane offence dated three months after the alleged offence. I thought you had to receive a PCN within 28 days of the event.

A Parking attendants, now known as Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), may issue a PCN by hand, or by using a hand-held computer, and should log all their daily activity – such as conversations with members of the public. Digital cameras may be used to record an infringement, but are not necessary to prove one took place.

PCNs should clearly state how vehicle owners can make representations and appeals against the fine. The Department for Transport (DfT) guidance recommends that authorities do not set targets on PCNs issued.

Under normal circumstances, in reference to the Bus Lane Contraventions (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) regulations 2005, a PCN shall be served before the end of the 28-day period from detection date to the person appearing to be the owner of the vehicle, or on the person appearing to be liable to pay the charge.

However, if a local authority has made a request to the Secretary of State within 14 days of the detection date for the supply of relevant particulars, the authority shall continue to be entitled to serve a PCN for a further six months after the original date of alleged offence.

ISTOCK/OLLO

Consultation to update law on mobile phone use while driving

The Government regards road safety as a high priority for all road users – collisions can, and do, change lives.

The painful and frustrating truth is that so many of those collisions are not simply an inevitable part of driving and riding; too many are caused by reckless individuals believing they can do whatever they want without any consequences.

One such reckless activity is using a hand-held mobile phone while driving, an offence that has been on the statute books since 2003 when the mass uptake of mobile phones around the turn of the century, combined with a better understanding of the risks, prompted Parliament to establish a specific offence relating to this activity.

When the legislation regarding mobile phones was introduced, people were primarily using them to communicate with each other. However, 17 years on, mobile phones are now used to perform a variety of different functions, not all of which involve interactive communication.

And, as technology has progressed, other devices, such as tablets or gaming equipment, have become available which also have interactive communication capabilities, making them equally distracting to drivers and dangerous for them to hold/use while driving.

The law must reflect these developments and the way in which people use their mobile phones and similar communication devices.

As a result, the Department for Transport (DfT) has launched a consultation on plans to make it a criminal offence to use a mobile phone for any reason while driving.

While it is currently illegal to use a hand-held phone for 'interacting communication' functions including calling, texting, email or accessing social media sites, the new proposals will update this law to include any use of a mobile phone, such as taking pictures or videos, searching for music stored on the phone, checking notifications or the time and rejecting calls.

This change will also include other hand-held interactive comms devices – defined as one capable and of sending and receiving data, other than two-way radios.

The proposed changes will close the current technical gap in the law to ensure that when a driver chooses to pick up a mobile phone while driving and uses it for any purpose, whether to send a text message or to browse through photos stored on the phone, that driver will be committing an offence.

The proposal will still apply only in circumstances where a driver picks up the phone to use it while driving; any change the Government makes to the law on the use of hand-held mobile phones arising from this consultation will not affect the use of mobile phones which are positioned in a cradle and used while remaining in the cradle, for example, as a sat-nav.

The consultation, which closes at midnight on 17 January 2021, recommends the introduction of a new exemption to allow drivers to make contactless payments using a mobile phone at appropriate locations, such as a food drive through.

Payments by phone could be exempt from future ban

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DAF XF 530 LOW DECK

The height of convenience for cross-Channel ferry travel

By Tim Campbell

Niche markets in tractors and semi-trailers are many and varied, but one specific sector – low deck tractor units – now has a new player, Daf Trucks. The low deck market is not high volume. In fact, it is relatively low in the UK with Daf Trucks putting it at around just 100 to 150 units.

At first glance, this looks so small it's hardly worth producing a bespoke product. But, if you look across the whole of Europe, this rises to between 3,500 and 5,000 units annually, making this a viable market worthy of the attention.

The sector has two or three key road transport operations, mainly in the entertainment and exhibition markets as well as music tours and outside broadcasts, mainly dominated by a handful of companies such as Fly by Nite, Stardes and Stagetruck. Other sectors include parcel, furniture delivery and automotive delivery, with the likes of DPD, DFS and Ontime logistics as potential customers.

As one might deduce, low deck tractors have to be relatively low compared with the industry standard, allowing for the essential ability to haul goods under the four metre maximum height when travelling across Europe. Of course, if you are travelling across Europe you will also need to negotiate the often challenging approach and departure angle needs of the cross-Channel ferries. Perhaps the largest payoff of running a low deck tractor unit in keeping under the four metre height is the ability to operate trailers capable of load volumes up to 100m^3.

With all this in mind, we were invited to test drive a XF 530 low deck to see how it performs and check out the specification.

	MODEL TESTED
SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	XF 4x2 Low Deck
Cab	Super Space Cab
Engine	Paccar MX-13
Power	537PS (390kW) @ 1,675rpm
Torque	2,600 Nm @ 1000-1,400rpm
Gearbox	TraXon 12 speed automated
Front axle	8,000kg
Second axle	11,500kg
GVW	18,000kg/40,000kg
Kerb weight	7,403kg
Wheelbase	3,600mm
Brakes	Discs all round
Tank	720 litres

DAF XF 530 LOW DECK

The low deck XF has virtually the same line-up as the standard unit although there's just one power setting on the Paccar MX11 rated 456PS and 2,300Nm of torque @ 900 rpm. The three remaining power settings are all based around the Paccar MX-13, starting at 436PS and 2,300Nm of torque @ 900rpm, 487PS and 2,500Nm of torque @ 900rpm and, finally, the top of the range 537PS with 2,600Nm of torque @ 1,000rpm.

Sitting behind both the MX-11 and MX13 is a choice of either the very familiar ZF Traxon 12-speed automated gearbox with a direct final drive, or the rather less popular 'old school' ZF 16-speed Ecosplit with an overdrive final gear.

Within the XF low deck family there is a two-axle 4x2 (FA), 6x2 rear steer (FAN), 6x2 rear single wheel (FAR) and 6x2 twin wheel (FAS), which should cover most of needs of low deck operators.

The Daf XF has two basic versions of the low deck, one offering a fifth wheel load height of 96cm. If that's not low enough, Daf can reduce this to 91cm by 'fine-tuning' a couple of components.

Both models feature an optional chassis protection beam, preventing direct contact between the chassis and the lower front edge of the semi-trailer when driving up or down a loading ramp. They also carry up to 1,215 litres of fuel, and an exhaust after-treatment system rotated through 90^0. Finally, there is a choice of a 3,800mm wheelbase with a 3,600mm also on the 96cm model.

The 96cm model features:

- Leaf or air suspended front axle (8t)
- Front axle tyres: 315/60, 355/50, 375/45 or 375/50R22.5
- Rear axle tyres: 295/60, 315/60, 295/55, 315/45R22.5
- 50mm fifth wheel + 12mm mounting plate
- 190mm ground clearance
- 75cm suspension travel

The 91cm model features:

- Leaf or air suspended front axle (8-tonne)
- Front axle tyres; 375/45R22.5
- Rear axle tyres; 315/45R22.5
- 140mm fifth wheel
- 140mm ground clearance
- 50mm suspension travel

On the front axle there is the choice between a Daf Axle 163N steel single leaf parabolic suspension rated at eight tonnes and lower than the standard. Perhaps the more useful is the Daf Axle 161N which has an electronically controlled two bellows air suspension, again rated at eight tonnes. This allows the front axle to be lowered 70mm to a maximum raised position of 130mm, or 200mm in total.

On our test 4x2 tractor unit, the revised rear suspension sits above four air bellows on two new parallel reaction rods and a triangle reaction rod. Obviously more bellows are on the three-axle variants, which, when linked to an air suspended front axle, offer the greater flexibility.

Daf also has other clever chassis features such as tyre compression compensation which increases the chassis height dependent on the load taken by the axle therefore compensating for the tyre compression. In reality, this equates to up to 10mm on the front air suspended axle and up to 25mm on the rear, on the FT low deck.

Of course, manoeuvrability with such a low chassis height is always a factor and the Daf engineers have thought of this by electronically developing a 'manoeuvring mode', again on the FT Low Deck.

This increases the chassis height to maintain clearance between the semi-trailer front edge and the tractor chassis ramps at the front by up to 50mm and the rear up to 60mm (laden) or 85mm (unladen) and/or by up to 35mm (laden) or 60mm (unladen) on 315/45R22.5 tyres. The manoeuvrability mode is activated via a switch on the dashboard at a vehicle speeds below 20mph and is deactivated automatically at speeds over 20mph.

Our cab was the top-of-the-range Super Space, with automatic climate control and an ECAS remote control with illuminated buttons for various functions including four memory buttons for pre-set chassis heights. Inside the double bunk cab, it is furnished with a series of black and tan leather exclusive trims mainly around the door covering, high backed air suspended, heated driver's seat with active ventilation and soft-feel leather steering wheel with double stitching.

Standard warranty is one year complete vehicle plus breakdown and second year driveline. Daf also offers a three-year maintenance package to a maximum miles of 300,000.

Daf Trucks' engineers have taken a good look at the requirements of low deck customers. Consequently, the XF has been fine-tuned to their needs and, ultimately, makes a great case to be in the melting pot when a low deck tractor is needed.

THE LAST WORD

MARTIN WEDGE

MANAGING DIRECTOR, OVL GROUP & CO-FOUNDER AND CEO EMTEC CORP

Wedge realised his ambition to run his own company more than 30 years ago. He still owns it, but has added another interest by co-founding a company building a connected vehicle platform

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is always work as hard as you possibly can, try to make a difference every day. I have tried to improve my business every day for the past 31 years!

My first memory associated with a car is being taught to drive by my dad in a Hillman Imp.

My hobbies and interests are skiing, sailing and cycling.

If money was no object I'd race yachts across the world.

The song I would have on my driving playlist is *Tiny Dancer* – Elton John.

My pet hate is lazy people with no ambition.

If I were made transport minister for the day I would accelerate the EV charging infrastructure across the country.

My favourite movie quote is "put that coffee down, coffee's for closers only" from the 1992 movie *Glengarry Glen Ross.*

A book that I would recommend others read is *The Forces of Nature* by Professor Brian Fox.

Why fleet?

After beginning in automotive retail, it was not long before I moved over to fleet sales and I have never looked back. B2B sales suited me and offered greater challenges and rewards.

How I got here?

I left school and completed an engineering apprenticeship with Austin Rover, before quickly realising I needed a 'people' element to my career. So, I went into retail sales and moved from 'showroom to backroom' to the fleet sales division. Later I worked for Nissan Contract Hire but, after a few years, I realised my dream of setting up my own business. OVL Group is now in its 31st year. As the business grew and developed I came across an opportunity within Emtec. Now I am co-founder and CEO of this exciting business that focuses on building technology for a connected vehicle platform.

Latest products, developments and achievements

The work we are doing at Emtec is exciting. We have built a connected vehicle platform that can take data from any IoT device – this is a major achievement as the CO_2 emissions-reporting algorithm means we can give businesses the tool they need to enable them to report their CO_2 emissions data.

My company in three words

Can I have three(ish) words? Excellent customer service; excellent people and innovation.

Career influence

I have always had the desire to encourage positive change in the behaviours of vehicle fleet buyers – if we provide them with the tools to influence their purchasing decisions in an environmentally friendly way – it's a good thing!

What makes a good MD?

Focusing on developing and supporting your team. No one person is bigger than the company.

Advice to fleet newcomers

Embrace proper fleet management software and know your metrics, especially emissions. Data is king!

If I wasn't in fleet

I'd love to work in the marine industry.

Next issue: Sarina Vale, vehicle fleet manager at Aggreko

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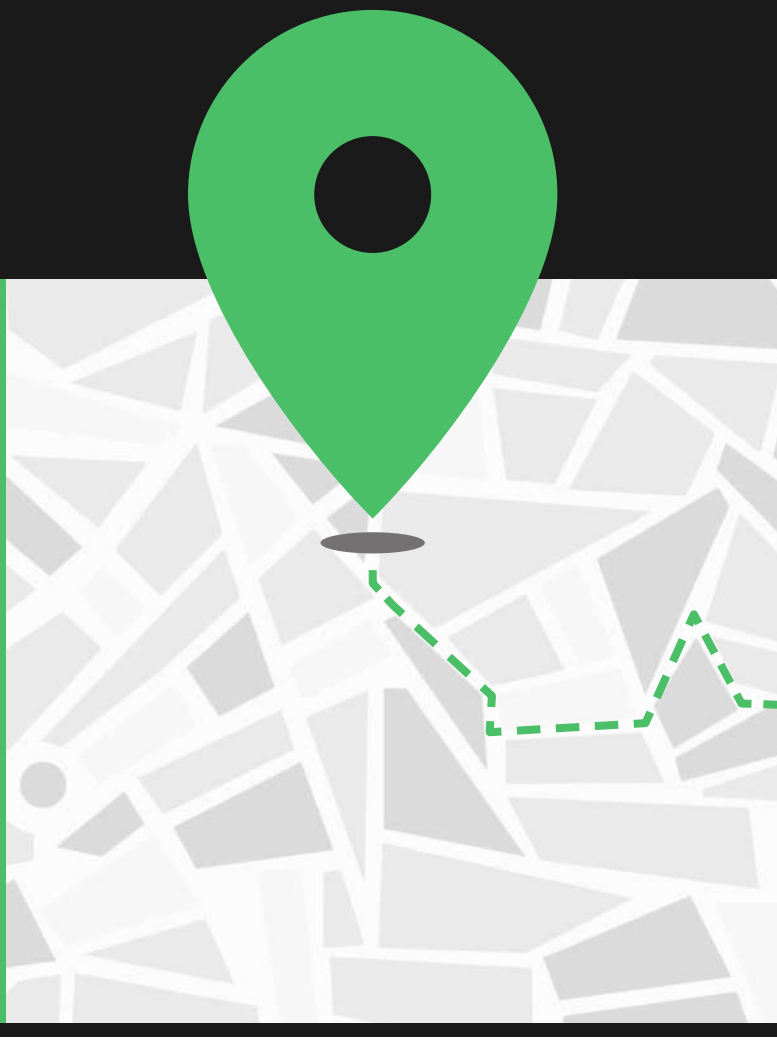

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