

MaaS movement

It has the potential to transform travel, so what is holding back mobility as a service? *Find out inside*



Navigating the urban jungle

Van and truck fleets re-think their last-mile distribution strategies

Electric Fleet: Optimise Prime

Insight from EV project will help fleets to speed up their electric journey

Exclusive: Nick O'Neill, Volkswagen

UK head of fleet outlines plans to offer 'end-to-end fleet management' service



Our vision is to enhance yours.

With up to four stars under the Direct Vision Standard*, the exceptional visibility of the new Mercedes-Benz Actros and Arocs with MirrorCam increases safety in urban driving, and needs no additional equipment to obtain a 10 year HGV Safety Permit to help futureproof your business.

*Subject to specification



To find out more about the scheme and the benefits of Mercedes-Benz Trucks to your business, please visit mbtrucks.co.uk/directvision or scan the QR code.

Mercedes-Benz
Trucks you can trust



THE BIG PICTURE

Welcome to this digital-only issue of *Fleet News*. We have taken the decision not to print the magazine this month, primarily for commercial reasons due to the industry-wide economic and financial fragility caused by the Covid-19 lockdown.

We will be back in print in March, when we hope some of the lockdown measures will have eased and the economic bounce-back will be firmly underway. We have reasons for optimism following the surge in activity after lockdown one; there is massive pent-up demand in all parts of the economy, not least the vehicle market where businesses have been extending contract agreements during this most turbulent of times.

Uncertainty remains, not least the speed with which restrictions are lifted. For *Fleet News*, this has significant implications for our events business. Many of you were at the last event we held – indeed anyone in the fleet sector held: the Fleet News Awards on March 11, 2020. A little over a week later, we went into lockdown.

Back then, we were already following Government and scientific advice on the staging of major events. We put the necessary hygiene measures in place and, thankfully, we received no notifications of anyone testing Covid-positive in the subsequent fortnight.

In the time since, we have continued to support you with the latest news, views, advice and insights to help you run your businesses efficiently, while offering our thoughts on the future to enable you to effectively plan your strategies. We're also increasingly connecting fleet decision-makers to share their experiences on all kinds of topics, such as the roll-out of workplace charging infrastructure.

But the best connections happen at our live events. We are planning Company Car In Action this summer – dates will be confirmed shortly – and are confident that, as an outdoors event, it will go ahead. Manufacturers are responding positively, and they have a plethora of new electric and plug-in hybrid models for fleets to drive for the first time.

What about the 2021 Fleet News Awards? We pushed the date back to the end of June (30th) to improve the chances of holding a live event (entry details are on page 44). But, due to concerns over the continuation of social distancing, we're now discussing whether we go virtual or postpone to later in the year.

I know from conversations across the fleet sector that you are desperate to be at a live event – so are we, and we'll do everything in our power to get this wonderful, resilient industry together again as soon as possible.

Stay safe, everyone.



Stephen Briers,
editor-in-chief,
Fleet News

LINKEDIN UK fleet managers group **TWITTER** twitter.com/_FleetNews
EMAIL fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk **COMMENT ONLINE** fleetnews.co.uk

Fleet News is published 12 times a year. Bauer Consumer Media Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 01176085, registered address Media House, Peterborough, Business Park, Lynchwood, Peterborough, PE2 6EA. VAT no 918 5617 01.

Bauer Consumer Media Ltd is authorised and regulated by the FCA (Ref No. 710067).

No part of the magazine may be reproduced in any form in whole or in part, without the prior permission of Bauer Consumer Media. All material published remains the copyright of Bauer Consumer Media and we reserve the right to copy or edit any material submitted to the magazine without further consent. The

submission of material (manuscripts or images etc) to Bauer Consumer Media, whether unsolicited or requested, is taken as permission to publish that material in the magazine, on the associated website, any apps or social media pages affiliated to the magazine, and any editions of the magazine published by our licensees elsewhere in the world.

By submitting any material to us you are confirming that the material is your own original work or that you have permission from the copyright owner to use the material and to authorise Bauer Consumer Media to use it as described in this paragraph. You also promise that you have permission from anyone featured or referred to in the submitted material to it being used by Bauer Consumer Media. If Bauer Consumer Media receives a claim from a copyright owner or a person featured in any material you have sent us, we will

inform that person that you have granted us permission to use the relevant material and you will be responsible for paying any amounts due to the copyright owner or featured person and/or for reimbursing Bauer Consumer Media for any losses it has suffered as a result. Please note, we accept no responsibility for unsolicited material which is lost or damaged in the post and we do not promise that we will be able to return any material. Finally, whilst we try to ensure accuracy of your material when we publish it, we cannot promise to do so. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage, however caused, resulting from use of the material. ISSN 0953-8526.



Complaints: Bauer Consumer Media is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (www.ipso.co.uk) and endeavours to respond to and resolve your concerns quickly.

Our Editorial Complaints Policy (including full details of how to contact us about editorial complaints and IPSO's contact details) can be found at www.bauermediacomplaints.co.uk.

Printing: PCP, Telford

CONTACT US

Fleet News, Media House, Lynch Wood,
Peterborough, PE2 6EA
Email – fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk

Burning question:

Which sports star (past or present) do you most admire?

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief

Stephen Briers 01733 468024

stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk

Michael Phelps: attitude, determination, hard work – and the most decorated Olympic athlete

News editor

Gareth Roberts 01733 468314

gareth.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk

Gareth Edwards, mercurial scrum-half for Wales

Features editor

Andrew Ryan 01733 468308

andrew.ryan@bauermedia.co.uk

Roger Federer. So effortless, elegant and successful. He seems like a decent bloke.

Head of digital

Jeremy Bennett 01733 468655

jeremy.bennett@bauermedia.co.uk

Jessica Ennis-Hill for her achievement in the heptathlon in the 2012 London Olympics

Web producer

Jess Maguire 01733 468655

jess.maguire@bauermedia.co.uk

Harry Redknapp, he's an absolute legend

Staff writer

Matt de Prez 01733 468277

matt.deprez@bauermedia.co.uk

Out of office

Photos istock, Chris Lowndes

PRODUCTION

Head of publishing

Luke Neal

Frank Bruno

Production editor

David Buckley

Sir Bobby Charlton – won it all ... World Cup, European Cup, leagues, FA Cup, survived Munich

Senior designer

Chris Stringer

I admire Danny MacAskill for his skills on two wheels; Tony Hawk and Colin McRae on four

Head of project management

Leanne Patterson

Project managers

Hollie Ismail, Kerry Unwin, Chelsie Tate

b2bpm@bauermedia.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Commercial director

Sean Childerley

Group advertising manager

Sheryl Graham 01733 366467

Account managers

Emma Rogers 01733 363219

Lucy Herbert 01733 363218

Telesales/recruitment

01733 468275/01733 468328

EVENTS

Event director

Chris Lester

Event manager

Sandra Evitt 01733 468123

Senior event planner

Kate Howard 01733 468146

Head of exhibitions

Katie Gordon-Hill 01733 468289

Head of conferences

Nicola Durrant 01733 395094

PUBLISHING

Managing director

Tim Lucas 01733 468340

Office manager

Jane Hill 01733 468319

CRM & marketing manager

Lauren Annis 01733 468295

Chief Financial Officer

Bauer Magazine Media

Lisa Hayden

MD Automotive Group

Niall Clarkson

CEO of Bauer Publishing UK

Chris Duncan

President, Bauer Media Publishing

Rob Munro-Hall

Subscribe to Fleet News:

Visit: fleetnews.co.uk/subscribe

Email: fleetnews@circdata.com

Call: +44 (0)1635 588495

UK: £65 per year; issue price £6

Overseas: £89 per year; issue price £8

THE HYBRID SUZUKI SWIFT SZ-L



GREAT CARS

GREAT SERVICE

GREAT OFFERS



HERE TO HELP YOU DRIVE HAPPY

- > Dedicated network of Suzuki Business Partners
- > Customer support always on hand
- > Award-winning fit-for-fleet product range

SEARCH 'SUZUKI FLEET' TODAY

FROM £149 PER MONTH*
ALL RENTALS + VAT AT 20%

INITIAL RENTAL £894 | 36 MONTH AGREEMENT
SUZUKI BUSINESS CONTRACT HIRE | EXCESS MILEAGE CHARGES APPLY

Fuel economy and CO₂ results for the Swift SZ-L. Mpg (l/100km) (combined): 57.2 (5.0). CO₂ emissions: 111 g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend on a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Business Users only. *Offer subject to 35 monthly rentals of £149 plus VAT with initial rental of £894 plus VAT based on Suzuki Swift Hybrid SZ-L. Suzuki Contract Hire is a trading style of Lex Autolease Ltd, Registered office: 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HN. Ownership of the vehicle remains with the finance company and the vehicle must be handed back at the end of the term. UK residents aged 18+ only. Subject to status. The offer above is available from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. This offer is available from 1st January until 31st March 2021. Return conditions apply. Vehicle must be returned in good condition to avoid further charges. Excess mileage charged at 4.30ppm plus VAT per mile. Offer based on 8,000 miles per annum. The vehicle must be serviced in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and by an approved service Dealer. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print. See full terms and conditions at cars.suzuki.co.uk/swiftbusiness

CONTENTS

NEWS AND OPINION

- 6 Fleets call for 'certainty' in Budget
- 10 Make EV charging as easy as ICE
- 13 UK carmakers face diesel law suits
- 14 People opt for car over bus/train
- 16 CCS offers 'quick and easy' quotes
- 17 News digest
- 67 Last word: Peter Mansfield

TOMORROW'S FLEET

- 18 What's holding MaaS back?
Progress on mobility has stalled
- 18 Supporting the evolution of CAV
Concept draws closer to reality

ELECTRIC FLEET

- 24 Optimise Primed!
Programme is speeding up the transition to electric vehicles

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- 30 Eric Wright Group
Demand for EVs accelerates
- 34 Volkswagen UK
'We want to provide an end-to-end proposition,' says Nick O'Neill (above)



MAKING VW
EASIER TO
WORK WITH
P34

TODAY'S FLEET

- 36 Future of remote training
Making the most of online courses
- 42 Benchmarking with DfBB
Peer-to-peer project coming soon
- 44 Fleet News Awards: 2021 entry
Update on prestigious awards

REMOTE
TRAINING
P36

IGNITION

- 46 Mazda MX-30
- 47 Audi A3 TFSIe
- 48 Volkswagen Arteon
- 48 Range Rover Evoque P300e
- 49 Peugeot 3008
- 49 Seat Leon e-Hybrid
- 50 Toyota Rav4 PHEV
- 51 Vauxhall Insignia
- 52 Our test fleet

COMMERCIAL FLEET

- 56 Coke seeks car/van case appeal
- 59 Lowering truck roof saves cash
- 60 Last-mile deliveries
The changing urban demands
- 63 FTA advice
Your questions answered
- 64 Citroën e-Dispatch
- 65 LEVC VN5
- 66 Iveco Daily 70C18



Fleets split over route Government should take to replace tax losses

'Certainty' tops the fleet wish-list as Chancellor prepares to deliver Budget early next month

By Gareth Roberts

Fleets are split over the merits of replacing fuel duty and road tax with a new road pricing regime, new research suggests.

Fewer than half (45%) of the respondents to a *Fleet News* survey said they were in favour of an alternative pay-as-you-go taxation scheme based on miles driven. However, more than a third (36%) said they were not.

A radical overhaul of road taxation is not expected to be announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, in the Budget on Wednesday (March 3).

But declining revenues, from fuel

duty receipts and vehicle excise duty (VED), are an inevitable consequence of drivers making the switch to electric vehicles (EVs) and the Government's policy to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030.

New research from The AA illustrates how quickly the UK car parc make-up could shift, with the number of EVs on UK roads expected to exceed that of diesel-powered models by 2030 (fleetnews.co.uk, February 18).

If approximately 33 million cars remain on UK roads between now and 2030, it predicts alternative fuels (electric, plug-in hybrid, hybrid and hydrogen) could account for half, at 16.5 million cars.

Paul Hollick, chair of fleet and training body, Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), says that Budget 2021 and those to come in the future, all need to be seen against the backdrop of declining revenues from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles as EVs become more mainstream.

"It is unavoidable that the Government needs to replace that revenue and it is right that they look to do so through taxing road travel and transport in some way," he said. "The question is how?"

Fleet News has been calling for the Government to launch a feasibility study since its Fleet Industry Manifesto report in 2015.

MPs on the Transport Committee are attempting to get some clarity through an inquiry into zero emission vehicles and road pricing, which was launched last December.

The committee is considering the implications of accelerating the shift to zero-emission vehicles, including bus and freight vehicles, and the case for using new technology to introduce some form of road pricing.

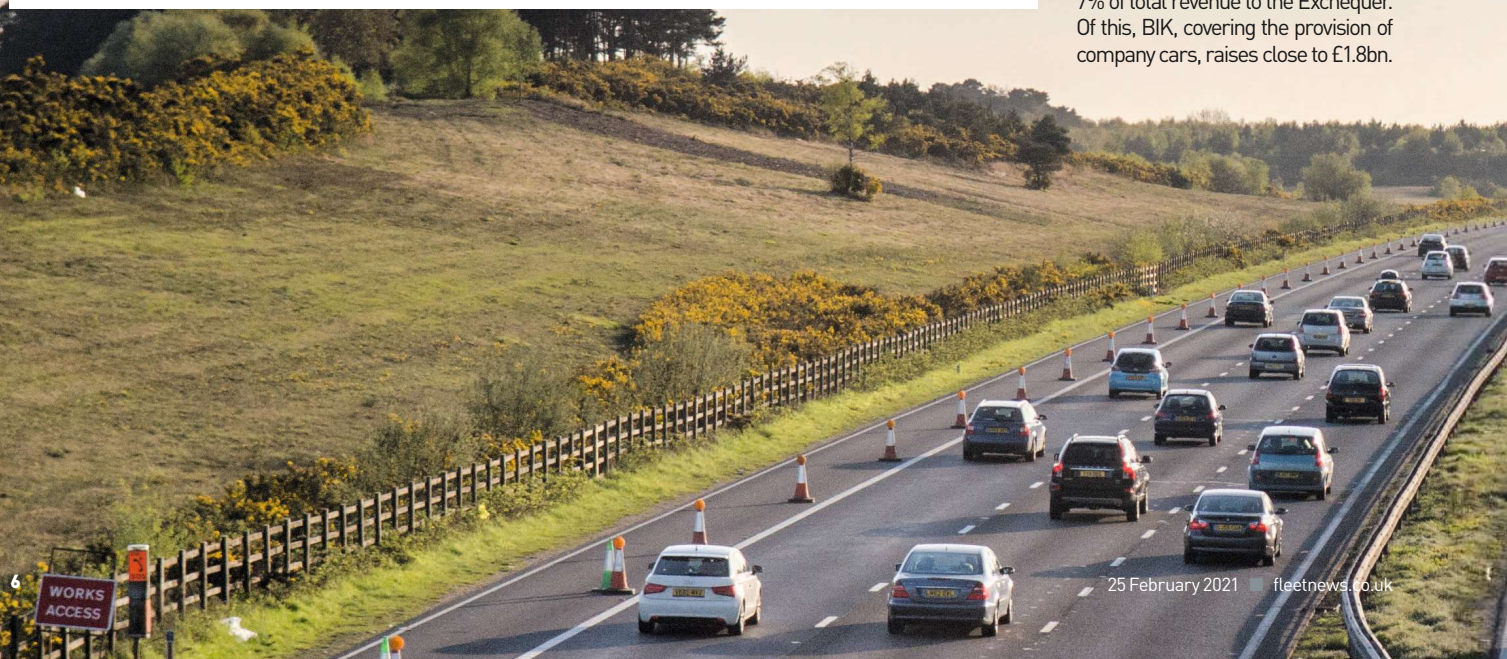
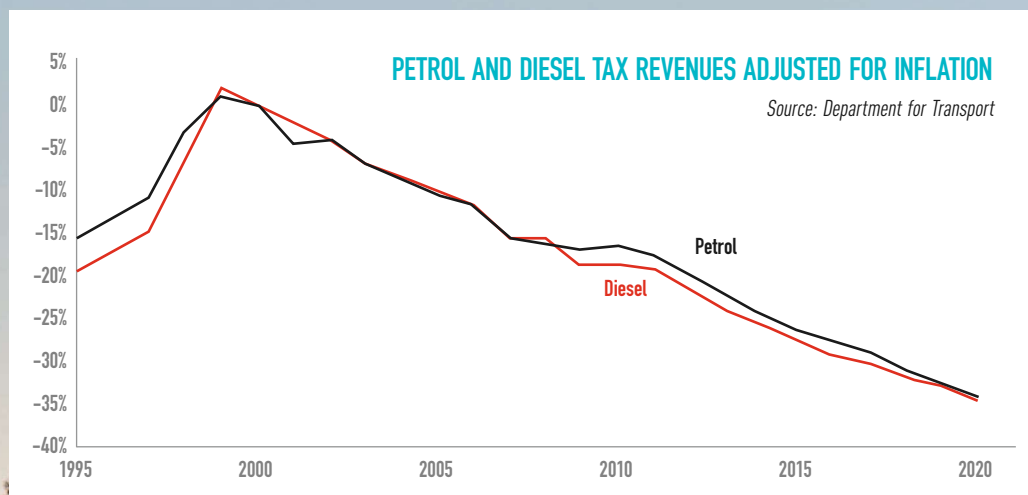
LITTLE CONSENSUS

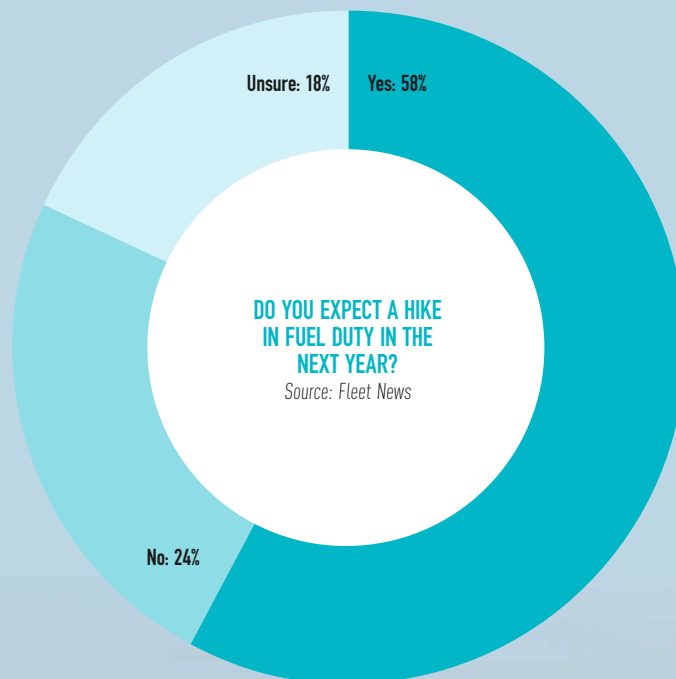
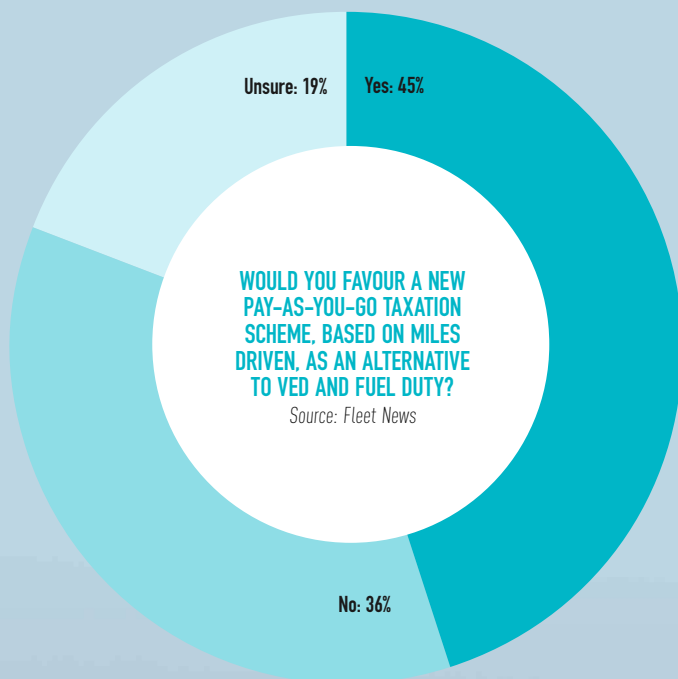
Hollick believes there is "little consensus" on how a new scheme would work. "The main options appear to be some form of annual road toll per user or vehicle, or toll per mile travelled," he said.

"However, these are likely to work in conjunction with other forms of charging, such as extended ULEV (ultra-low emission vehicle) zones and even emissions-based parking levies."

When combined with fleet-specific taxation, such as benefit-in-kind (BIK) taxation of vehicles and approved mileage allowance payments (AMAPs), Hollick told *Fleet News*: "It's potentially a very complicated picture and that is before you even start to ask questions such as how mileage would be monitored and charged."

In total, taxes on UK motoring, including VED, fuel duties and VAT, raise around £40 billion per year or 7% of total revenue to the Exchequer. Of this, BIK, covering the provision of company cars, raises close to £1.8bn.





However, a recent Government report acknowledged much of this revenue is likely to be “eroded during the transition to a net zero economy”, with the tax take “wholly or partially at risk”.

The warning, published in HM Treasury’s interim *Net Zero Review*, came as the National Infrastructure Strategy also emphasised the need for motoring tax revenues to ‘keep pace’ with the uptake of EVs (fleetnews.co.uk, December 18, 2020).

Hollick said: “Everyone knows that change has to come in this area and the conversations we need to have should start sooner rather than later.”

KEEP IT SIMPLE

In its submission to the Transport Committee’s road pricing inquiry, the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) outlined 10 guiding principles for any road pricing scheme.

They included: an early and exten-

sive consultation; making it simple to administer; providing a clear link to transport infrastructure and decarbonisation; and ensuring it treats all road users fairly.

BVRLA head of policy and public affairs Thomas McLennan believes that if Government engages with the fleet industry, a “world-leading road pricing system optimised for the UK can be developed”.

“Fleets can work as a partner with Government, spearheading the testing, development and deployment of any road pricing scheme,” he said.

“We believe the best road pricing system is simple, data-led and not overly prescriptive in its approach. It must be able to work well for all vehicle use cases.”

It is a view held by fleets, who fear an admin-heavy charging regime.

Matt Hammond, head of fleet at Altrad Services, says he is in favour of road pricing, but stressed it

needed to replace current road taxes, rather than becoming an additional cost charged by multiple operators.

“We are already paying to use the M6 toll and Dartford and Humber crossings,” he said. “My hope would be that these existing independent tolls could be incorporated into a single road pricing mechanism as well, otherwise we will end up with multiple agreements for different parts of the country or, worse still, different motorways.”

The potential cost to fleets from having to deal with administering a new road pricing regime is also a key concern of Steve Winter, head of fleet at British Gas. He told *Fleet News*: “When you consider clean air zones, ultra-low emission zones and the administrative burden for companies to register vehicles, it’s already really challenging.”

Winter fears any new scheme could add “significant cost” to a fleet operator, particularly if they are a commercial operator, where entering towns or cities at peak times is unavoidable.

“There will be a number of fleets out there that recognise road pricing is inevitable, but they want to know how it will avoid penalising them for doing their job,” he said.

FUEL DUTY INCREASE

Fleets will have to wait to see how any future road tax changes could be framed, but Budget 2021 could leave fleets facing an increase in fuel duty as the current Chancellor considers ending the 10-year freeze, first introduced by George Osborne.

The total tax per litre of petrol and ↻



⚙️ diesel, adjusted for inflation (RPI), has been falling steadily over the past two decades (see page 6 graph).

Fleet decision-makers do not expect this trend to continue. Almost three-in-five (58%) respondents to the *Fleet News* survey expect a hike in fuel duty this year. Fewer than a quarter (24%) believe the freeze will continue for a further 12 months.

The Chancellor announced in the previous Budget that the fuel duty freeze would continue for a further year, costing the Treasury £800m in lost revenue (fleetnews.co.uk, March 11, 2020).

In Budget 2020, the Treasury outlined expected tax receipts from fuel duty each year up to 2024/25. It suggested it would collect £27.5bn this tax year, a £200m decline on £27.7bn in 2019/20. But then it predicted an 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.

Budget 2021 will give an update on these figures, with Covid-19 expected to have significantly driven down revenues for the current tax year.

Hammond told *Fleet News* that fleets were going through a tough time, caught between the pressure from Government and environmental bodies to embrace EVs and the "stark reality" that the industry is not "ready to change".

"The Chancellor needs to identify this situation and ease off from further penalising drivers of internal combustion engines by reviewing the BIK rates for the cleaner, lower emissions petrol and diesel cars for at least the next fleet cycle," he said.

"Hopefully by then the industry will have caught up and the range and selection of EVs will allow drivers to naturally migrate across.

"Any measures now to further penalise drivers of ICE vehicles, through retaining the high BIK figures or any increase in fuel duty,

will only have the counter-productive effect of driving more employees down the grey fleet route, which reduces the governance and controls over vehicle selection and environmental considerations."

ABILITY TO PLAN

Fleet decision-makers are also urging the Chancellor to give them "certainty" in a post-pandemic world, after the uncertainty endured during the past year.

Winter told *Fleet News*: "The main thing I'd like to see (in the Budget) is some certainty to give me the ability to plan.

"When you're trying to run a fleet, however large it is, you're looking at lease lengths and trying to figure out what's going to happen in three, four, five or six years.

"At this moment, and for the past couple of years, the uncertainty has meant it's been difficult to plan."

What the Government is planning in terms of plug-in electric vehicles (PHEVs) is key, he says, particularly when British Gas runs an electric-only company car policy.

The AFP is calling for the Government to introduce BIK company car tax tables through to the end of the decade to allow fleets to plan for the new ICE car and van ban from 2030.

"Currently, we have tax tables up to 2024-25 and that allows us to effectively plan one replacement cycle ahead, which is useful, but we would also like to see tables through to 2029-30 created as soon as possible to look two cycles into the future," explained Hollick.

"From a practical standpoint, this will mean that we can produce comprehensive EV adoption strategies that take us right through to the moment when petrol and diesel cars will no longer be available."

■ For the latest on Budget 2021, visit fleetnews.co.uk and sign up to the daily *Fleet News* newsletter.



“EVERYONE KNOWS THAT CHANGE HAS TO COME IN THIS (TAX) AREA AND THE CONVERSATIONS WE NEED TO HAVE SHOULD START SOONER RATHER THAN LATER”

PAUL HOLLICK, AFP

Road pricing – the devil is in the politics



BY DR STEVE MELIA
SENIOR LECTURER
IN TRANSPORT AND
PLANNING AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST OF ENGLAND

Road pricing is back on the political agenda. Government sources suggest Chancellor Rishi Sunak is considering replacing fuel duty, as electric power gradually replaces petrol and diesel.

Meanwhile, the Transport Committee of the House of Commons has launched an inquiry into zero carbon vehicles and road pricing.

We have been here before. In 2007 some of my colleagues were working on a study for the Department for Transport (DfT) into the public acceptability of road pricing when an email went round the

university urging people to sign an e-petition urging the Prime Minister to "scrap the planned vehicle tracking and road pricing policy". It went on to attract 1.8 million signatures, prompting Blair to abandon the plans.

I interviewed Peter Roberts, the man who started that petition, for *Roads, Runways and Resistance: From the Newbury Bypass to Extinction Rebellion**.

The book tells the inside story of the most controversial transport issues in Britain since the late 1980s, the ones which provoked widespread protest, through interviews with ministers, civil servants, advisers and protest leaders.

It outlines how, in 2000, a small group of farmers and hauliers closed down the UK economy faster than Covid-19 in protest at rising fuel taxes. The Government made small concessions at the time, but the enduring legacy of those protests is illustrated in the fuel tax graph; fuel tax has fallen by more than a third since then.

Those stories, and that graph, illustrate the biggest problem with plans for road pricing today. Over the next few years, decarbonisation is the main challenge for the transport sector.

The sixth carbon budget now before Parliament would require the whole sector to cut its emissions by 70% by the mid-2030s. There are only two ways to do that: take petrol and diesel vehicles off the road and/or reduce the distances they drive.

Fuel tax rises would be the most effective way to create a 'push factor', and yet, governments continue to cut them, with hardly a murmur of opposition.

Road pricing could create a push factor if it increases the cost of driving conventional vehicles. It would make driving more expensive on congested roads, but if it replaces fuel taxes, it could make it cheaper to drive on uncongested roads, which have more capacity. That would increase carbon emissions.

It all depends on how the prices are set. Would politicians really use this as a way of making motoring more expensive? If not, then road pricing might make sense after the fleet has electrified, but not before, as I have written in my evidence to the Transport Committee.

In the meantime, governments should reverse those fuel tax cuts and aim to accelerate the shift away from petrol and diesel.

* *Roads Runways and Resistance: From the Newbury Bypass to Extinction Rebellion* is published by Pluto Press. For a 30% discount when buying direct, use the code ROADS30.

The all-new, **Golf 8 Estate**

More Golf Than Ever

More space, more style, more connectivity,
when you need nothing less than a mobile
office in a car. What more could you ask for?



Official fuel consumption figures for the all-new Golf 8 Estate model range in mpg (litres/100km): Combined 45.6 (6.2) - 61.4 (4.6). Combined CO₂ emissions 120-154 g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Data correct at 17/12/20. Figures quoted are for a range of configurations and are subject to change due to ongoing approvals/changes. Please consult your retailer for further information.

Government wants operators to make EV charging as easy as ICE

Interoperability is key as the DfT urges adoption of a simpler pricing framework

By Gareth Roberts

The Government has moved a step closer to mandating the interoperability of different electric vehicle (EV) charge point networks.

In a consultation, launched earlier this month, the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), part of the Department for Transport (DfT), outlined a series of measures it believes could transform the charge point experience for EV drivers (fleetnews.co.uk, February 15).

Key is interoperability, with the Government suggesting customers should be able to make a contactless payment, without having to download an app.

The consultation – the consumer experience at public electric vehicle charge points – also revealed how the Government wants to improve charge point reliability by forcing operators to respond to faults quickly and provide a 24/7 drivers' helpline.

Furthermore, it is proposing charge point operators make pricing information more readily available, along with location and power output data.

The Government says this is essential for ensuring costs are fair, for driving competition, and for increasing the confidence of both existing EV drivers and those considering making the switch.

"Reliable and easily accessible charging infrastructure is key to making the switch to EVs as easy and smooth as possible," said transport secretary Grant Shapps.

"It's essential that EV drivers feel



The Government is seeking to balance the ease of charging an EV with the ease of filling up with petrol or diesel

confident using the public charge point network."

Fleets have been driving the demand for EVs in the UK, with 10% of new cars sold last year being electric, up from around 3% in 2019.

Overall demand for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) grew by 186%, with more than two-thirds (68%) of the 108,205 BEVs and 66,879 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) registered in 2020 to fleets.

However, as EV uptake has increased, so have fleet concerns around the ease of access and reliability of charge points.

Fleet operators and company car drivers have long argued for a far simpler payment system to access the charging infrastructure.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (previously ACFO) highlighted two years ago how 'charge point anxiety' could thwart the wider adoption of EVs.

More recently, Richard Jones, the boss of Britain's largest vehicle leasing company, Lex Autolease, labelled the country's EV charging infrastructure "not fit-for-purpose".

Furthermore, concerns around charging infrastructure were the biggest perceived disadvantage to

EVs cited in a DfT survey (fleetnews.co.uk, August 25, 2020).

The consultation sets out how the Government wants to make charging an EV no different to fuelling an internal combustion engine (ICE) petrol or diesel car.

Opening up charge point data will enable the development of consumer-friendly apps and improve consumer experience, ministers believe.

It will also reduce costs by encouraging competition and innovation, and support system planning across the transport and electricity sectors.

The Government wants drivers to be able to understand and compare pricing offers across the UK network so they can select the best available price, as is the case for ICE vehicles.

"Standardisation to a pence-per-kilowatt hour (kWh) basis will enable a simpler pricing framework for all users," the consultation says.

The Government says it is also essential that the charge point network is maintained, and faults are repaired quickly, to ensure a minimum 99% reliability.

Daniel Brown, head of transport at the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (REA), believes an open, reliable, and

"simple-to-navigate" charging network is crucial to keep the confidence of drivers and fleets and take EVs into the mainstream.

"We welcome Government setting baseline expectations and 'guard rails' for the industry to deliver on," he said.

"The EV charging sector, however, is a complex blend of telecoms, electricity provision, payments, real estate, and hardware and we would caution against interventions that would stymie innovation that will benefit consumers and be the backbone of emerging British brands."

The consultation was launched at the same time as the DfT announced it would expand the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) to include small-to-medium enterprises and the charity sector for the first time.

In addition, it says the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme, which provides up to £350 towards a charge point, will continue next year and be expanded to people in rented and leasehold accommodation.

The charge point consultation will run until April 10, 2021. Go to fleetnews.co.uk/chargepoint-consultation and click on the link in the story to respond.

**RELIABLE
AND EASILY
ACCESSIBLE
CHARGING
INFRASTRUCTURE
IS KEY TO MAKING
SWITCH TO EVs**

GRANT SHAPPS, DfT

The all-new, **Golf 8 Estate**

More Golf Than Ever



Official fuel consumption figures for the all-new Golf 8 Estate model range in mpg (litres/100km): Combined 45.6 (6.2) - 61.4 (4.6). Combined CO₂ emissions 120-154 g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Data correct at 17/12/20. Figures quoted are for a range of configurations and are subject to change due to ongoing approvals/changes. Please consult your retailer for further information.

NEW FOR 2021...

ELECTRIC FLEET CONFERENCE 2021



brought to you by **FleetNews**

A TWO DAY VIRTUAL CONFERENCE,
Tues 23rd – Weds 24th March
(9am – 1.30pm each day)

Meet our line-up of expert headline speakers



**RACHEL
MACLEAN MP**
Minister for Future
of Transport &
Decarbonisation



GARY COOK
Deputy Director
and Head of the UK
Government Office
for Zero Emission
Vehicles at UK Civil
Service



**GREG
ARCHER**
UK Director,
Transport &
Environment



PHILIP NEW
CEO, Energy
Systems Catapult
& Chair of the EV
Energy Taskforce



**MATTEO
DE RENZI**
CEO, bp pulse



**MATT
WALTERS**
Head of
Consultancy,
LeasePlan UK

Topics to be covered include:



VEHICLES +
TECHNOLOGY



TOTAL COST
OF OWNERSHIP



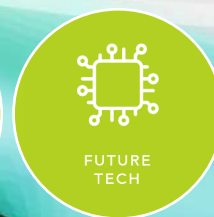
AFTERCARE



CHARGING



ENERGY +
INFRASTRUCTURE



FUTURE
TECH

Register now at www.electricfleetconference.co.uk

This virtual conference has been created for end-user fleet decision makers. A limited number of industry tickets are available to purchase.

Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Law firm accuses all manufacturers of cheating on diesel emissions tests

Harcus Parker issues class action lawsuits on diesels sold between 2009 and 2018

By Matt de Prez

Emissions cheating allegations are now being levelled against all car manufacturers who sold diesel vehicles in the UK between 2009 and 2018, by London law firm Harcus Parker.

Businesses, company car drivers and the rental and leasing industry could be eligible for compensation if the claims are successful.

Following the dieselgate scandal, Volkswagen Group was the first brand to face civil action with some 90,000 UK owners seeking compensation. The carmaker, however, is defending the claim and says that claimants did not suffer any loss. The case is ongoing.

Class action lawsuits have since been launched against Daimler, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Renault, Nissan and Vauxhall by numerous firms in the UK and Harcus Parker plans to begin legal proceedings against all other manufacturers of diesel vehicles in the coming weeks. The cases are expected to last for around two years.

All the car brands involved in existing claims deny the allegations.

Damon Parker, partner at Harcus Parker, said: "My clients bought diesel vehicles after believing the messages pushed on them from all sides that 'clean diesels' offered a win-win solution to the problem of increasing CO₂ emissions.

"Unfortunately, this ignores the



The court case against Volkswagen is on-going

difficulties manufacturers have always faced in controlling emissions of nitrogen oxide (NO_x). The effects of diesel fumes on air quality is now becoming more well known, and my clients hope that by holding vehicle manufacturers to account for breaching regulatory limits, they can help to protect the environment, air quality and our health in the future."

Car manufacturers are accused of using illegal defeat devices to manipulate the emissions performance of vehicles at certain times, such as during emissions tests, to make their cars appear to be more environmentally friendly.

All vehicles registered between 2009 and 2018 underwent the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC) test, in order to gain type approval. While EU law bans the use of 'defeat devices', exceptions within the regulations allow the effectiveness of emissions control systems to be reduced if it's required to protect the engine against damage or ensure its safe operation.

Nick Molden, founder and CEO of independent vehicle emissions testing firm Emissions Analytics, told *Fleet News*: "The regulations set a NO_x limit in 'normal driving' but, in

Europe, there was no description of what normal driving was – only the official NEDC cycle, which varied totally from normal driving.

"Manufacturers have worked through the regulations and found what specific tests they had to meet. No carmaker has failed to meet what they had to do under NEDC, but the lawyers argue that they should always meet that."

A 2016 investigation by the Vehicle Certification Agency, on behalf of the Department for Transport, found that only Volkswagen Group vehicles featured defeat devices designed specifically to beat official testing.

However, the tests provided further evidence that NO_x emissions from diesel vehicles were higher in real-world conditions and on the test track than in laboratory conditions.

The investigation concluded that the EU regulations provided uncertainty about how emissions control systems may be reduced or deactivated in certain conditions and did not detail how the exceptions to the ban on defeat devices should apply, whether or how manufacturers should apply these exemptions, or how a type approval authority should evaluate the validity of their use.

Parker said: "For a vehicle to perform significantly differently below 20°C, 17°C or even 15°C is simply unacceptable and in our view is a transparent attempt to manufacture vehicles which purport to pass the relevant tests but which perform very differently in the real world. After all, the average temperature in the UK is around 9°C."

The excess diesel emissions issue is estimated to affect around 40 million cars in Europe and around 11 million in the UK, including non-RDE Euro 6 models.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) said it is not aware that any of its members are engaging with class action suits and believes fleet operators are unlikely to seek compensation unless residual values were affected.

Molden said the weakness in class action suits is in establishing that car owners have suffered a loss.

"The consequence of higher NO_x is better fuel economy and lower CO₂. Consumers have been benefiting – there is no financial loss there. Secondhand car values are also still very strong. People like the fuel efficiency of a diesel vehicle," he explained.

“MY CLIENTS BOUGHT DIESEL VEHICLES AFTER BELIEVING THE MESSAGES PUSHED ON THEM FOR ALL SIDES THAT ‘CLEAN DIESELS’ OFFERED A WIN-WIN SOLUTION

DAMON PARKER,
HARCUS PARKER

Increasing numbers shun public transport with trend set to last

Study 'should set alarm bells ringing' as it reveals huge shift away from train and bus travel

By Gareth Roberts

People in a post-pandemic world will continue to avoid public and shared transport, potentially increasing grey fleet use and impacting the wider mobility market, new research suggests.

The study, from the Capgemini Research Institute, shows a huge shift in attitude away from travelling by public transport and car share.

When in 10 major countries it asked more than 10,000 people in April 2020, close to the start of the pandemic, whether they would choose their car over public transport, less than half (44%) of respondents said 'yes'.

That had increased to 78% by November, with similar trends seen in people's attitudes towards the use of car-pool services, such as car clubs and ride-hailing services.

In the UK, just 8% of people see buses, trains and trams as their primary means of transport, compared with 21% before the pandemic.

Four-in-five (81%) said they would avoid using car-pool services owing to health and safety concerns – up from 42% – and 78% added they would steer clear of ride-hailing services, an increase on 40% when

the first lockdown was introduced.

Furthermore, 87% of respondents said their safety was best served through their own vehicle, significantly higher than the 57% seen in the first survey.

John Webb, principal consultant at Lex Autolease, said people are particularly wary of rail travel.

"We're getting clear signals from all sectors that working life is never going to be the same again in terms of travel," he said.

However, what that actually means for employers remains to be seen in a post-pandemic world.

"You have to look at how much business is going to change," Webb said. "How much individual perceptions have changed – the actual risk as opposed to the real risk."

REVIEW TRAVEL POLICIES

He is urging employers to review their travel policies to ensure they reflect employees' concerns.

"There are going to be scenarios where previously you would have said for this journey you're going to have to get the train," he said.

However, if employees say they do not feel safe travelling by rail, the employer will need to adapt its travel policies.

"The potential there is to create

pressure on the grey fleet," continued Webb. "That creates challenges, because grey fleet emissions are reportable under the SECR (Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting scheme) and so there is more accountability on organisations to manage grey fleet emissions."

New data from the Department for Transport (DfT) shows during the latest lockdown, rail use has fallen to about 14% of usual levels – it has never been higher than 43% since the start of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the London Underground is currently carrying approximately 18% of its expected passenger numbers and has never exceeded 45% since the first lockdown was introduced.

Peter Golding, managing director at FleetCheck, says the Capgemini research should set alarm bells ringing for fleet managers.

"Grey fleet already outnumbers conventional company cars by a ratio of around six-to-one and this research indicates that proportion could increase over the next year," he said.

"This will have all kinds of implications for employers – ranging from potentially greater demand for at-work parking through to a need to upgrade (grey fleet) safety inspection procedures."

The Capgemini report – *Shifting gears: Covid-19 and the fast-changing automotive consumer* – showed that 45% of people are now planning on buying their own vehicle within the next 12 months compared with 27% last April.

That could result in employees choosing a used, higher-polluting vehicle, or provide an opportunity for the company car market, particularly through salary sacrifice schemes.

YOUNG MORE INTERESTED IN CARS

Of particular note was a growing interest in car ownership from younger people (aged 18-35), with 59% considering buying a car in the next 12 months, up from 40% in April.

The pandemic has focused more attention on infection risk, and this is changing the way people think about accessing a car for mobility.

With a car subscription, for instance, consumers enjoy a short-term and economical solution to their mobility needs while enjoying the protection from infection that a car offers over other mobility options.

In the UK, fewer than one-in-five consumers (18%) said they would subscribe to a car and 21% would prefer to lease one. Three-in-five respondents (61%) said they would prefer to buy.



WORKING LIFE IS NEVER GOING TO BE THE SAME AGAIN IN TERMS OF TRAVEL

JOHN WEBB,
LEX AUTOLEASE



Just 8% of those surveyed now see buses, trains and trams as their primary means of transport

ISTOCK.COM/PEOPLEIMAGES

New all-electric Mokka-e

1% BiK* | CO₂ 0g/km

Range up to 201 miles

Up to 80% rapid charge in 30 minutes**

0-60mph in just 8.7 seconds



Unbox your business

Call 0330 587 8222 to pre-book a free 3 day test drive†, or search Vauxhall Fleet Range.



VAUXHALL
Fleet

Fuel economy and CO₂ results for the Mokka-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO₂ emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 201 miles (WLTP).

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. **You can obtain 15-80% of the vehicle charge in 30 minutes from a 100kW rapid charging station. The vehicle will rapid charge at a rate of up to 100kW, depending on the power of the rapid charging station used and will take longer to charge at a lower power. Rapid charging stations are available across the UK at various locations and their power rating varies, typically from 50kW and sometimes up to 350kW. For further information on public charging stations across the UK, please visit www.zap-map.com. *2021/22 Tax Year. Company Car Benefit in Kind (BiK) rates are based on the standard paint price. †3 Day Test Drive terms and conditions apply and vehicles are subject to availability. Please contact your Vauxhall Retailer for further information. All figures quoted correct at time of going to press (February 2021).

CCS improves its website to offer 'quick and easy' access to quotes

New online capabilities will help public sector fleets focus on Government's 'net zero' target

By Gareth Roberts

The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) has launched a new, fleet-focused section on its website, giving public sector fleets help and advice on key issues and access to real-time vehicle quotes.

Operators access its suite of 'Total Fleet Solutions' through a new landing page, which gives an overview of the services offered by the UK's biggest public procurement organisation.

New sections have been created to cover each element of the fleet's

lifecycle and there is a new fleet portal for public sector fleets buying or leasing cars and vans.

CCS says it gives fleets "quick and easy" access to real-time quotations, helping them find the right vehicle for their organisation.

Tammy Carter, CCS head of fleet, said: "The usual winter pressures, the ever-increasing importance of sustainability and the coronavirus pandemic means there's never been a tougher time for those who manage the public sector fleet.

"To effectively help our customers,

it was important to bring together all of our framework news, market insight, case studies and blogs, in addition to details of events we are either hosting or supporting."

Carter hopes that the new web pages can be a "one-stop-shop", giving the public sector the information it needs to "power fleets through uncertain times".

"We hope the new pages will help fleet managers with every challenge they might face – from adapting vehicles to greening their fleet," she said.

"When a user lands on the Total

"THERE'S NEVER BEEN A TOUGHER TIME FOR THOSE WHO MANAGE THE PUBLIC SECTOR FLEET"

TAMMY CARTER, CCS

NEW HGV FRAMEWORK INCLUDES ELECTRIC VEHICLE CONVERSIONS

A new heavy goods vehicle (HGV) and specialist vehicle procurement framework has been launched by the Procurement Partnership and North East Procurement Organisation.

In addition to the purchase and contract hire of HGVs and specialist vehicles, the framework provides an opportunity for public

sector organisations to convert existing petrol or diesel vehicles to electric or hydrogen drivetrain technology.

James Brennan, managing director of the Procurement Partnership, said: "We are delighted to support the Government's 'Road to Zero' strategy through the inclusion of a lot specifically scoped for

electric and hydrogen fuel cell conversions.

"It will be key in enabling public sector bodies to harness the new technology and meet their 'net zero' carbon targets."

The framework, which will run until January 2025, can be accessed by way of direct award or further competition based on requirements and preferences.

Fleet Solutions home page, they can quickly understand our entire offering and identify which area is most applicable to their requirements. From there, they can click through to find out more about that particular topic."

The new layout, she says, will help users see the "linkages and dependencies" between fleet products and help highlight new topics or ideas they may not have previously considered.

A former fleet manager herself, Carter says that the Total Fleet Solutions are suitable for customers with one vehicle through to those with fleets in excess of 10,000.

She explained: "The portfolio of products has been structured to address all of our customers' fleet needs, providing a seamless route to market however small or complex that need may be.

"For ease of use, we have structured our different products and services into five groups: acquire, adapt, manage, maintain and sustain.

"These groups provide a link between our supply chains and their product and service offerings, aligning them to the customer requirements throughout their fleet life cycle."

An executive agency and trading fund of the UK Government's Cabinet Office, CCS, through its Total Fleet Solutions, also provides a focus on the journey towards 'net zero'.

"Recognising the challenges this brings, we can support our customers in understanding their current data, options to manage future demand and then to make the change," Carter said.



JAN

12

HITACHI CAPITAL BUYS £10M STAKE IN GRIDSERVE

Hitachi Capital UK has invested £10 million in EV charging business Gridserve to support the roll-out of 100 new Electric Forecourts.

14

RENAULT 5 RE-INVENTED TO SHOWCASE ELECTRIFICATION STRATEGY



Renault plans to launch 14 new models with electrified powertrains by 2025. Showcasing the new direction is a retro-styled electric city car that is based on Renault's popular 5 model.

18

GREY MOST POPULAR NEW CAR COLOUR IN THE UK

The UK's favourite new car colour in 2020 was grey for the second year running, according to new data issued by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

22

BMW i4 COMPLETES FINAL TESTING BEFORE LAUNCH



BMW's first electric saloon, the i4 is completing its final testing phase before its market launch in the spring. The new model is based on the 4 Series, in Gran Coupe body type, and will have a power output of up to 530PS.

28

VEHICLES FAIL MOT IN RECORD NUMBERS DUE TO EMISSIONS

A record number of vehicles – almost 1.3 million – failed their MOT last year, because of faults relating to exhaust emissions, new data from the DVSA suggests.

29

ARVAL STRIKES LEASING DEAL WITH ONLINE CAR PLATFORM YESAUTO

Arval has signed a deal to provide leasing options for the new and used car platform, YesAuto, which launched in the UK last year.

FEB

1

NEW-STYLE DRIVING LICENCES AND NUMBER PLATES ISSUED



MOST COMMENTED
The Government has marked the first anniversary of Brexit by removing the EU flag from all UK driving licences and number plates.

2

TOYOTA MIRAI HYDROGEN CARS JOIN ENTERPRISE FLEET



In an effort to explore alternative fuels to deliver low- and zero-emission transport, Enterprise Rent-A-Car has taken delivery of 17 Toyota hydrogen fuel cell electric Mirai saloons.

GO ULTRA LOW CAMPAIGN TO CLOSE AFTER FUNDING CUT

Go Ultra Low – a joint industry and Government campaign – to promote the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) has failed to secure additional funding and will close from the end of March.

KIA TO LAUNCH SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE AND 11 NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Kia will roll-out its Korean car subscription service – Kia Flex – globally and strengthen its EV line-up by 2026 with 11 new models.



AUDI UNVEILS THE E-TRON GT – ITS FIRST ELECTRIC SALOON

MOST SHARED
Audi has revealed the new e-tron GT, a fully-electric

saloon car that will go on sale in the spring. Poised to rival the Tesla Model S, the new e-tron GT will be priced from £79,900.

MOST READ

JAGUAR TO BECOME ALL-ELECTRIC BRAND BY 2025

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has outlined its electrification strategy which will see Jaguar offer an entirely electric model line-up by 2025.

FEB

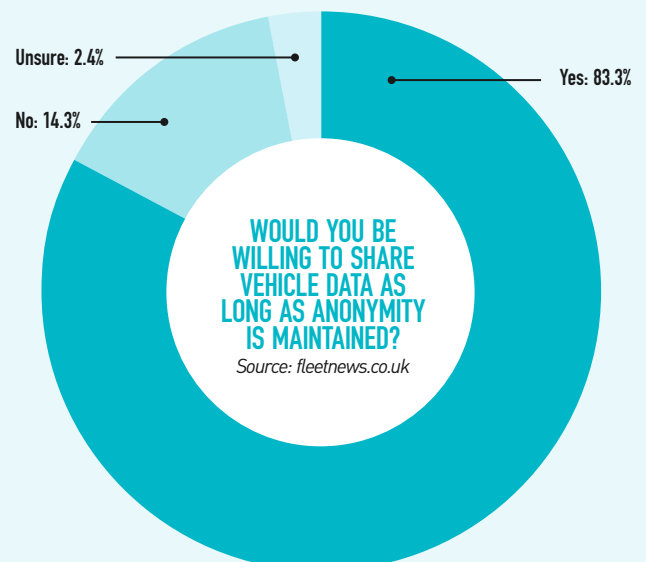
4

9

10

15

FLEET NEWS POLL



FLEET NEWS VIEW:

Our poll shows that, where anonymity is maintained, more than four-out-of-five drivers (83.3%) are happy to share their data. Many new cars are equipped with some connectivity, often allowing drivers to gain access to services or in-car entertainment features, such as live traffic data or music streaming, in return for data-sharing consent. The poll results suggest drivers will be happy to continue sharing data provided they are not identifiable.

THIS ISSUE'S POLL: WHAT WILL BE YOUR NEXT COMPANY CAR?

MaaS MOVEMENT

Mobility as a service has the potential to transform travel, but has not yet entered the mainstream.

Andrew Ryan looks at what's holding it back

When the concept of mobility as a service (MaaS) first burst on to the scene, many experts expected it to transform how business users – as well as the public – travelled.

A smartphone app would provide a user with access to different transport modes and providers, allowing them to book and pay for a range of services such as car clubs, trains, aeroplanes, buses, e-bikes and e-scooters all in one place.

Using these shared transport modes would reduce private car ownership, which, in turn, would cut congestion and CO₂ emissions, therefore improving air quality.

Some experts went as far as to say it could spell the end of the company car as employees would, instead, be provided with a mobility budget to spend as they wish.

However, as time has passed and experts and industry have had more time to investigate and develop technologies, many predictions now tend to be more cautious.

One of the latest thoughts is that employees could be offered the choice of a mobility budget in addition to a company car or cash allowance.

This partly reflects concerns over the coverage MaaS may provide in rural areas, as well as people's attachment to the car.

"One of the main challenges with delivering a MaaS solution in the UK is we've become so used to personal mobility, also known as the car, that almost any inconvenience is incomprehensible," says Simon Davies, general manager of Warwickshire-based Ox, which is working on MaaS solutions for developing countries.

"I'm a massive proponent of MaaS and I think that, if we lived in a MaaS culture, then it would be a much better thing for individuals, the nation and the environment.

"However, in the UK, we have spent more than 100 years investing in the emotional connection with the car.

"In a MaaS world, we wouldn't need motor shows. We wouldn't need car dealerships because people wouldn't be buying cars, we'll also need fewer factories because there'll be less vehicles on the road.

"And all of those businesses and those industries today deliver people's livelihoods. And therefore, those businesses and those people are not

going to head off into the sunset without a fight.

"MaaS has a huge barrier to overcome in the UK: almost anything is less convenient than having a car in your driveway."

DRIVERS NOT WILLING TO GIVE UP THE CAR

The most recent Arval Mobility Observatory report supports this sentiment, as just 18% of UK fleet decision-makers said their drivers would be willing to give up their car for an alternative mobility solution.

"Our findings really illustrate just how resilient the company car remains within UK corporate culture," says Shaun Sadlier, head of Arval Mobility Observatory in the UK.

This attachment means MaaS would need to offer an employee an experience which needs to exceed or at least equal the one that individual private car ownership provides, says Edward Atai, co-head Mobility 2030 at KPMG.

"Another obstacle is the tax treatment," he adds. "It's clear that MaaS does not have the same tax benefits as company cars do at the moment.

"For instance, there is nothing similar to the 0% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax for electric vehicles (EVs)

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Gavin Franks, business services director at The AA



With the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on the road increasing by more than 300% in the past 12 months*, the number of EV call-outs we receive has risen dramatically. As a result,

we've continued to invest in research and development to offer industry-leading support for drivers.

We're proud to have just launched our latest ground-breaking innovation which has transformed our breakdown service for thousands of drivers. The brand new 'freewheeling hub' enables our patrols to safely tow EVs or 4x4s, which normally cannot be 'lifted' and towed on two wheels.

Working exclusively in conjunction with our Multi-Fit wheel and new heavy-duty Multi-Fit Wheel for larger vehicles, the revolutionary freewheeling hub allows patrols to fit a temporary spare wheel to almost any vehicle. It has its own heavy-duty high-speed bearing making the wheel turn independently from the car.

The invention is being used by more than 900 patrols and will be rolled out to all patrols in the coming months. It means shorter waiting times and reduced CO₂ emissions for breakdown recoveries, as AA vans can now be used to tow more cars, freeing up large recovery trucks for complex breakdowns involving heavier or more damaged vehicles.

In addition, we're proud to have the largest trained group of EV patrols across Europe, and most will be trained to the equivalent of Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) level two by the end of 2021, as well as a third of the AA Prestige Network already EV-capable.

As we progress on the journey to 2030 and electrification, The AA's continued innovation, roadside capabilities and customer service keeps us ahead of the curve with supporting EV drivers. Whatever your route to embracing EVs, we're with you every step of the way.

Contact: www.theaa.com/business

** An increase of 343.7% from December 2019, to December 2020. SMMT vehicle data, December 2020 – <https://www.smm.co.uk/vehicle-data/car-registrations/>*



A MaaS smartphone app will allow hire bikes to be unlocked and ridden

ISTOCK.COM/DEAN MITCHELL

for MaaS despite all of the significant benefits it provides, in the same way that EVs provide some environmental benefits.

"MaaS also needs to be a comprehensive solution. For it to work and be attractive, it needs to have full coverage, whether that's at a city level or a national level. And that will take time.

"From an employer perspective, it is also important that it is seamless, which means integration with business expenses and invoice systems.

"And it needs to have the ability to monitor employee journeys from a financial or an environmental perspective, so you have these really valuable data points."

SHIFTING ATTITUDES

The Covid-19 pandemic has also moved attitudes towards shared transport.

Department for Transport (DfT) figures show the number of passengers using national rail services has fallen to an average of 22% of pre-pandemic figures, while London Underground use is down at 21%.

"This is predominantly based on safety

grounds and people feeling uncomfortable taking public transport," says Ataii.

Maurizio Catulli, of the smart mobility unit at the University of Hertfordshire, says people should not be surprised by the impact of Covid-19 on shared transport.

"Research [Bardhi & Echardt 2012] has already identified the impact of fear of contagion on the use of car clubs.

"Is Covid-19 an existential threat to MaaS? Well, it has definitely the potential to change consumer attitudes to sharing transport.

"[Covid-19] has taken people by surprise, but it may not be an isolated incident because research shows that humans interfere with the environment and this creates a persistent risk of pandemics."

Catulli says the university has seen at first-hand the effect Covid-19 could have on services such as car clubs.

It had offered students the use of electric vehicles through a car club, but the provider withdrew the service as part of a strategy to "retrench to urban areas such as London due to a lack of demand and the very strict cleaning

Award-winning Business Breakdown Cover



Track us right to your side



We'll handle everything



Keep your business moving

Visit **theAA.com/business**

Use promo code **0888**

Or call **0800 294 2994**

12
MONTHS
FOR THE
PRICE OF
10



Ts&Cs apply.

Automobile Association Insurance Services Limited is an insurance intermediary authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered office: Fanum House, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 4EA. England and Wales. Company registration number 2414212.

The use of e-scooters on public roads is currently illegal, but that is expected to change

controls and protocols and disinfection", he adds. "This had an impact on profitability because it became more and more labour intensive."

The progress of MaaS is one of the technologies tracked by the *Hype Cycle for Connected Vehicles and Smart Mobility* report, produced annually by global technology consultancy Gartner.

It maps technologies through four phases before they enter the mainstream.

So far, MaaS has progressed through the Innovation Trigger, which covers a breakthrough, public demonstration or product launch which generates significant press and industry interest, and the Peak of Inflated Expectations, which is a phase of overenthusiasm and unrealistic projections, where a flurry of well-publicised activity by technology leaders results in some successes, but more failures, as the technology is pushed to its limits.

TROUGH OF DISILLUSIONMENT

MaaS now sits in the Trough of Disillusionment, which is where, because the technology does not live up to its overinflated expectations, it rapidly becomes unfashionable.

The 'Trough of Disillusionment' phrase sums up where some industry experts sit right now.

"It is hard to argue with the *raison d'être* of MaaS, but, more recently, I have wondered if MaaS has become a totem for shared mobility and we are in danger of overlooking existing, fit-for-purpose, solutions," says Johan Herrlin, CEO of transit data and software company Ito World.



MAAS SOLUTIONS ARE ONLY LIKELY TO BE EMBRACED IF THEY HAVE A CLEAR SCOPE, BASED ON LOCAL NEEDS

JOHAN HERRLIN, ITO WORLD

"Long-distance journeys are generally purchased in much the same way airline tickets are: passengers book ahead, sometimes reserving a specific seat.

"These customers are already well served by incumbent ticketing providers, such as Trainline.

"Commuter passengers are already served by season tickets which enable them to take their regular daily journey.

"Local transport users are represented by passengers who travel around a defined area, for

example London. In London, contactless payments have become near universal for both public and private transport options.

"In this market, the value of MaaS would be for travellers who don't only want to access tubes and buses, but to regularly combine other modes of transport such as car clubs, taxis and micromobility schemes.

"For the MaaS provider to attract this segment of travellers, they would not only need to convince users that they would save money by using their platform, but that they also would provide a more seamless and convenient solution than contactless travel is already providing."

Herrlin says journey planning apps like Google Maps or Apple Maps already provide an option to MaaS.

They allow users to navigate transport systems and get turn-by-turn directions and, although they don't generally sell tickets, they do facilitate transactions through Google Pay and Apple Pay.

"MaaS solutions are only likely to be embraced if they have a clear scope, based on local needs, increased convenience and will help travellers save money," he says.

"The issue is, however, that there are already providers meeting this need.

"Even if it is not called a MaaS implementation, the Transport for London (TfL) Oyster Card/contactless system is delivering convenient, frictionless and price-capped solution to millions of passengers in London, who can easily consume various services.

According to the Arval
Mobility Observatory research,
more than six-in-10

62%

UK companies have introduced
a mobility solution

Journeys by train have dropped by more than 75%
as a result of the pandemic, DfT figures reveal

“Even without encompassing additional services (taxis, micromobility, car clubs etc.), this works well for a large local population.”

However, falling into the Trough of Disillusionment is far from the death knell for MaaS. It is just another natural step towards the technology entering the mainstream which will be five-to-10 years away, says Gartner.

A wide variety of companies, including car manufacturers, have invested billions of pounds into the technology and its adoption has been growing in cities across the globe.

This includes Berlin, Sydney, Helsinki and Sofia, while in the UK, Go-Hi (see below) begins next month.

Last November, Kinto, the mobility division of Toyota, announced it would introduce a MaaS solution for UK businesses that will allow customers to search thousands of different travel

providers for flights, trains, car hire, car clubs, taxis, hotels, airport lounges and more.

Kinto's offering is powered by Fleetondemand's Mobilleo platform, which is also used by public authorities including Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Surrey Council and Transport Scotland.

“Businesses are now starting to consider the wider mobility mix going forward and what this (mix) means sitting alongside the use of company cars,” says Matt Terry, head of business MaaS at Fleetondemand.

EMPLOYERS TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

KPMG has also found some employers are looking at mobility service options “very seriously”, according to Ataii.

“We’ve been approached by a number of corporates asking for information on MaaS credit

schemes as there has been some feedback from staff, particularly those living in cities, that they would prefer some form of MaaS credit to a car allowance,” he says.

The Arval research also found more UK companies are using and intend to use new mobility solutions compared with a year ago.

More than six-in-10 (62%) have introduced a mobility solution, with a quarter of fleets formally adding mobility options to their car policy.

While the top alternatives include ride share, PCH/salary sacrifice and public transport, a growing proportion are planning to adopt mobility budgets and booking apps.

“Mobility is in its infancy, but we see it speeding up. There will be a generational element where younger people don’t want a car; they will want mobility – as long as it is a cost- and time-effective alternative to the company car,” says Sadlier.

PROJECT TAKES TO THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TO EXPLORE GO-HI CAPABILITIES

A project designed to trial MaaS in a rural part of Scotland is due to begin next month.

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) will use Fleetondemand's Mobilleo platform to support its Go-Hi project.

The project covers a region which is home to 10% of Scotland's population and accounts for approximately 50% of the country's land mass – an area the same size as Belgium.

This includes long, remote coastlines, mountainous areas and many uninhabited islands

that currently create barriers to the movement and transportation of people and goods.

“Being the Highlands, it has some obvious challenges. It’s very rural with limited transport infrastructure,” says Ben Lawson, vice-president of strategy Europe at Enterprise Holdings, one of the partners in the project.

“To overcome these, the project truly brings the concept of an integrated multimodal transport system to life.

“It includes ferry, bus, bicycle, train, plane and, facilitating the uptake of these modes of

transport, the car in the form of further expansion of Enterprise's car club service.

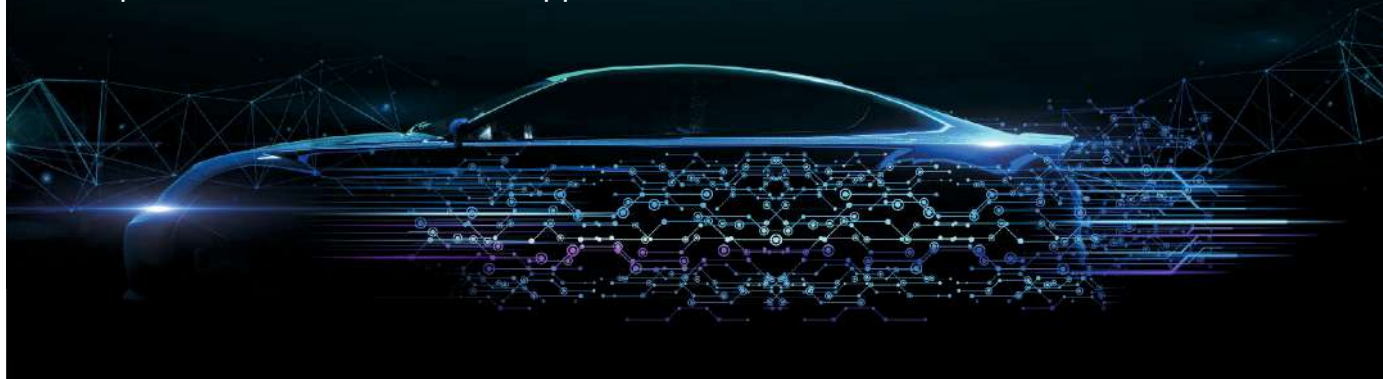
“It’s the most expansive trial of its kind to date and will deliver genuinely valuable insights on behavioural change, the significance of which should not be underestimated.”

Other project partners include Bewegen, Stagecoach Bus, West Coast Motors, Inverness Taxis, ScotRail, Loganair and Skedgo.

It is being funded by the EU North Sea Region Stronger Combined project and the Scottish Government's MaaS Investment Fund.

SUPPORTING THE EVOLUTION OF CAV CONCEPTS

The introduction of connected and autonomous vehicles is drawing closer. But, as the challenges of bringing them to market become more evident, so, too, does the value of specification and validation support services for carmakers, writes *Alastair Evanson*



ISTOCK.COM/JUST_SUPER

There are some who believe the driverless car revolution has stalled since its 'peak hype' in 2015. In fact, the reality is far more pragmatic.

What if it's not a revolution at all, but more an evolution? While the initial technology and idealistic concepts moved forward at pace, the challenges of bringing such a new concept to market, inevitably, take longer.

Driverless cars are certainly closer than they've ever been. Many of those early innovators are now in the validation stage; designing and undertaking complex, comprehensive test programmes which span digital and physical tests, to ensure the safety of their product.

However, it's a lengthy process. Bringing any new product to market is hard. For something on this scale, which has the potential to fundamentally shift our way of living and where the risks of failure could be fatal, it is incredibly challenging.

That's why this last hurdle in the development of connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) was always going to be a difficult one to navigate. But good progress continues to be made. Many Government-backed CAV trials have been a success – one example is the HumanDrive project which saw an autonomous vehicle complete a 230-mile self-navigated journey on UK roads.

A report launched last month by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) notes that the CAV sector is very much on the cusp of deployment and is set to be worth nearly £42 billion by 2035, with the potential to create almost 40,000 skilled jobs.

Progress continues to be made. Horiba Mira's £100 million Assured CAV centre provides an ecosystem of advanced facilities and technologies which support the industry in edging closer to the deployment of CAV technologies. It combines physical and digital infrastructures to provide a behind-closed-doors location, where develop-



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alastair Evanson is head of commercial and business development for Assured CAV at Horiba Mira, a leading organisation in the validation and verification of CAVs. He has international expertise in transport and mobility from a consultancy, delivery and business development perspective.

ment work can be undertaken safely and securely.

As the DfT notes in its report, the Government has worked since 2015 to make the UK one of the best places in the world to develop and deploy CAV technology. It is the only place worldwide with the capability to take ideas from concept to development both virtually and physically.

Horiba Mira works with companies to ensure the validation and verification of connected automated technology, including testing programmes.

As a partner of Assured CAV, a manufacturer can undertake virtual testing using state-of-the-art technology including digital twins and our road setups for safe, physical testing within a controlled environment.

For others, we can provide a full consultancy service, with engineering capabilities to support carmakers, Tier 1s and start-ups to achieve their commercial goals.

Take a manufacturer which has developed a specific technology, for example, but doesn't know how to take it to market. Our team can help them understand what they require and develop a test system to help them get there, identifying where it will drive and under what conditions in order to design a system and, subsequently, a rigorous test programme.

It's a challenge, but with collaboration from the Government and industry, CAVs are edging closer. The evolution continues.

UK'S CAM INDUSTRY HASN'T 'STALLED', IT'S THRIVING

BY DANIEL RUIZ, CEO, ZENZIC

It is clear how the development of connected and self-driving vehicles will positively change our environment by improving road safety, access to transport and productivity.

Sceptics who argue that the self-driving industry has 'stalled' fail to anticipate how completely technological evolution can transform our perspective. Less than 15 years ago, there were many who did not foresee how our mobile phones were about to change quickly.

However, while we couldn't see how a Nokia 3310 would become an iPhone, we can already see many potential societal and economic benefits due to CAVs.

The UK is a world leader in connected and automated mobility testing and development with sites like Horiba Mira and its Assured CAV facility, showcases the nation's technical ability to homegrown start-ups and overseas investors.

Zenzic's CAM Scale-Up programme is another example of how the UK is cultivating its progress towards a connected and self-driving future.

As highlighted in the CCAV's latest report, the UK's CAM industry is thriving today, and we want to make sure it thrives tomorrow through intelligent, continued funding from the UK Government, matched by industry investment.

The opportunity to build up an industry like this is rare.

Rarer still is to be in a leading position.

Primed for

TRANSFORM



INFORMATION

The Optimise Prime programme will offer guidance to fleets and electricity networks to speed up the transition to EVs. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Fleet electrification is no longer just a potential option for a limited number of organisations. It is an inevitability following the Government's 2030 ban on the sale of new conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) petrol and diesel cars and vans.

But questions remain over how the UK's electricity infrastructure will cope with the mass adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), as well as how businesses can accelerate their transition.

Answering these is the aim of the Optimise Prime programme funded by Ofgem (the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets), which is the world's largest commercial EV project.

The consortium of Hitachi, electricity distribution networks UK Power Network and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, and fleet partners Royal Mail, Centrica and Uber, was formed in 2017 with the project beginning in 2019.

It was originally due to finish next year, but is now expected to continue until early 2023 after the Covid-19 pandemic affected vehicle availability and the ability to install charge points at people's homes.

The three fleet partners offer different ways of operating, with each presenting individual challenges to electricity networks.

Royal Mail operates a back-to-base model where vehicles are returned to a depot to be charged overnight. Centrica's vans are taken home by drivers at the end of the working day, while Uber drivers will use either the public charging network or a combination of both public and home chargers.

"The key questions the project is seeking to answer is how do we quantify and minimise the electricity network impact of commercial EVs; what is the value proposition for smart charging solutions for EV fleets and plug-in hybrid operators; and what infrastructure (network, charging and IT) is needed to enable the EV transition at scale," says Nicole Thompson, director of social innovation and head of co-creation partnerships for Hitachi Vantara.

"If the Optimise Prime methods and solutions are successful and deployed throughout Great Britain, the anticipated benefits include savings of £207 million for electricity customers, a reduction in CO₂ emissions of 2.7m tonnes and the freeing up of enough capacity on the network to supply more than one million homes with electricity by 2030."

The project has so far analysed data on more than five million trips by 1,000 electric vehicles, cross-referenced with 9,000 charge points, 400,000 road sections and four electricity distribution networks.

Thompson says the fleet partners have already ordered an additional 1,000 commercial EVs with more to follow.

In this feature, we look at the work carried out and findings so far.

RETURN TO DEPOT CHARGING

Organisations which operate a back-to-base operating model (such as Royal Mail), where vehicles are returned to a depot overnight, have the potential to have an immediate and negative impact on their local electricity network.

If multiple EVs are charged at the same time at the same site, the level of electricity demand could pose a threat to the local supply.

These organisations could also incur huge charges by having to upgrade the electricity network connections to their sites to cope with this demand.

"Depot-based fleets tend to be done on a worst-case scenario, where installing large numbers of chargers on a single site could result in prohibitive cost connections," says Thompson.

"In some cases, the cost to electrify the site could be higher than the cost of the vehicles, making the transition commercially unviable."

Royal Mail is the project's fleet partner for this part of Optimise Prime and operates the largest fleet in the UK of around 46,000 vehicles, based across 1,700 sites.

It currently has around 300 electric vans, ➔

Sponsored by



Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Rob Morris, Head of Fleet and Remarketing, Volvo Car UK



Last year, Volvo's UK fleet operations outperformed the overall market despite the significant challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Plug-in hybrids represented 43% of total fleet

and business registrations, with our range of petrol-electric powertrains across all seven of our models continuing to receive significant levels of interest.

The XC40 compact SUV continues to win awards. Now available as a mild-hybrid, plug-in hybrid and pure electric, this car is popular with fleets and drivers alike. Last year, it was also the premium market's most popular SUV, taking the lead in one of the most fiercely contested market segments.

As the new Head of Fleet and Remarketing at Volvo Car UK, looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, I believe our growing range of plug-in hybrid and electric cars will continue to provide an exciting and practical proposition for our business customers.

The XC40 Recharge Pure Electric will be joined this year by the second of several pure-electric Volvos to be launched by 2025. We are on track globally to achieve our 2025 objective of 50% of all sales being fully electric.

We understand that the next step towards electrification throws up a myriad of questions – anything from charging infrastructure to total cost of ownership. Our dedicated team of fleet experts is available to assist you with your specific requirements.

This year will be a formidable one for businesses. We invite you to challenge us to find a fleet solution that works for you and your drivers.

Call the Volvo Car Business Centre on 0345 600 4027 or visit [volvocars.co.uk/business](https://www.volvocars.co.uk/business)



ISTOCK.COM/RA-PHOTOS

V O L V O

Electrifying business



Introducing the Volvo XC40 Recharge Plug-in Hybrid T4 R-Design

From £39,095
P11D

12%
Benefit-in-Kind

Up to 28 miles
Pure electric range

Our new Volvo XC40 Recharge Plug-in Hybrid T4 R-Design delivers figures that speak for themselves. But that's not all. There's the head-turning design, technology to keep your drivers connected and world-leading safety innovations to protect them. Plus, if you act now your business can enjoy a range of government incentives and tax benefits currently available for plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Volvo plug-in hybrids.
A fleet for here and now.

**Visit volvocars.co.uk/electrifyingbusiness
or call the Volvo Car Business Centre on 01423 623555**



Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures for the Volvo XC40 Recharge Plug-in Hybrid T4 R-Design, in MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 117.7 – 134.5 (2.4 – 2.1). WLTP CO₂ emissions 55 – 47g/km. WLTP electric energy consumption 3.5 – 4.1 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 26.1 – 27.3 miles. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption, CO₂ and equivalent electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures were obtained using a combination of battery power and fuel. The Volvo plug-in hybrid vehicles require mains electricity for charging. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Preliminary data. Please contact your retailer for latest information.

Glow on charging cable for illustrative purposes only.



used in its collection and delivery operation, and these are based at seven depots in and around London.

"We are challenged with ageing infrastructure and limited space," says Royal Mail fleet innovation and environment manager Anna Pearson. "Not all our buildings are owned so we would also need landlord permission before we can invest in upgrading our sites."

The Optimise Prime project has looked at the cost and practicality of converting 21 Royal Mail depots to be able to cope with an all-electric fleet.

These calculations involved using the background electricity demand of the site, the existing agreed supply capacity, the number of vehicles which will need to be charged, vehicle battery size and the rate they could be charged, as well as the number and power of charge points needed.

Telematics fitted to the depots' diesel vans provided information on mileages and duty cycles and this was used to produce a charging schedule to ensure the EVs would have sufficient energy for their work the following day.

UK Power Networks found that if these EVs were plugged in as soon as they returned to the depot and charged at the same time, it would cost around £1.8m to upgrade the depots' connections to the capacity required. There would be a lead time of four-to-six months for this work.

"The cost would vary between depots," says James Bracegirdle, programme manager for Optimise Prime. "The most expensive depot would be around £200,000 to connect, while some depots would cost nothing. This confirms what many will

**THE MOST
EXPENSIVE DEPOT
WOULD BE AROUND
£200,000 TO
CONNECT, WHILE
SOME DEPOTS
WOULD COST
NOTHING. THE COST
OF CONNECTION
IS A LOTTERY**

**JAMES BRACEGIRDLE,
OPTIMISE PRIME**

already know – the cost of connection is a lottery."

However, if the depots adopted smart charging, which sees technology monitor and manage charging devices to optimise energy consumption, then the cost "can be dramatically reduced by almost 100%", says Bracegirdle.

Just three of the 21 sites would need their connections upgraded, and the lead time for this would be reduced by between one and three months.

Optimise Prime is also developing a planning tool

for depot-based fleets to help determine the right specification for their charging infrastructure.

"This will allow us to optimise EV charging to ensure vehicles are charged when needed," says Bracegirdle. "Without optimising the fleet's charging, depots may face significant costs for network reinforcement or need to limit their electrification plans."

RETURN-TO-HOME CHARGING

Many commercial vehicle fleets do not operate back-to-base models, with drivers instead taking their vehicles home overnight.

While the biggest issue this poses for diesel or petrol vans may be parking, electric LCVs will also need to be charged.

These are likely to have a greater impact on the electricity network than EVs for private use due to their higher utilisation and mileage, says Thompson.

This creates an extra challenge as currently commercial EV charging demands are effectively hidden inside the domestic load profile, making forecasting and planning more challenging.

"No visibility of commercial charging on domestic connections means the full costs associated with network reinforcement will be socialised, resulting in higher costs for network customers," she adds.

Optimise Prime is using live trials to uncover these hidden commercial loads and search for ways to reduce the need for network reinforcement through smart charging and flexibility.

The fleet partner for the home charging part of the project is Centrica, which has committed to electrifying its 12,000-strong British Gas fleet by



The British Gas fleet is being studied to examine the impacts of charging at home on energy supply



Royal Mail vans are returned to depot overnight which means large numbers are charged at the same time in the same location

☞ 2030 and last summer ordered 1,000 Vauxhall Vivaro-e vans – the largest EV order for a commercial fleet in the UK.

It currently has around 300 EVs with the Vauxhall order due to be completed this summer. Centrica is installing chargers at the homes of the EV drivers where possible.

"Our engineers will either charge at home or, if they have no driveway, they will have to public charge," says James Rooney, fleet engineer at Centrica.

"This poses the question of when the charging can happen. If it's overnight, you have eight-to-12 hours which the vehicle can spend charging. But, if it's during the day, it becomes a lot trickier.

"The less downtime the better, and if you have to start factoring in charging during the day, the most expensive bit isn't actually the electricity which is going into the battery, it's our engineer standing there idle."

Centrica's strategy is to adopt vehicles with the largest batteries so they have to be charged the least frequently, adds Rooney.

"Our shifts can be fairly small, they might only be 40 miles a day, so some of our engineers could go three, four, maybe even five days before recharging, which then makes the van feel more like operating a diesel," he says.

MIXED CHARGING

Optimise Prime's third trial is using more than 1,000 Uber EVs in London.

"These types of fleets may charge at homes, charging hubs or at roadside chargers throughout the city," says Thompson.

"Demand for these services is growing, yet the potential network impact isn't fully understood.

"The challenge for network operators is that for this type of fleet, there is no visibility of when and where the demand for charging is, while for the

private vehicle operators the issues are around the availability of charging infrastructure and a lack of understanding of drivers' charging behaviour."

Throughout the trial, the project will collect anonymised telematics data from Uber EVs across Greater London and this will be combined with grid data to estimate the future charging demand from private hire EVs.

It will also identify locations where the charging infrastructure needs to be strengthened.

"We are currently seeing, for example, that the Heathrow, Central London and London City Airport areas appear to be under-served with charging infrastructure as drivers starting in those areas travel the furthest to charge," says Bracegirdle.

Thompson says private hire fleets will adopt EVs quicker than the general public due to the increased amounts of regulatory pressure with, for example, London requiring that all new private hire vehicles registered are zero emission capable.

A VAN FOR ALL SEASONS? THAT'S NOT WHAT PROJECT FLEET PARTNERS ARE FINDING

The Optimise Prime programme has found winter conditions can reduce the range of a battery electric vehicle by up to 40%.

"In 2014, we took on some Nissan eNV200s," says James Rooney, fleet engineer at Centrica. "They were a really good van in the summer; not so good in the winter.

"Bearing in mind this is old tech, we could get 70 miles out of them in the summer, but in

winter that could be down to 40 miles with a mix of what the cold does to the battery in terms of potency as well as the driver using the heaters.

"It's less of a problem now with battery preconditioning and liquid-cooled batteries, but we certainly see a seasonal disparity."

Royal Mail has had a similar experience. "We introduced our first 100 EVs throughout 2018/19

so we've had them for a couple of winters now," says Anna Pearson, fleet innovation and environment manager at Royal Mail.

"The colder and darker conditions means we have to use the heaters and lights more, and we have seen a drop in range.

"We've probably seen a drop of about 25% to 30%, definitely. That, obviously, depends on how the vehicle is being driven as well."

CONNECT WITH OUR EV EXPERTS

**THE SUPPORT YOU NEED
TODAY, FOR THE FLEET YOU
NEED TOMORROW**

We're highly experienced in everything electric, and will work in partnership with you to provide expert advice that ensures your fleet is always prepared for the road ahead.

zenith.co.uk
oneteam@zenith.co.uk
0344 848 9311



Zenith 
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions



'As soon as the BIK rate dropped, range anxiety disappeared'

Eric Wright Group fleet manager Steve Openshaw explains the sudden popularity of electric. *Andrew Ryan* reports

When *Fleet News* profiled the Eric Wright Group two years ago, its group fleet manager Steve Openshaw had driven his BMW i3 range-extender electric vehicle (EV) 26,000 miles, using just 19 litres of petrol.

Those figures now stand at 48,000 miles and 30 litres. "Most of that fuel has probably been used by the engine running through a maintenance cycle which it needs to do from time to time," says Openshaw, who ran an Ampera range-extender for more than 70,000 miles before taking on his i3.

"What I've done with the i3, and the Ampera before that, shows that you can quite easily live with a 120-to-130-mile vehicle as there are always options for longer trips."

Leading by example was key to winning early acceptance for EV technology from his drivers.

This acceptance has snowballed and the company is now on track to smash its ambition of having 60% of the cars it leases as hybrid, plug-in hybrid or pure EV by 2025.

Around 12 months ago, 20% of its cars fell into this category, including two pure EVs in March when the construction company was named Fleet of the Year (under 1,000 vehicles) in the 2020 Fleet News Awards. It now has 32 battery electric vehicles (BEVs), 20 plug-in hybrids and 11 hybrids.

"I think we'll be at 60% electric vehicles by the end of next year; 96% of our current order book is electric," says Openshaw.

As well as the increasing acceptance of the technology, the growing availability and competitive wholelife costs of EVs, as well as favourable benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates, is fuelling the surge in orders.

The 0% BIK rate for pure EVs this year, rising to 1% in 2021/22 and 2% after that, has also helped overcome a traditional obstacle to EV uptake.

"As soon as the BIK rate dropped, range anxiety disappeared," jokes Openshaw. "The newer EVs have ranges of 200 miles and upwards, and you don't want to be driving 200 miles in one go anyway."

"If you are, it's against policy. In four hours' driving, you need to take a break of half-an-hour to an hour, so, in that time, you can charge up."

"I say to our drivers that they don't have to charge up fully at a public charge point if they don't need to."

"They don't have to sit there for an hour until the battery is full. They can sit there for 15 minutes or until they've got enough charge to get home."

"I tell them not to charge it up completely because one, that's expensive and two, why would you want to sit there when you can plug it in at home for half price?"

"If they just need the 15 to 30 miles, then put 50 miles in. They'll have plenty to do the journey. It's just getting that mentality over to people."

BEVs AVAILABLE FOR ALL CAR GRADES

Under Eric Wright Group's wholelife cost-based choice list, employees who are eligible for a company car can select a BEV regardless of their grade.

"We initially tried to offer a hybrid or a plug-in hybrid in every grade, and we got that," says Openshaw. "The Peugeot e-208 got into the second-lowest grade, and then MG let us offer a BEV in the lowest grade."

"So where a driver would otherwise be getting a Volkswagen Polo or a Ford Fiesta, they can get a pure electric car with a range of 200 miles."

The improved choice list and BIK rates have also led to a resurgence in cash allowance drivers wanting to rejoin the company car scheme and choose an EV.

Vans pose a different challenge. Eric Wright Group has trialled electric vans, most recently the Maxus 3, but in the past they have not been suitable to add to the fleet.

"The shift to electric vans at the moment is with the last-mile delivery vehicles, which is not what we do," says Openshaw.

"They will work brilliantly for parcel delivery people because they've got depots where they can park and charge up. They're going to be operating in congestion zones where ↻

FLEET OF THE YEAR – UP TO 1,000 VEHICLES ERIC WRIGHT GROUP

Steve Openshaw, group fleet and transport manager of the Eric Wright Group, picked up the award from Lisa Spong, sales director of sponsors Reflex Vehicle Hire (right)

Sponsored by



SPOTLIGHT: ERIC WRIGHT GROUP

“It will cost them if they don’t go electric.”

“We’re a bit more rural, working away from town centres, so it’s not that big an impact at the minute. Also, the technology is not there at the moment for what we want to do.”

However, he says the company will look to get some electric vans in at the next change cycle, probably starting with smaller Peugeot Expert-sized vans.

While company car drivers have low BIK rates to help them overcome any reservations about EVs, this does not apply to vans.

Instead, Openshaw will look to get an EV champion in each of the business’s areas and work with them on tuition and guidance.

Another obstacle for the wider uptake of EVs is the charging infrastructure. So far, Eric Wright Group has installed five charge points at its headquarters in Bamber Bridge, near Preston, with plans to increase this to 25 in the next 18 months.

It also plans to put an additional 30 charge points across its property portfolio.

IMPROVED CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The improving public charging infrastructure has also allowed Eric Wright Group to loosen restrictions on which company car drivers are able to opt for an electric car.

Originally, drivers who could park their cars off-road and had access to a charge point could choose one.

“Now we say ‘have you got access to a charge point elsewhere? Do you live close to a service station with a rapid charger, for example?’,” says Openshaw.

“Drivers can charge EVs at work, but that’s not guaranteed and we don’t pay for charge points at homes, but the drivers are coming up with other places they can charge, such as at supermarkets.

“The main thing we talk to them about is making sure they know they’ve got to charge their car.

“If, in six months’ time, they say ‘I can’t do it’, they can’t hand the car back and get a petrol or a diesel one, they’re stuck with it, so they need to make sure that they’re aware of what they want to do.”

Charging commercial vehicles (CVs) presents a different challenge as the vans are taken home at night. Openshaw says home charge points will probably be supplied, but this has highlighted another issue.

“The main objection has been ‘I’ve got a car and my wife has got a car, and we can only put two vehicles on the drive. Why would I put a car on the road so I can put my van on the drive?’,” he says.

“It’s understandable. Why would they park their car out there where it could get damaged by people or traffic going past when they could just leave the van there?”

The drive to electrify its fleet is an important part of Eric Wright Group’s overall ambitions to reduce emissions.

Last year the group received the Gold Standard Award from Carbon Saver for successfully reducing its carbon footprint for the 11th consecutive year.

In a further move to minimise its environmental impact, it has also switched energy provider to a 100% renewable provision through Haven Power.

Away from electrification, Openshaw lists one of his biggest achievements over the past couple of

years as fitting telematics with dashcams to the entire commercial fleet.

These are linked to a new mileage capture system and fuel cards to enable Openshaw to gather more accurate data to manage the fleet.

Eric Wright Group initially introduced telematics with dashcams on the CVs in one part of the fleet towards the end of 2017 and, following issues with the original supplier, switched to a new one and completed the roll-out in 2019.

Openshaw says the original prompt for adopting the technology was the number of incidents its drivers were having where it was somebody’s word against another.

“We would have no independent witness, but, with a dashcam, we do. People were against it thinking it was a spy in the cab. I say not. It will prove whether you’re guilty of something or it might equally prove you’re innocent. A dashcam will prove that, but at the moment I can’t.

“One of our most vocal drivers had an incident and the dashcam helped him prove it was exactly



Investing in a professional fleet team will pay for itself, believes Steve Openshaw

ORGANISATION: Eric Wright Group
GROUP FLEET MANAGER: Steve Openshaw
TIME IN ROLE: Four years
GROUP FLEET CONTROLLER: Sue McGuigan
FLEET SIZE: 300 – 150 cars, 150 vans.
Plus 134 cash-takers
FUNDING METHOD: Contract hire
OPERATING CYCLE: Four years



how he said it was – it wasn't his fault – and he went away, telling everybody the dashcams were the best thing since sliced bread.

"That took a lot of the issues away."

Openshaw is a firm believer in the power of word of mouth. As well as looking to recruit EV champions for vans, he has a number of safety champions across the fleet to highlight and improve risk management.

He has also set up a steering group to look at how to use the telematics data to reduce incidents.

Chaired by the company's insurance broker, the group also consists of operation directors and senior and junior managers.

"The insurance broker has got a wealth of knowledge on how to put information on collisions across to different businesses, guiding them on how to reduce accidents," says Openshaw.

"The aim is this committee will win buy-in from the top down first and then they will take it out to get local drivers involved."

Telematics data is also used to identify collision trends to highlight areas for training, as well as potential efficiency improvements such as reducing fuel use through cutting idling.

"We can see that vans have arrived on site, but they've been sitting there for an hour with their engines on so the driver can keep warm," says Openshaw.

"Why are they doing that? Because there's no welfare on site. Should there be? We can use telematics to help us with things like that."

Openshaw joined the group to oversee the plant and transport department 14-15 years ago and has been in his current more strategic role for around four years.

Together with group fleet controller of 20 years Sue McGuigan, he manages most functions in-house.

“THE DRIVERS
ARE COMING UP
WITH OTHER
PLACES THEY CAN
CHARGE, SUCH AS
AT SUPERMARKETS

STEVE OPENSHAW,
ERIC WRIGHT GROUP

All vehicles are leased on four-year terms, with service and maintenance included. "Other than that, we don't outsource a lot. Accident management is managed by us, but in conjunction with our insurer," he says.

"There's so much legislation and regulation involved in running a fleet, and you can't outsource your responsibility.

"You've got to have somebody that knows what they're on about and can advise the directors.

"It's also vital to manage suppliers. There might be an error through the leasing company not having a proper discount code loaded or there's something missing.

"If that's not checked by a professional fleet team, it could cost you thousands.

"It's very easy to outsource things to other companies and say 'let them take care of it', but they won't.

"They'll look after you but they are also taking care of themselves, so an investment in a professional fleet team will pay for itself."

OPENSHAW ON...

... pandemic's impacts on work practices

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a number of changes in Eric Wright Group's working practices, covering both employees out in the field and office staff.

For Steve Openshaw and Sue McGuigan, this has meant working from home.

"We feel like we've been divorced," jokes Openshaw. "We've been working side-by-side for 14 or 15 years and these past 12 months have been totally different.

"We probably spend two hours a day on MS Teams or on the phone, and there are always emails flying backwards and forwards, but it's not like having an interaction with somebody in person."

Briefings with drivers who are already with the business and are taking on new vehicles are now done through emails and online, but meetings with new starters is still done face-

to-face, although precautions such as social distancing and mask-wearing are taken.

The company has suspended its in-person driver training programme and replaced this with online modules during the pandemic (see page 40).

It has also ensured employees work in the same teams to minimise mixing with more people than necessary, while it has also had to sometimes get additional vehicles to reduce the number of workers travelling together.

The mileage covered by the organisation's vans has remained fairly static during the pandemic, but the distance travelled by company cars has "dropped dramatically", says Openshaw.

"We're working with our fleet provider on rewriting leases and how best to use our pool mileage," he adds.

'We want to provide an end-to-end proposition'

UK head of fleet Nick O'Neill outlines Volkswagen's plans to become much more than simply a provider of cars, reports *Stephen Briers*

COMPANY: Volkswagen
UK HEAD OFFICE: Milton Keynes
HEAD OF FLEET: Nick O'Neill
TIME IN ROLE: one year
ANNUAL CAR SALES (2020): 148,338
TRUE FLEET: 53,798
RENTAL: 6,846
MOBILITY: 17,481
FLEET CAPTIVE: 8,086



The Covid crisis has coincided with an unprecedented hive of activity at the helm of the UK's fleet manufacturers, with the appointment of five new fleet directors in little more than a year.

FCA promoted Iain Montgomery at the start of 2020, a month after Craig Cavanagh filled the vacant head of fleet position at Seat. And already this year, Rob Morris has taken the fleet reins at Volvo while Scott Westerby has become head of fleet at PSA.

Like those other recent appointees, Volkswagen UK head of fleet Nick O'Neill has had to wrestle with the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus on the macro and social-economic environment. But he has also seen it give a helpful boost to trends that were already materialising, trends that are influencing the direction in which the corporate market is heading, including the direction in which the corporate market is heading.

O'Neill, appointed a year ago this month, points to the April 2020 benefit-in-kind (BIK) changes as the catalyst for a dramatic rise in demand for electric product. Full battery electric (BEV) and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) accounted for almost 11% of all car registrations last year, according to Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) figures, up from just 3% a year earlier.

Reduced mileages due to coronavirus lockdowns have increased the appeal of electric vehicles for

more company car drivers, and while some businesses have paused vehicle replacements, it is clear the market "has shifted significantly", O'Neill tells *Fleet News* in his first major interview.

He adds: "There are mega trends on global CO₂ and climate change so there is a natural transition and we see electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-ins continuing to grow. For us, last year was transitional; this year we have the confidence that comes with the new product family."

He's referring to the ID3 BEV, available with two battery options with a third to follow, and forthcoming ID4, with two power choices – both important "cars for the masses" – but also the forthcoming Golf GTE, Tiguan PHEV, Touareg PHEV and Arteon PHEV.

A third, unspecified, ID model (likely to be the ID5 coupe) is slated for the end of the year, although fleet volumes will be low.

"These cars give us real confidence that we have a huge opportunity in the EV space," O'Neill says.

"There is a lot of demand from larger corporates although it is still a transition for some smaller companies – there's some nervousness about fuel benefits and the workplace charging infrastructure. Some companies ask us to survey their drivers to establish the level of demand."

As BEV ranges extend beyond 200 miles towards 300-plus, dependent on the battery size, Volkswagen is confident it has the options to meet

the vast majority of day-to-day needs, particularly for drivers with home chargers.

"We are in the realms of cars that could drive for three or four days without being charged," O'Neill adds.

The electric product is particularly key if Volkswagen is going to retain its long-held number one position in true fleet – best described as a 'claimed' title because accurate figures are hard to collaborate, while some manufacturers have idiosyncratic ways of measuring true fleet.

Official SMMT data, which segments contract hire/leasing and fleet other, comes closest, and supports O'Neill's assertion. It reveals that Volkswagen nudged 54,000 registrations in 2020, giving it a sizeable lead over the next best, Mercedes-Benz on 47,663.

"We have been number one in true fleet for a number of years for a reason – this is a well-run business," O'Neill says when questioned about his plans for the fleet operation. "So, it's not about revolutionising the way we do business."

Nevertheless, there will be tinkering "under the bonnet", including lines of accountability for sales channels and cross-function collaboration. There is also a need to manage model supplies and clearly identify the fleet volumes to ensure Volkswagen meets the anticipated demand for BEV and PHEV.

O'Neill is refining the customer relationship



One year on:
Nick O'Neill is
making VW
easier to
work with

VOLKSWAGEN IS KEEN TO EXPAND INTO MOBILITY SERVICES

Volkswagen is keen to develop mobility services in conjunction with Volkswagen Financial Services.

Within the product roadmap are subscription services and micro-lease products, and Volkswagen has already "dipped a toe in the water" with several propositions, according to Nick O'Neill. He

says that some work, some don't.

"However, based on what we have learnt, we believe there is a market for subscriptions," he says. "We also trialled We Deliver with Hermes, where online orders could be delivered to your car – a one-off code opens the boot. It's a fantastic proposition and works well, but it's on hold."

management process with a new business development manager and by integrating the sales and customer management teams.

"We have become over-reliant on the quality of our product at times," he says. "We could be quicker and easier to deal with in terms of the information we provide and our engagement with the customer. We want to be renowned not just for our products, but as a responsive partner that understands customers' needs."

In time, the emphasis will evolve beyond simply being a provider of vehicles towards being a provider of services, with the support of Volkswagen Financial Services.

The first step sees the UK launch this year of We Connect Fleet for cars, an app-based mini-management system already available in some European countries (and vans in the UK) that enables fleets to register multiple vehicles and access information such as location, mileage and fuel levels.

Phase two, later in the year, will include predictive maintenance and, ultimately, automated service booking at the dealer.

Volkswagen is also trialling an API link to allow larger fleets to feed the data into their own systems.

"Long-term, we want to provide a full end-to-end fleet management proposition, not just the car," O'Neill says.

With a career that started at Volkswagen

Financial Services in 2002 before transferring to Volkswagen Group's parts operation in 2013 and then Škoda, working across both the used cars and sales operations teams, O'Neill's experiences have given him a deep understanding about the inner workings of the fleet sector, particularly the funding and captive business.

They form a major part of his 2021 fleet priorities, which also include growth with corporate end users, although the quickest sales recoveries have come from Motability, which has remained strong throughout the pandemic, and rental, where volumes are tightly controlled via relationships with a select group of companies, including Sixt and Europcar.

Strategic planning on the numbers is based on 2019 figures – when Volkswagen registered 51,000 as contract hire and 24,000 as fleet other – as a proxy for last year's market depression.

O'Neill is bullish about captive business via the retail network and the potential from leasing companies, while the corporate target is "to write similar, if not slightly more" than two years ago. The model mix, though, will "transition significantly from ICE (internal combustion engine) to alternative fuels".

Half of corporate volumes will be electric and plug-in hybrid, although that impressive proportion has the potential to be even higher if it wasn't for – admittedly high – limits on supply.

"We would still take more if we could," he says.

Volkswagen has, at least, ensured the balance of supply is much more evenly shared between retail and fleet channels after facing criticism from fleets ahead of last year's ID3 launch. Most of the limited volume was swiftly swallowed up by the retail channel after order books opened for customers to place deposits. This process precludes many corporates.

"There is a deliberate move to ensure we allocate more BEV and PHEV product into fleet because of the BIK," O'Neill explains. "We may still disappoint some companies, but I have significant volume available – it's not all going to retail."

"And we have invested heavily in our plants so we can significantly ramp up production this year, especially for ID3."

Despite some gloomy forecasts about the company car market, O'Neill is upbeat. His is a five-year view.

"Our forecast for overall fleet and corporate demand is for year-on-year incremental growth for the next couple of years and then a plateau," he says.

"Over the longer term, Government tax incentives will have a bearing. There will be a tipping point when customers in big conurbations no longer want a car. At that point, we will see a proliferation of vehicles on micro-lease – but that's not for another five-to-10 years."

TRAINING: IS IT ON COURSE TO STAY REMOTE?

Covid-19 lockdown restrictions mean in-person driver training has been increasingly replaced by digital methods. But what does this mean for safety levels? *Ben Rooth* reports

The Covid-19 pandemic has prompted many sudden changes of direction for fleet decision-makers – and how to manage driver training is one of them.

In-person training has long been an effective way of improving employee performance in areas such as safety and efficiency.

However, lockdowns have meant that in-cab training, classroom workshops and toolbox talks have become severely restricted.

"Clearly businesses have had to make substantial changes to their approach to driver training due to the need for social distancing," says Tony Greenidge, chief executive of IAM RoadSmart.

"The majority have put all forms of in-cab training on hold, while those who have had no choice but to continue have had to implement stringent cleaning procedures.

"Some have adopted ingenious solutions for separating the driver from passengers.

"As a training provider we have had to prioritise the safety of our fleet trainers and it's only right that employers have taken steps to protect their staff and help stop the spread of the disease.

"Even when restrictions eased following the first lockdown, classroom learning was similarly affected given not all businesses have the on-site facilities to allow for adequate social distancing in an indoor setting."

Some organisations have been able to continue to provide in-person training if employees are considered to be critical workers.

DriveTech, for example, found training remained consistent for its blue-chip grocery delivery clients as they recruited more drivers to cope with increased demand for online shopping.

This is being delivered with good safety practices such as vehicle hygiene and the wearing of effective personal protective equipment (PPE), says Colin Paterson, head of marketing at DriveTech,

but "more and more customers" are warming to "the benefit of good quality digital training interventions" which allow employers to deliver training without personal risk to health.

However, whether the change in driver training strategies has had short- or longer-term effects on driver safety is unproven, say experts.

"It's very difficult to draw a direct correlation from our data to any positive or negative impact on driver behaviour or accident rates," says John Keelan-Edwards, managing director of Driver Hire's Driver Risk Management division.

"There is official data that suggests that during the first lockdown, because the roads were quieter, those people who were using the roads were driving faster and less carefully, but I don't know if this has been a sustained trend."

Amy Brant, head of training at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), adds there is no hard evidence to suggest that there



SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Nick Butler, commercial director – DriveTech



As a business that provides care and safety for fleet drivers and one which helps to reduce risk and costs, I hope you are all as well as can be expected.

None of us saw the pandemic lasting for as long as it has, but we are pleased to be surviving and continuing to serve our fleet and commercial customers with the benefit of quality online assessments, online e-learning, online workshops and a whole host of impactful non-face-to-face interventions.

Where lockdown restrictions have been relaxed, we have been able to deliver face-to-face in-vehicle training. We will work to achieve this wherever Government stipulations allow.

But, as is often said, 'necessity is the mother of invention' and we have been pleased to help customers move to online equivalents from on-road to maintain important safety training.

During lockdowns road safety became an extreme issue as many saw the empty road as an excuse to speed and be unnecessarily reckless. This was not in the spirit of the lockdown and likely stretched emergency services further from their core needs.

We must maintain a high level of responsibility to do the right thing. The need to drive has been severely reduced unless you're part of the backbone of goods and services delivery. Ultimately, 2020 has only reinforced that in-car driving behaviour remains safety-critical.

Arguably, the reduction in road traffic (mainly ICE vehicles, of course) has noticeably improved local air quality – and I'm sure this, plus the overall climate change and pollution agenda, has helped to further accelerate the move to EV vehicles and "target 2030".

Whatever the powertrain, DriveTech provides professional driver training and driver risk management. We are pleased to have recently emphasised the need for training as part of this accelerated EV transition in our new white paper: "Embracing an electric future: the right support for fleets". You can read it via our website or just ask us for a copy.

We're here to help on your driver training journey – through thick and thin – and as the market evolves, we evolve too. The pandemic has perhaps heightened our attitude to risk management. Don't leave your driver risk management to chance.

For more information visit: www.drivetech.co.uk, email: tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk or call 01256 610907.

is, or will be, an increase in accident rates.

She says: "We might find that, because a lot of people are not driving as much, there could be a skills fade. But, in terms of people's long-term behaviour, this will need to be reviewed over time to see if we have drivers changing habits.

"Those who drive for work will still experience the same pressures, such as deadlines, but what's not certain is whether lockdown will have changed the way they react to those pressures."

TRAINING TECHNOLOGY

The restrictions on in-person training has coincided with developments in remote training technology and online courses.

Online risk assessments were already a big part of many organisations' driver training programmes, but the use of technology has

widened to include videocall software such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

"Our Driver CPC training business has been transformed by the introduction of what we call our virtual classroom," says Keelan-Edwards.

"It's not e-learning; we deliver a live training course via Webex. It's accessible and, interestingly, good trainers say they find a higher level of interactivity than they sometimes see in the classroom.

"Drivers get to 'meet' and share views with a much wider range of people than if they were just on a course with colleagues or in the local area, so they actually learn more.

"In a sense, it is still in-person training, it's just that the delivery location has moved online."

Despite these advances in technology, experts say the benefits of real-time interaction between driver and trainer is believed to have the most memorable and long-lasting impact. ➔



From the **AA**. Driven to keep people safe

PULSE

from **DriveTech**

Your fleet and staff who drive for work could be **at risk**.

Get **PULSE**. Your actionable Fleet Risk Health Check.

Start your journey today.

UK & International Team

☎ 01256 610907

✉ tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk

🌐 drivetech.co.uk

Product Benefits

- Identify Compliance & Duty of Care Issues
- Comprehensive Health Check
- Measurable: Easily Interpretable Dashboard
- Benchmarking of Results
- Recommendations to Address Specific Issues
- Follow-up Health Check



ISTOCK.COM/FIZKEES

VIRTUAL REALITY 'BRINGS SCENARIOS TO LIFE' BUT REQUIRES INVESTMENT

Virtual reality has been shown to offer significant benefits in the delivery of successful driver training.

Pre-pandemic, Travis Perkins used the technology to train more than 1,000 drivers in group workshops where each employee was provided with a set of virtual reality goggles and workbooks that were signed off after each exercise by the facilitator.

"It's been inspiring to see the ability virtual reality has to reach our drivers and bring scenarios to life," says Karl Wilshaw, head of fleet for Travis Perkins.

"This type of training has completely transformed the way we can show how drivers should conduct walk-around checks, drive more fuel-efficiently, manoeuvre vehicles and handle road risk challenges."

“(IT’S) INSPIRING TO SEE THE ABILITY VIRTUAL REALITY HAS TO REACH DRIVERS”

KARL WILSHAW,
TRAVIS PERKINS

“In-cab or in-vehicle training remains valuable in terms of gaining real-world experience,” says Keelan-Edwards.

“If a trainer can observe a trainee actually doing what they do on a normal day, they are more likely to be able to tailor training interventions to their specific needs.

“As social animals, we respond well to human contact and there’s a degree of suspicion still of decision-making by algorithm.

“While there are some excellent e-learning courses out there, some are still quite rigid and uninspiring, and we all remember a great teacher who made a difference to us at school.”

Brant adds: “You learn from experience, from being faced with different scenarios and from working with an experienced coach who can help you identify areas of your driving that require attention.

“Assessing drivers can only be done effectively in-vehicle by someone sitting next to you and agreeing what the behavioural and development changes need to be.

“That has to be observed and experienced. It can’t come from a textbook or online.”

TTC Group’s Business Driver fleet risk management subsidiary has developed a product which incorporates both in-person and remote training: a virtual in-vehicle course which uses dashcam technology for live, two-way interaction.

The dashcam footage is transmitted in real-time to a remote-based Business Driver trainer who

then analyses, coaches and supports a driver during any given live, on-road situation.

“The driver can also provide commentary or ask questions regarding their observations,” says Andy Wheeler, TTC Group head of technical delivery.

FUTURE PROGRAMMES

So what will driver training programmes look like in the future?

The subjects and scenarios that form a comprehensive programme have not changed much since before the pandemic, says Keelan-Edwards.

“What has changed – and for the better – are the delivery platforms,” he adds.

“We are all much more comfortable with digital platforms and they provide a level of accessibility and convenience that is not possible if every training intervention has to take place in a classroom or in-vehicle.

“However, for the best outcomes, the human aspect should remain at the heart of any good driver training programme.”

Greenidge believes the successful delivery of webinars for those courses that were previously entirely classroom-based will be replicated across an even wider range of driver training courses.

“I also think we will see a continuation of the heightened awareness of hygiene protocols for a while yet, even after the need for social distancing is relaxed, and there may also be an ongoing reduction in the demand for live classroom courses,” he adds.

However, Tony Greenidge, of IAM Roadsmart, says despite the benefits, their use of virtual reality simulators is likely to remain “limited” in the pandemic’s immediate wake.

“Virtual training systems are becoming more sophisticated and there are some impressive systems now that can replicate the experience of driving in a way we would never have thought possible only a few years ago,” he adds.

“One advantage of virtual reality is that specific scenarios can be repeated exactly which enables trainers to gather hard data and make a direct comparison between drivers.

“But, while many people have the kind of computing power in their homes to run the latest software, there remains a significant gap in the level of interactivity offered by on-screen systems and hardware-based simulators, which have tactile controls and integrated headsets.

“This kind of system represents a significant investment for any business and will need to be physically moved between sites or visited in person by remote workers. Where real cars and human trainers are already available, the appeal and viability of these kinds of virtual reality systems remains limited.”

Paterson agrees: "Learning is likely to become more remote, more digital and increasingly personalised for the best, most relevant experience for each individual."

"Workshops that have traditionally entailed attendance at a specific physical venue, will transform to online delivery – and this will be more greatly accepted as the norm."

"The future is a more hybrid mix of training interventions."

"On-road driver training is still vitally important in many instances, but for the vast majority of drivers, the future is likely to be much more digital and with greater and greater measurement."



**THE DRIVER
CAN PROVIDE
COMMENTARY OR
ASK QUESTIONS
REGARDING THEIR
(TRAINER'S)
OBSERVATIONS**

ANDY WHEELER, TTC GROUP



CASE STUDY: ERIC WRIGHT GROUP

Steve Openshaw, group fleet and transport manager for construction and property company Eric Wright Group, is a firm advocate of one-to-one driver training.

"I've seen first-hand on several separate occasions the many benefits of one-to-one driver training – the physical contact certainly ensures that colleagues' attention is maintained," he says.

"In my opinion, it also provides the best way to assess skills."

The Eric Wright Group uses external trainers to ensure that drivers of the company's 450 fleet vehicles – 300 cars and 150 vans – meet its exacting standards.

Drivers are assessed for their knowledge and experience and subsequently supported where necessary with additional training.

The training starts in the classroom before moving behind-the-wheel to ensure that each driver's skills are accurately gauged.

But the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020 immediately halted this tried-and-tested approach.



"We had to consider – and then implement – other ways to reduce occupational road risk without the close contact. We're currently providing colleagues with online training when this is required," adds Openshaw.

"But we've not done this in isolation. Last month, we established our motor incident

steering group which has representatives from each of our four major offices.

"They will liaise with drivers remotely when we become aware that there's a need for training to ensure that those colleagues realise that the new online modules are for their benefit – not a form of punishment."

The steering group is also intended to ensure online training does not become a one-size-fits-all approach to the company's driver training needs.

Openshaw concludes: "While I'll always keep an open mind about the best training for this organisation and will adapt what we do accordingly, in honesty, I think we will return to one-to-one training at a point in the future when it's safe to do so."

"Down the years, I've had colleagues contact me after in-person training enthusing about what they've achieved. I've yet to experience this level of engagement and positivity from online training."

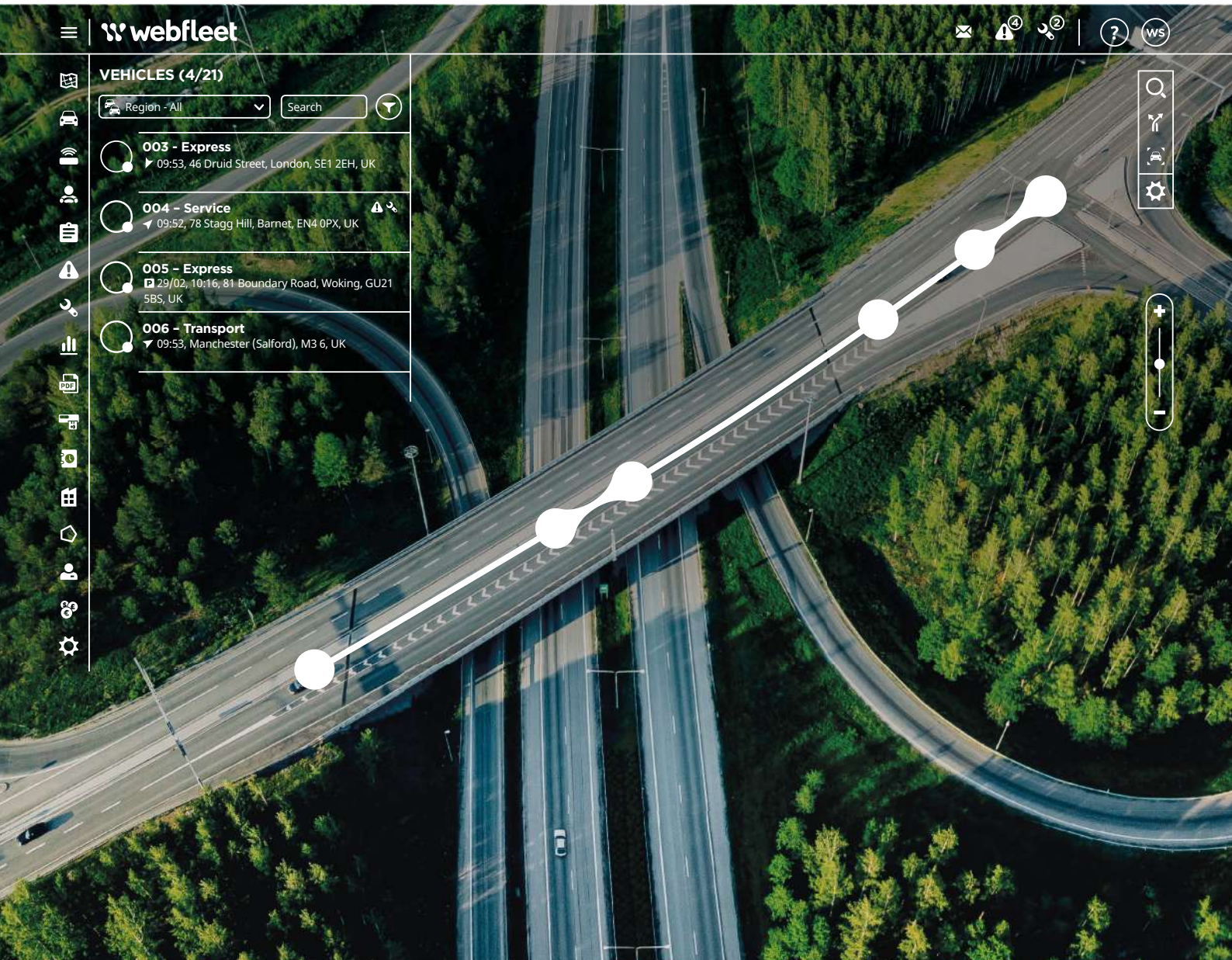
■ Steve Openshaw reveals the secrets to a successful EV policy – fleet profile page 30.

Email: tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk visit: www.drivetech.co.uk or call: 01256 610907

DriveTech
From the AA Driven to keep people safe

From generating data to driving business performance

Discover WEBFLEET - Europe's number one
fleet management solution



Cut fuel and maintenance costs. Plan better routes. Improve driving behaviour. WEBFLEET helps you do it all. That's why more than 50,000 companies worldwide trust our solution to get their drivers, vehicles and businesses where they need to go.

Let's drive business. Further.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE LIKE-FOR-LIKE COMPARISONS

New benchmarking project shortly due for launch. *David Williams* reports on behalf of DfBB

2

2021 is set to become a landmark year for all involved in driving for work safety as a major new benchmarking project is officially launched.

Funded by the Department for Transport, in partnership with *Fleet News*, Driving for Better Business and RoadSafe, this project will overhaul the way fleet managers, bosses, business owners – and drivers – measure their individual road safety and environmental performance.

An online tool will, for the first time, allow

organisations of all sizes to compare and contrast their achievements against others in the same sector, giving them the ammunition to dramatically improve their own performance.

Benchmarking will provide participants with important new comparative data to support internal business cases and provide valuable sources of information for their sustainability reporting programmes.

Experts in the field of road safety have long been concerned not only about levels of basic

compliance across some industry sectors, but also a lack of awareness as to how efficient record-keeping, driving-for-work policies, effective communication with the workforce, driver checks and management leadership can significantly boost safety and performance.

Here we speak to three organisations which seized the initiative early on and which are throwing their weight behind the new benchmarking project, to discover why they decided to be involved – and how they went about it.

AUTO ELECTRICAL SERVICES (AES FLEET), INCLUDING A FLEET CONSULTANCY BUSINESS



Fleet: Nine LCVs, three company cars and a pickup, in addition to responsibility for thousands of clients' vehicles via its consultancy.

We spoke to: Richard Stansfield, director of business development,

and vice-chairman of UK Logistics' Van Excellence Governance Group.

Background: AES formed in 1952 and achieved Van Excellence status six years ago. Still a family firm, it now looks after 10,000 vehicles' telematics and camera systems for other organisations, in addition to up to 3,000 vehicles via FleetCheck and WebFleet.

Ethos: "Like many firms, looking after vehicles and drivers used to be a back of cigarette packet job" says Stansfield. "All changed a decade ago through our involvement with Van Excellence, then FleetCheck and WebFleet. It took at least nine months to get everything in place with driving for work policies, drivers' handbooks, driving licence checks and making sure everything was exactly right."

How should benchmarking move forward? "Big fleets are easier to control; it's the little

SMEs (small-to-medium enterprises) that make up the majority of people on the road in vans. You would be astounded how many times we've engaged with new clients and found they don't check licences, or that vehicles are taxed or even have an MOT. They don't have a driving policy or know much about their own drivers. Out of about 10 visits we do, eight won't have a clue – this is what benchmarking must help tackle.

"Benchmarking will depend on whether we can convince the SMEs, Joe Bloggs the plumber, to get involved, and that's going to depend on good publicity. Procurement restraints won't affect the SME market, the trader with nine vans, so persuasion will be key. The ultimate goal is that everybody gets home alive at night – that is what must be communicated."

JHMC LOGISTICS AND SISTER FLEET MANAGEMENT FIRM HH DRIVERIGHT



Fleet: JMHC: 700 vans; HH Driveright is responsible for – among other clients – 11,500 Amazon vans.

We spoke to: Co-founder Rebecca Hall, who runs both

with partners James (her husband) and Ian Hewitt.

Background: JMHC founded in 2011, with one van. It now has 27 depots and up to 700 drivers seasonally. After charting impressive gains in company performance, safety and wellbeing following driving for work policies and introduction of telemetry in 2016, they decided to offer similar services to others.

Ethos: “Organisations often focus on customer targets to the exclusion of safety and compliance, remaining unaware of the risks they face. We discovered how to tackle both simultaneously and this is what we now practise and offer,” says Hall.

How: Driveright uses telemetry including reporting systems that constantly monitor vehicle and driver behaviour. Its systems can collate data points before and during an incident. Drivers report directly to the insurance company via an app, which guides them through the reporting process. A log can be examined at head office within 20 minutes.

“Next we will see companies asking for evidence of benchmarking when you engage with them,” says Hall. “It happens in rail and soon, fleets will approach clients and say ‘I can provide a service of this quality – it’s been benchmarked.’”

ST JOHN AMBULANCE



Fleet: 650 including ambulances, first aid units, treatment centres, vans, cars.

We spoke to: Mick Coley (left), regional manager for fleet, based in

Norwich. He manages the north region including East of England, East Midlands, North-east, North-west, comprising about 180 vehicles.

Background: St John Ambulance originally had a fragmented approach to its fleet, with 43 individually managed county regions. Today, however, following extensive overhauls, it has just one centrally-managed fleet, split into two sections, north and south. Strict licence-checking was initiated more than 10 years ago and today St John has a contract with FleetCheck.

Ethos: “We have always taken our fleet responsibilities very seriously; we can’t let ourselves down by not having all the rules and regulations in place,” says Coley. “Our

primary function is providing first aid and care for the community; it goes hand-in-glove with doing the best we can with our fleet and drivers.”

How: For years, St John relied on an internal web-based database but record-keeping is now administered by FleetCheck, holding precise data including drivers’ records.

“In addition to legislative requirements other organisations have, we must comply with strict CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspections and criteria governing care of patients. That has a big influence on how we look after vehicles, not just mechanically, but for cleanliness, and all equipment on board,” says Coley.

St John has 3,000 volunteers who drive, each with accreditation for different vehicle classes. Accreditation lasts five years, after which it must be renewed.

All driving incidents are investigated and recorded, with appropriate action taken.

“We are always looking to improve further,” says Coley. “Benchmarking will help us achieve that.”

HOW THE EXPERT SEES IT

“When I worked in the insurance industry, one of the questions fleet and risk managers frequently asked was ‘how do we compare with others?’,” says fleet safety specialist Andy Price, one of a panel of experts developing the new online benchmarking process.

He adds: “It could be very challenging; each organisation, typically, had a different type of insurance programme, was operating different types of vehicles; there could be different age profiles or different costs of vehicles and then there were different journey types.

“For the individual firm, benchmarking was invaluable, it allowed them to monitor their performance over time. But, as far as the wider industry was concerned, it was not comparing apples with apples; a set of figures for one organisation would not necessarily be helpful for another for comparison purposes.

“We benchmarked their management systems in depth. It took at least a couple of days once we had spent time with the customer looking at their management systems, policies and procedures. This did allow one organisation to compare how it managed fleet safety against others.

“Now, with the national benchmarking project, we have a big opportunity to allow all fleets to benchmark their performance

against others, to analyse data from a wide range of fleets across industries, and provide a system that really works for everyone, that does most of the work for them.

“One of the questions that will come back from management, is ‘how do we compare with other fleets?’. Most of the time fleet managers have to shrug their shoulders and say ‘actually, we’re not sure’. Once benchmarking is up and running it will allow organisations to have that conversation with more gravitas.”

There are other reasons that firms need benchmarking – the same reasons that have already driven many to go beyond legal requirements, as our case studies show.

“The prime motivation for one MD I worked with was he didn’t want to have to knock on the door of one of his employees’ family and say the worst had happened. But he is the exception,” says Price.

“Most organisations that keep proper records, have driving for work policies, communicate well with their workforce do it because, financially, they know it makes sense. It really is driving for a better business. Benchmarking will help others understand the need to improve and start them on the journey to improve their fleet safety management and realise these financial benefits too.”



THE BEST NIGHT *of the year*

Enter now for your chance to win the fleet industry's most prestigious and important awards

6 BENEFITS OF ENTERING AWARDS



By Stephen Briers

Matt Hammond, UK fleet and transport manager at safe fleet of the year Altrad Services said winning a Fleet News Award was "an amazing honour" adding that "being acknowledged at such a prestigious and high profile event by both peers and industry professionals confirmed that all the hard work was paying off".

Louise Baker, head of fleet at dealer of the year Johnsons Fleet Services believes there is "no greater recognition of a team's success than winning a Fleet News Award".

Only the best companies, people, and vehicles are honoured at the awards. Winning a trophy doesn't come easy, but the effort is worth it when the envelope is opened, and your name is read out. Studies show that winners enjoy a measurable improvement in business performance and credibility, while it can also raise staff motivation and help companies to acquire new talent and improve client relationships.

It's not just the winners who bask in the glory of the awards. Being shortlisted raises your profile with existing and potential customers.

Organisations who can prove they take seriously their safety and environmental obligations to their vehicle fleets are ideally placed to retain customers and attract new business – these things really matter to consumers.

This year's awards bring together the Fleet News Awards and the Commercial Fleet Awards for the first time to create an unparalleled ceremony that honours and recognises excellence across every part of the fleet sector.

To enter the awards, head to the website now to register interest: awards.fleetnews.co.uk

For more information visit:
awards.fleetnews.co.uk or contact
Sandra Evitt on 01733 468123 or
sandra.evitt@bauermedia.co.uk



AWARDS 2021 TIMELINE

NOW
Entries open.
Go to the awards website
– fleetnewsawards.com

26 MARCH 2021
Entry deadline for
all categories
(no extensions)

11 MAY 2021
Judging day
for manufacturer
awards

12 MAY 2021
Judging day for
supplier awards

19-20 MAY 2021
Fleet manager
interviews/judging
take place

27 MAY 2021
Shortlist revealed
in Fleet News

THE JUDGES

FLEET AWARDS

- Stephen Briers, *Fleet News*
- Stewart Lightbody, AFP vice-chair
- Paul Hollick, AFP joint-chair
- Julie Madoui, Kier Group
- Stewart Taylor, Police Scotland and current Fleet Manager of the Year winner

SUPPLIER AWARDS

- Stephen Briers, *Fleet News*
- Graham Short, Zip Water (UK)
- Ryan Coles, Aviva
- Peter Weston, Arcus
- Lorna McAtear, National Grid
- Jo Coffey, Anglian Water
- Simon Gray, SSE
- Cliff Lewis, Interserve
- Willie Crawford, Network Rail

MANUFACTURER AWARDS

- Stephen Briers, *Fleet News* (cars/vans/trucks)
- Matt dePrez, *Fleet News* (cars/vans/trucks)
- Martin Ward, consultant (cars)
- Andy Cutler, Glass's (cars)
- Mark Jowsey, KeeResources (cars)
- Matt Curtis, LeasePlan (cars)
- Shaun Sadlier, Arval (cars)
- Debbie Floyd, Bauer Media (cars)
- Chris Connors, Countryside Properties (cars)
- Lorna McAtear, National Grid (vans)
- Andy Picton, Glass's (vans/trucks)
- Ken Brown, Cap HPI (vans)
- Steve Winter, Centrica (vans/trucks)
- Jo Coffey, Anglian Water (vans/trucks)

HEADLINE AWARDS

Judges as above, relevant to the category

We are planning for a live Fleet News Awards on June 29, 2021, at Grosvenor House Hotel in London. However, we will be led by Government guidelines and if we are unable to host the live event due to Covid-19 restrictions, we will celebrate our winners either via a virtual alternative or postpone the event to a later date. We will provide regular updates to guests and sponsors over the coming months. If you are interested in attending the live event, please register your interest for tickets via www.fleetnewsawards.com

29 JUNE 2021
Winners revealed

THE CATEGORIES

FLEET AWARDS

Excellence in Fleet Safety

2020 winner: Altrad Services

Environmental Innovation

Sponsored by Ogilvie Fleet

2020 winner: Active Building Centre – Swansea University

Mobility Achievement of the Year

2020 winner: Active Building Centre – Swansea University

Exceptional Contribution Award

new category recognising the efforts of fleets to continue providing services during the Covid crisis

Fleet of the Year (up to 1,000 vehicles)

2020 winner: Eric Wright Group

Fleet of the Year (more than 1,000 vehicles)

Sponsored by Zenith

2020 winner: British Gas

SUPPLIER AWARDS

Leasing Company of the Year (up to 20,000 vehicles)

2020 winner: Ogilvie Fleet

Leasing Company of the Year (more than 20,000 vehicles)

2020 winner: Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions

Rental Company of the Year

Sponsored by Grosvenor Contracts

2020 winner: Enterprise

Outstanding Product or Service

New category

Fleet Customer Partnership Award

2020 winner: Fleet Service GB

Fleet Dealer of the Year

2020 winner: Johnsons Fleet Services

Innovation in Mobility Technology Award

2020 winner: Fleetondemand

MANUFACTURER AWARDS

Best Small Van

New category

Best Medium Van

New category

Best Large Van

New category

Rigid Truck of the Year (six-16 tonnes)

New category

Rigid Truck of the Year (more than 16 tonnes)

New category

Best Small Car

2020 winner: Peugeot 208

Best Lower Medium Car

2020 winner: Ford Focus

Best Upper Medium Car

2020 winner: Škoda Superb

Best Compact SUV

2020 winner: Peugeot 2008

Best Mid-size SUV

2020 winner: Toyota Rav4

Best Compact Premium Car

2020 winner: BMW 1 Series

Best Premium Car

2020 winner: BMW 3 Series

Best Executive Car

2020 winner: BMW 5 Series

Best Zero Emission Van

New category

Best Plug-in Hybrid Car

New category

Best Zero Emission Car

2020 winner: Kia e-Niro

Most Improved Manufacturer

2020 winner: Suzuki GB

HEADLINE AWARDS

Fleet Supplier of the Year

Sponsored by Aston Barclay

2020 winner: Reflex Vehicle Hire

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Car (Reader voted)

2020 winner: BMW Group UK

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Van (Reader voted)

New category

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Truck (Reader voted)

New category

Fleet Manager of the Year

2020 winner: Stewart Taylor, Police Scotland

Fleet News Hall of Fame

Sponsored by The AA

2020 winner: Liz Hollands

2021 sponsors





MAZDA MX-30

Range is just 124 miles, but battery can reach 80% charge in a little more than half an hour

By Andrew Ryan

One of the common features of new battery electric vehicles (BEVs) is their ever-increasing range, with 200 miles now often considered a minimum requirement.

There are a handful of new models which have bucked this trend, however, such as the Honda e which can travel 136 miles between charges and the Mini Electric with 144 miles.

Mazda's first BEV – the MX-30 crossover – joins this group with 124 miles from its 35.5kWh battery.

It can be charged at 50kW from rapid charge points, allowing it to take up to 80% battery charge in 36 minutes, which may mitigate this limitation.

It also has a 6.6kW on-board AC charger, so using a 7kW home charger will see it go from empty to full in just more than five hours.

This may not prevent some drivers ruling it out entirely through range anxiety, but, if they do, they will be missing out on a good-looking, talented BEV.



The 8.8-inch infotainment screen is mounted above the centre console

Mazda has gained a reputation for producing cars that are good to drive and the MX-30 shares its 'MX' moniker with the best of all: the MX-5.

As a small SUV, its handling is obviously not as good as the two-seater's, but it is still a good drive. There's a nice weight and directness to its steering, while acceleration is ample thanks to the instant torque offered by the electric drivetrain.

It also rides nicely. One-pedal driving is possible if the strongest of the three regenerative braking levels is selected, although this does not bring the car to a complete halt.

The quality of materials and build used in Mazda cabins have also become among the class best in recent years, and the MX-30 cabin reflects this.

It uses sustainable material throughout, including cork to line centre console trays and for inner side door handles, as well as recycled plastic bottles in the door trims to give a premium feel while highlighting its environmental credentials.

An 8.8-inch infotainment screen sits atop the centre console, while lower down, the MX-30 has a seven-inch air-con control panel touchscreen, which also

uses physical buttons to control fan speed and temperature. Both are straightforward to operate, while front seat occupants are also well served for comfort and space.

However, room in the rear is fairly tight. Access is eased by the MX-30's use of 'suicide' rear doors. The front doors open forward to an angle of 82 degrees, while the rear doors open backwards to an angle of 80 degrees. There is also no B-pillar to hinder access.

The range will arrive in UK dealerships in April and will consist of three trim levels: SE-L Lux, Sport Lux and GT Sport Tech.

SE-L Lux has a P11D price from £28,490 and standard equipment includes LED headlights, reversing camera, cruise control with intelligent speed assist, navigation and head-up display.

Sport Lux, priced from £30,490, adds extra equipment including power seats, lumbar support adjustment and smart keyless entry, while the GT Sport Tech, starting at £32,790, ups the spec again with additions such as adaptive LED headlights and heated steering wheel.

FLEET PICK MAZDA MX-30 SPORT LUX

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£30,490
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£5 (2021/22)
Class 1A NIC	£42
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£9,677/32%
Fuel cost (ppm)	4.02
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	33.33ppm
CO ₂ (g/km)	0
Range	124 miles



AUDI A3 TFSle

More expensive, but with extra power and lower tax

By Matt de Prez

Audi expects a quarter of all new A3s sold in the UK will be powered by its new TFSle plug-in hybrid engine, a significant uplift on the 1-2% annual sales the previous e-tron model achieved.

Much of that growth is expected to come from fleets, where the market for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) is growing strongly.

Offered in two versions: the 204PS 40 TFSle and the sportier 45 TFSle with 245PS, both package a 13kWh battery pack and electric motor alongside a 1.4-litre petrol engine.

The powertrain is widely used across the VW Group's plug-in range and enables the new A3 to achieve a benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band of 6% in certain trims.

Drivers can choose to drive the car in 'EV mode', which the car defaults to every time you start it, or hybrid mode, where the engine does the bulk of the work to preserve charge.

Audi claims a zero-emission range of 40 miles per charge for cars with 17-inch alloy wheels (optional on the S Line). Our experience showed 30 miles to be more realistic in the real-world.

Fuel consumption of more than 50mpg should



Interior quality remains high as in the regular A3

be easily achievable when operating the car in hybrid mode. We averaged 55mpg during our testing.

Prices for the plug-in A3s start at £33,000 – around £3,000 more than an equivalent diesel model, but they are more powerful and significantly cheaper from a tax perspective.

With the weight of its battery over the rear axle, the A3 TFSle provides high levels of grip, making it enjoyable to drive. Benefiting from the new A3 platform, the steering is surprisingly sharp. Ride quality errs on the firm side, however.

The powertrain offers potent acceleration, with 0-60mph taking less than eight seconds in the 40 and 6.8 seconds in the 45. Drivers can expect instant torque from the electric motor, while the six-speed auto can be a tad laggy at bringing the petrol engine into the mix. Switching the car to sport mode gets things moving more swiftly.

Interior quality remains high, as in the regular A3, although the boot is reduced from 380 litres to 280, due to the repositioning of various bits under the floor to make room for the battery.

The A3 was already a strong contender in its segment and the new PHEV models help to enhance its fleet appeal with low BIK and strong driver appeal.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



I've spoken with quite a few industry chiefs in recent weeks, and three of them mentioned "fun". One said 'it's no fun any more'; another, 'all the fun days have gone'; and 'what fun we used to have'. All three were beginning to feel the strain of Covid-19. Each is normally full of optimism and, yes, fun, but the joy has been knocked out of them.

However, speaking to salespeople, some are still reporting a good level of used car sales and many franchised dealers are saying there is a shortage of nice, late low mileage stock.

I really thought click-and-collect would not work. How wrong I was. It seems it is liked by most people and the haggling over price has disappeared. The figure from the dealer is the price you pay, and the agreed part exchange price is generally what you get, provided you supply the correct information and, sometimes, photos of your car.

It couldn't be easier and you have to wonder whether this will continue long after we get back to some normality.

Great name, but nothing like the original

I recently had use of a Ford Puma SUV with mild-hybrid technology. The car looks great, and is certainly proving a big hit with both retail and fleet as it offers so much. But the name is a throw-back to the original sporty Puma which was launched in 1997.

Most cars with the same name, often look similar, and are easily recognisable, but not the Puma. It couldn't be more different, they both have four wheels, and that is where the similarities end.

Ford has had some fantastic car names over the years, and wouldn't it be lovely if some were reintroduced, as the Puma has been. They needn't be new model names, but maybe limited editions or special editions. How about a Mondeo Zephyr, or a Kuga Zodiac, or Fiesta Cortina? The list could go on. There may be some legal or trademark reasons why these brilliant names have not been used for many years, but would be great to see those nostalgic badges back on a few grilles.

Birth of Genesis

Genesis is coming. And I don't mean a reunion of Mike Rutherford and Phil Collins. No, the new car company Genesis is a premium sub-brand of Hyundai, a bit similar to Toyota's Lexus and Nissan's Infiniti, one of which worked, the other, well, didn't.

One of the cars, the Genesis G70, is up against Audi A4, BMW 3-Series and Alfa Giulia. Two of which work, the other, not quite as well. Any new brand will find it tough, but Genesis has gathered a great team. Getting the public to understand what Genesis is might take a while. I wish it luck.

FLEET PICK A3 40 TFSle S LINE (17IN WHEEL)

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£34,905
Monthly BIK (20%)	7%/£41 (2021/22)
Class 1A NIC	£337
Annual VED	£0 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£11,701/33.5%
Fuel cost (ppm)	7.3
AFR (ppm)	10
Running cost (4yr/80k)	41
CO ₂ (g/km)	25
EV range	40 miles

VOLKSWAGEN ARTEON

Plug-in hybrid technology from Golf and Passat GTE introduced to the Arteon

By Matt de Prez

In face-lifting the Arteon, Volkswagen has introduced two rather exciting new elements that elevate both the car's practicality and fleet credentials. The first is a 'Shooting Brake' estate version, which provides more headroom for rear-seat passengers and gives the car enhanced carrying abilities with up to 75 litres of extra load space.

Second, and it's a big one for fleets, is the eHybrid powertrain, which brings plug-in hybrid technology from the Golf and Passat GTE to the Arteon for the first time.



The Shooting Brake is 20mm taller than the standard version

The new engine, which is available in both body styles, has CO₂ emissions from 26-32g/km, can travel up to 39 miles with zero emissions on a charge, and serves up 218PS.

We'll be reviewing the new eHybrid as soon as it arrives in the UK, but for now we will concentrate on the facelifted car's key attributes.

Externally, the Arteon retains its oil-painting good looks, with only minor changes to the bumpers and rear lights. The shooting brake is 20mm taller and equally beautiful with its sculpted rear haunches.

On the inside, VW has introduced touch-panel controls similar to those in the new Golf and ID range, meaning there are fewer buttons.

Alongside the 150PS 1.5-litre TSI and 2.0-litre TDI engines, there's a 190PS TSI option and a new 200PS TDI that emits from 137g/km.

Minimal change have been made to the way the Arteon drives. It remains comfort focused, with light controls and a relaxing, refined ride.

The interior is spacious and well laid out, although the technology feels a bit dated in comparison with the BMW 3 Series.

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE P300E

Heavier PHEV stays nimble and has a battery which can replenish in half an hour

By Matt de Prez

Land Rover's best-selling model has just gained a significant fleet advantage with the introduction of the new P300e powertrain.

Following the new Evoque's debut last year, it is now offered as a plug-in hybrid which makes it considerably more desirable for user-choosers.

Using a three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine and electric motor in the rear axle, the Evoque P300e achieves a benefit-in-kind (BIK) rate from just 10%, thanks to an electric-only range of 34 miles from its 15kWh battery.

Unlike most plug-in hybrids, the Evoque also



This latest SUV weighs in at more than two tonnes

supports rapid charging, enabling the battery to be replenished in 30 minutes.

Setting off silently and with the urgency expecting from an electric motor, the Evoque is more refined than ever. When the petrol engine fires up to provide additional power, or when the battery is flat, there is little more than a distant rumble from under the bonnet.

The only time the Evoque P300e feels compromised is when the engine is left to haul the two-and-a-bit-tonne SUV at high speeds with no electrical assistance.

It develops a not-unhealthy 200PS, but the extra 109PS the electric motor provides makes a significant difference.

Despite being heavier, the P300e remains nimble enough to drive with the bulk of its extra weight centred in the chassis.

Prices start from £43,850, which means it carries a premium of around £3,000 over an equivalent Volvo XC40 or BMW X1 PHEV. The baby Range Rover feels more luxurious and more refined in comparison though and promises Land Rover's famous off-road capability.

PEUGEOT 3008

Not a lot 'broken' that needed fixing on this former best compact SUV winner

By Matt de Prez

When the second-generation Peugeot 3008 launched, it marked a bold step forward for the brand, introducing an exciting new design and a welcome balance of practicality and driver engagement in the crossover segment.

There wasn't much that needed changing on the 3008 – it was the 2019 Fleet News Compact SUV of the Year – and this facelifted model reflects that. It's been given a revised front end with a larger grille and new LED daytime lights.

The infotainment system features a larger 10-inch touchscreen with a higher resolution and there's a new Nightvision system that projects an image of the road ahead in the instrument cluster to help the driver see potential obstructions.

Efficiency is one of the 3008's key attributes, with



both its 1.5-litre diesel and 1.2-litre petrol engines returning competitive CO₂ and fuel economy figures.

The former feels a little lacking in guts compared with the free-revving petrol units, but both are overshadowed by the plug-in hybrid offerings.

Unique in the segment is the 3008's choice of two plug-in hybrids. A front-wheel-drive 225PS model and the range-topping all-wheel drive version with 300PS (see our long-term test on page 54)

offer BIK from 7% and significant performance advantages.

Peugeot remains committed to its i-cockpit interior layout, which features a small flat-topped steering wheel that sits below the instrument cluster – a departure from the norm. It may not be to all tastes and takes a bit of adjustment to get used to, so drivers would be advised to make use of test-drive opportunities before placing an order.

SEAT LEON E-HYBRID

Electrified powertrain gives Leon PHEV an extra layer of refinement and efficiency

By Andrew Ryan

The Leon is Seat's biggest seller in the fleet sector and the new e-Hybrid plug-in version should help ensure that this success continues.

When we drove the conventionally-powered models last year, we judged the Leon was, in a number of ways, a more attractive package than the Volkswagen Golf with which it shares a platform.

It looks prettier, the roomy interior is funkier while sharing the same advanced technology, and its handling is more engaging as well.

These factors remain true with the Leon PHEV, but this adds an extra layer of refinement and efficiency due its electrified powertrain.

In FR trim, it can travel 36 miles in electric-only mode. Its official combined fuel economy is 235.4mpg and it emits 27g/km of CO₂.

Power delivery is smooth with ample acceleration when solely using the battery, while the switch to or intervention of its 1.4-litre TSI petrol engine, when required, is slick.



Its efficiency figures mean it sits in the 11% benefit-in-kind bracket this year, attracting monthly tax bills of £60 per month for a 20% payer, making it an attractive prospect for drivers.

One negative is the car has only a 3.6kW on-board

charger, so it takes around three-and-a-half hours to charge the 13kWh battery.

But, even taking that into account, the Leon e-Hybrid's abilities and tax-friendly nature makes it a very likeable and impressive all-rounder.



TOYOTA RAV4 PHEV

Most efficient and fastest ever Rav4 addresses poor fuel consumption issue

By Matt de Prez

Toyota has more experience of hybrid powertrains than any other carmaker and it only takes a few minutes behind the wheel of the new Rav4 plug-in hybrid to realise the benefits of that.

Utilising a similar hybrid system to a 'normal' all-wheel drive Rav4, with electric motors powering both axles and a 2.5-litre petrol engine, the plug-in benefits from a much larger 18.1kWh battery, which has enabled Toyota to boost the car's output to 306PS.

What results is both the most efficient and fastest Toyota RAV4 ever.

The official electric range of 46 miles, combined with 22g/km CO₂ emissions, means the RAV4 PHEV falls into the 7% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax band – a boon for company car drivers.

In developing the new model, Toyota engineers have attempted to resolve some of the common issues with plug-in hybrids – including terrible fuel consumption when it's not running on electric.



The interior is more akin to what one expects from a premium car

As the Rav4 PHEV, like the hybrid, is mainly driven by its electric motors, the engine is able to fire up and charge the battery at lower revs, rather than having to haul the car around.

Engine power is only directed to the wheels when you really call for maximum performance. This means that, in real-world driving, the PHEV should be able to return at least 50mpg when it's not got a charge. The official figure is 282mpg, but achieving that would require regular charging and trips that enable maximum use of the battery's range.

Another benefit of the system is the simplicity with which it is controlled. There's the usual EV, Charge and Battery hold options, but also an Auto setting, where the car chooses the best deployment of petrol vs electricity.

When the battery is charged, drivers should be able to comfortably achieve 38-40 miles of mixed driving before the petrol engine is required.

In its latest generation, the Rav4 has taken a step up in terms of luxury and refinement, with an interior fit and finish worthy of the premium sector.

As the majority of drive comes from the electric motors, there's not much engine noise.

When it comes to performance, how does zero to 60mph in six seconds sound? Not what you'd expect from a Toyota crossover and, unlike some of the other high-powered hybrids, the Rav4 PHEV deploys its power exceptionally well.

It feels like there is just one powerful engine, not three separate sources. When you ask for speed it delivers and the power builds nicely, rather than surging and diminishing. With the EV range down to zero the performance doesn't falter. So drivers can always expect the car to react in the same way.

This could very well be the best plug-in hybrid powertrain available. But, that brilliance comes at a price. With only two highly specified trim options, the Rav4 PHEV starts at £47,340 making it about £10,000 more expensive than a Ford Kuga PHEV or a Mitsubishi Outlander, pushing it into bandings for only the highest earners.

On the premium side, the Rav4 is cheaper than a BMW X3 or Volvo XC60 plug-in, but doesn't quite offer the same badge appeal, despite its capability.

FLEET PICK TOYOTA RAV4 PHEV DYNAMIC

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£47,340
Monthly BIK (20%)	7%/£55 (2021/22)
Class 1A NIC	£457
Annual VED	£0 then £165
RV (4yr/80k)	£15,345/32.4%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8
AFR (ppm)	17
Running cost (4yr/80k)	52
CO ₂ (g/km)	22g/km
EV range	46 miles



VAUXHALL INSIGNIA

Insignia may not be as popular with company reps these days, but it can still do the business

By Matt de Prez

It's not been a good decade for the humble reprobable. The Vauxhall Insignia and Ford Mondeo were once kings of the corporate car park, but now they've fallen out of favour with drivers who are increasingly attracted to premium-badge models or SUV crossovers.

In less than 10 years, Insignia sales have declined by 80%, while manufacturers like Renault and Citroën have left the segment entirely.

Still, the fleet market accounts for around 90% of Insignia registrations and, with prices from £23,565, it's cheaper than both the Mondeo and the Škoda Superb.

The latest facelift for the Insignia is centred on a new powertrain line-up and revised trim levels. It also benefits from less weight, improved aerodynamics and new technology.

Kicking off the model range is a new three-cylinder diesel engine. It manages a respectable 122PS and 300Nm from its 1.5-litre capacity



Dependent on the trim level, the Insignias come with seven- or eight-inch infotainment screens

FLEET PICK VAUXHALL INSIGNIA

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£23,565
Monthly BIK (20%)	27%/£101 (2021/22)
Class 1A NIC	£910
Annual VED	£175 then £150
RV (4yr/80k)	£5,612/24%
Fuel cost (ppm)	8.8
AFR (ppm)	8
Running cost (4yr/80k)	35
CO ₂ (g/km)	121
Mpg	61.4

and promises to return in excess of 60mpg.

From a tax perspective, it's the cheapest for drivers. With RDE2 compliance, CO₂ emissions from 121g/km and the lowest P11D value, drivers will be facing benefit-in-kind (BIK) bills from around £109 per month.

It's not a particularly refined powertrain, at least not compared with a petrol or hybrid. With such a small capacity, the car needs to be worked hard to get it moving. Once you're up to speed, however, the Insignia is exceptionally quiet and smooth.

On the motorway it glides effortlessly, with the aforementioned aerodynamic improvements helping to keep wind noise to a minimum.

Switch to country lanes and the Insignia continues to impress. It's not especially sporty, but it will happily deliver a brisk drive. If you work the six-speed manual gearbox to keep the engine in its peak power band, and avoid stamping on the accelerator, the car is happy to respond positively.

There's also a larger 2.0-litre four-cylinder diesel with 174PS. It promises the same 121g/km emissions, but with more impressive performance.

On the petrol side there's a new 2.0-litre turbo unit with 200PS, which features active cylinder deactivation. However, it's unlikely to be a popular fleet choice with emissions from 171g/km. The same is true of the range-topping GSI version, which receives a power bump to 230PS.

There are four trim levels: SE, SRI, SRI VX line and Ultimate. All get sat-nav with a seven-inch infotainment screen. SRI VX Line and above gets a bigger eight-inch screen. The system is simple to use, but feels dated in comparison with rivals.

One of Vauxhall's party pieces is its IntelliLux LED headlights and the new Insignia features the latest development of these, which uses pixel technology to ensure drivers get the maximum light output without dazzling other road users.

While the Insignia may have fallen out of favour with many user-choosers, it still offers a spacious, refined and efficient package for very good value.

This will be the last Vauxhall to launch that isn't based on a PSA Groupe platform and, while it's not the most exciting car in the world, it's capable of getting the job done with little fuss.

▶ CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS

FIRST TEST

FLAIR PLUG-IN HYBRID E-EAT8 PURETECH 180



By Gareth Roberts

The new C5 Aircross SUV plug-in hybrid is Citroën's first plug-in hybrid (PHEV) model, marking the start of a move to have an electric option for every car and van in its range by 2025.

The car is powered by a 1.6-litre four-cylinder petrol engine producing 180PS, a 13.2kWh battery pack and an electric motor mounted to the gearbox. This powertrain produces a total power output of 225PS, which goes to the front wheels via an eight-speed automatic gearbox.

Citroën says this set-up is capable of 168mpg, although drivers are likely to see a lower figure in real-world driving. CO₂ emissions are rated at 32-33g/km dependent on specification, with a claimed pure-electric range of 34 miles.

The battery can be fully charged using a 7kW wallbox in two hours, with a charger plugged into a domestic socket taking six. It can also be topped up on the move via regenerative braking.

Inside, Citroën's 'Advanced Comfort' seats are standard, along with the fully adjustable sliding rear seating bench found in the conventionally-powered C5 Aircross, which allows for individual seats to be folded. The addition of the battery pack reduces the available boot space from 780 to 600 litres.

The entry-level Flair model costs a very reasonable £35,370, considering it comes with equipment like climate control, air-con and traffic-monitoring navigation.

The new PHEV powertrain takes the PSA Group's Puretech 180 1.6-litre four-cylinder petrol turbo engine and mates it to an 80kW electric motor in the standard eight-speed automatic gearbox to make a powertrain with a maximum power of 225PS and torque of 500Nm. Most of that torque is available from standstill – which is a powerful reason why this front-drive-only model's generous retinue of driver aids (lane-departure warning, blind-spot monitoring, parking sensors, colour reversing camera) needs to be topped by a very effective traction control.



▶ VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER

T28 SWB STARTLINE 2.0 TDI 110

By Trevor Gehlcken

When we request test vans, we are often sent top of the range models dripping with every conceivable paid-for extra. This means our reports might miss the mark, because these are not the vans most fleet managers choose.

With a brand new Transporter T6.1 due, I asked for a 'fleet-type' model – and that's exactly what we were given. The Startline variant on test here for the next few months is about as fleet as the Transporter gets. Startline is the lowest of the three ranges and

the 2.0-litre 110PS engine is the next up from the basic 90PS one, so what we have is probably what about 90% of our readers will order.

I'd have to say that if I were a professional van driver and was given this test vehicle to drive, I'd be a pretty happy employee right now. If this is the 'cooking' version then this recipe suits me well.

The £23,655 ex-VAT price tag disproves the old myth that VW vans are expensive to buy and the list of standard equipment is quite acceptable for any fleet driver.



▶ AUDI A6

50 TFSI E S LINE

By Andrew Ryan

An essential work trip gave me the reason to leave my home town for what seems like the first time in six months and to take the Audi A6 on its longest journey since joining our long-term fleet.

I already knew the A6 provides exceptional levels of refinement and comfort and the 99 miles from my Norfolk home to Coventry reinforced that.

What did come as a surprise was just how efficient the plug-in hybrid powertrain was. It uses a 252PS 2.0 TFSI petrol engine combined with an electric motor to produce a combined 299PS.

Its 14.1kWh battery provides an electric-only range of up to 34 miles, but the car also lets you select auto hybrid mode, where it will alternate between battery and petrol or use both at the same time dependent on speed, style of driving and battery charge. With the car in auto mode and a fully-charged battery, it achieved an average fuel economy of 48.9mpg for the outward trip.

The journey home, which started with no battery charge, saw an efficiency of 40.2mpg, pretty good for a two-tonne executive saloon powered mainly by its 2.0-litre engine.



▶ VOLVO S60

T8 R DESIGN

By Matt de Prez

Having successfully house-trained my puppy – and with little else to occupy my free time – some new flooring was needed. With a click-and-collect order waiting for me at a well-known DIY outlet, I finally had a chance to test the S60's practicality.

Upon returning to the car with the trolley full of laminate, I realised I had no idea if the Volvo's seats would actually fold. Thankfully, they do and are electronically triggered by two switches hidden behind the left-rear headrest.

At 390 litres, the S60's boot is bigger than those of both the BMW 330e and the Mercedes-Benz C300e. If that's not enough, then the V60 T6, which uses the same plug-in hybrid system – but with a lower power output of 340PS – can be had for exactly the same money as our T8 (from £46,750). Once again, it trumps both German rivals for boot space with more than 500 litres.

The Swede has an advantage as its hybrid battery lives in the centre of the car, rather than being shoved under the boot floor.



▶ MERCEDES-BENZ A250E

AMG LINE PREMIUM PLUS

By Luke Neal

With the Government's announcement last year to ban the sale of new fossil fuel vehicles by 2030, electric and hybrid vehicles are a hot topic.

Of course, both have been around for some time now, but with PHEVs accounting for the majority of our long-term fleet, the direction – and speed – of change is clear.

For most though, an alternatively fuelled vehicle is still unfamiliar ground.

A hybrid is a perfect stepping stone for those with range anxiety. But, with current lockdown restrictions

and a lack of a fast charger at home, the A class has spent the majority of its time using petrol power from the small 1,332cc engine.

However, even with zero electric miles showing in the 'tank', low speed manoeuvres such as crawling in traffic can still be performed without the use of the petrol engine.

It also continues to use the electric power to assist the petrol engine with a grin-inducing turn of speed when needed.

The petrol engine is both quiet and refined and is returning a respectable average of 41.5mpg.

▶ BMW 530E

FIRST TEST

XDRIVE M SPORT SALOON



By Stephen Briers

Plug-in hybrid (PHEV) is widely acknowledged as a stepping-stone to full electric and its appeal has rocketed due to the dramatic reductions in mileages seen during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With home working, the majority of journeys can be undertaken on electric with the comfort blanket of a petrol (or diesel) engine should drivers need to travel further.

No surprise, then, that registrations of PHEVs soared by 91% last year to take 4% of the market (2019: 1.5%).

Our new BMW 530e PHEV fits perfectly into this setting, offering up to 34 miles of electric-only range, which can be charged in 3.5 hours at 3.7kW (hopefully quicker using the supplied 7.4kW cable with my Pod Point home charger).

Importantly, benefit-in-kind is just 10% (£2,138 a year for a 40% taxpayer on our £53,455 test car – excl. options), compared with 30% (£5,225) for an equivalently equipped 520d M Sport. From April 2021, BIK rises to 11%.

There are wins for the company, too, with a £205 saving on first year VED, and £1,054 on Class 1A national insurance. We'll delve into the running cost details in a subsequent review.

Official emissions for the 530e xDrive M Sport, according to the *Fleet News* Car Tax Calculator, range from 38–48g/km dependent on spec; our car hits the upper limit of 48g/km. However, it makes no difference to the BIK as the threshold is 50g/km.

So, what is adding the addition weight, or affecting efficiency? We could point the finger at the Sport Pro Pack with its 20-inch run-flat wheels (standard spec is 19-inch, but you can option down to 18-inch), although the official word from BMW is that larger wheels don't always mean more weight or less efficiency, particularly with the work it is doing on aerodynamics.

A word of advice: you can check the exact CO₂ figures for your desired spec via the configurator on BMW's website.



▶ ŠKODA OCTAVIA

FIRST TEST SE TECHNOLOGY ESTATE 1.5TSI



By Tim Rose

The new Škoda Octavia range launched last autumn with more on-board tech, more soft-touch materials and more of the practicality that fleets demand.

It also now includes a plug-in hybrid variant in the range. However, given the price premium for the PHEV (list price £31,745 in estate guise) currently many fleets are likely to opt for efficient petrol-engined models, such as the 1.5-litre 150PS one we now have on long term test or its even more frugal, but less powerful, 1.0-litre sibling.

With a £23,390 P11D value and a 28% BIK rate this well-equipped 1.5-litre workhorse will cost an typical 20% taxpaying fleet car driver an acceptable £1,310 annual tax. To me, little more than £100 per month is small sacrifice for a car loaded with all the essentials that'll keep occupants safe and comfortable.

Highlights of the SE Technology derivative's kit list include a 10-inch touchscreen controlling the sat-nav, climate control and infotainment, front and rear parking sensors with manoeuvre assist, an electronic parking brake with hill start assist, and cruise control with a speed limiter function – vital for business drivers who've already accrued a few points on their licence.

Standout touches are the umbrella hidden inside the driver's door and an ice scraper mounted inside the fuel filler flap – Škoda is well known for such clever little touches that make owners' lives easier.

And I particularly like the 10.25-inch 'virtual cockpit' in front of the driver. This really boosts this Octavia's 'techy' persona and ensures drivers can personalise their dashboard view quickly and intuitively through the steering wheel controls to see navigation, performance and efficiency data and even connectivity options as they desire. Used well, it helps to reduce the instances they'll glance at the main centre screen, so ensuring their focus remains on the drive, not the gadgetry.

The next report will share more on that, plus a quick comparison with the PHEV alternative I've also driven for a couple of days.



▶ PEUGEOT 3008

GT HYBRID4

By Jeremy Bennett

One of the most appealing factors of driving an EV involves sitting in my lounge. Downloading the free MyPeugeot app (peugeot.co.uk/mypeugeot-app) to my phone, submitting the car's VIN number and email address, inputting a verification code and then achieving the Bluetooth link between the two reveals a number of appealing features.

Across the range, whether you drive an electric, diesel or petrol version, the app provides information on your range based on your fuel level, consumption average, journey type (work, leisure),

times and distance, running costs, your car's location and online service booking.

The app keeps a track of mileage and will warn you of your next service and the work needed. You can also track the arrival of breakdown services using a roadside assistance function.

And if your drivers don't know what a warning light means, the app will tell them. Help is also a fingertip away on how to use the multimedia system. Whoever reads the manual in the glovebox unless in dire need? Well, you can download it onto your phone too if that makes it any more appealing.



▶ MAZDA CX-30

2.0 180PS 2WD SPORT LUX

By Sarah Tooze

The Mazda CX-30 was facing another long period of being mainly parked up at home due to lockdown so I handed the keys to my husband who has to drive to Cambridge most days for work.

It was interesting to see the difference it made to the fuel economy. My 21-mile round trip to the supermarket on a mixture of rural and urban roads has been returning an average of 44mpg.

During my husband's 98-mile commute, mainly on dual carriageways and motorways, the average rose to 48mpg (above the official combined average

of 47.9mpg). He says that's down to his smoother driving style, but the jury is still out on that one.

He appreciated the comfortable seats and quality of the materials in the CX-30, plus safety features like blind spot monitoring.

On one occasion when driving the CX-30, I was unlucky enough to pick up a stone chip when leaving the village. But this was rectified through leasing company Zenith and its third-party windscreen repairer, National Windscreens. It was repaired at home with a set time slot and the repairer called half an hour before his arrival time.

Commercial Fleet



The changing face of last-mile delivery

Van and truck fleets are having to re-think their urban strategies

**PLUS: COCA COLA SEEKS TO REVISIT CAR/VAN CASE • TRUCK ALLOWS ROOF TO BE LOWERED TO SAVE CASH
FIRST DRIVES OF CITROËN E-DISPATCH/LEVC VN5/IVECO DAILY 70C18**

Coca-Cola seeks permission from Supreme Court to appeal the 'van should be treated as car' tax case

HMRC says it expects to clarify the tax rules for all fleets after legal process has ended

By Gareth Roberts

The future tax status of thousands of vehicles hangs in the balance after drinks giant Coca-Cola said it was hoping to lodge an appeal with the Supreme Court.

The Court of Appeal ruled in favour of HMRC last year, deciding that the use of three vehicles – two Volkswagen Kombis and a Vauxhall Vivaro – should be treated as cars, rather than vans, for tax purposes.

The ruling increased the amount of tax due from both the employer – Coca-Cola European Partners Great Britain (CEPG) – and the employees.

If unchallenged, the Court of Appeal's decision could set a legal precedent impacting the amount of national insurance contributions (NICs) paid by scores of fleets and the level of benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax incurred by their drivers.

A Coca-Cola European Partners spokesperson told *Commercial Fleet*: "We can confirm that we have sought permission from the Supreme Court to appeal the decision made in the Court of Appeal that some commercial vans should be reclassified as cars for tax purposes."

HMRC said it was waiting to see if leave to appeal is granted before issuing any clarification around the classification of vehicles for tax purposes.

In handing down the judgement last year, one of the three Court of Appeal judges deciding the case, Lady Justice Asplin, recognised the wider impact of their ruling, saying it was of "considerable importance" given the "large numbers" of employees supplied with Kombis or Vivos, or vehicles which share their attributes (fleetnews.co.uk, August 6, 2020).

VAN OR CAR?

The case was first heard in August 2017, when a First Tier Tribunal (FTT) ruled that, although two modified

Kombi T5 vehicles were originally classed as vans for tax purposes, once it considered the characteristics of the two vehicles as provided to the employees in 2016 – and not just at construction – they should be classed as cars, attracting a higher tax rate.

The same court, however, ruled in favour of Coca-Cola, agreeing that a Vauxhall Vivaro provided to an employee in 2011, was "primarily suited to the conveyance of goods" and, as such, qualified for the much-reduced rate offered by company van tax.

The rules regarding classification can be found in the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (ITEPA).

It says that every mechanically propelled road vehicle is a "car" unless it is a goods vehicle (a vehicle of a construction primarily suited for the conveyance of goods or burden of any description); a motor cycle; an invalid carriage; a vehicle of a type not commonly used as a private vehicle and unsuitable to be so used.

In explaining the Court of Appeal's decision, Lady Asplin said the fact that a vehicle may look like a van is not conclusive.

Until 1997, Coca-Cola technicians had used estate cars but, as the amount of equipment they carried had increased, they were switched to Vivaro, Kombi 1 and Kombi 2 models.

Kombi 1 was fitted with a remov-

able three-person bench seat in the van's mid-section as standard, which meant no goods could be carried there with it in place. The rear cargo section was approximately 3cu m and separated from the mid-section with a central partition.

Kombi 2 had three removable seats in the mid-section and was modified with a fixed partition to separate it from the 3cu m rear cargo area.

As the mid-sections were equally suitable for carrying goods and passengers in the Kombis, the FTT decided they could not be regarded as goods vehicles.

The Vivaro also featured a number of modifications including a second row of removable seats and one rear passenger window.

The FTT concluded that by a "narrow" margin, the construction of the Vivaro was primarily suited for the conveyance of goods.

Appeals were lodged with the Upper Tribunal (UT) by both HMRC and Coca-Cola, with HMRC disputing the decision of the FTT on the Vivaro and Coca-Cola on its Kombi ruling. The UT upheld the original decisions made by FTT, publishing its decision in 2019 (fleetnews.co.uk, March 27, 2019).

Further appeals were lodged by HMRC and Coca-Cola with the Court of Appeal. The drinks firm lost its appeal on the Kombis, with the Court of Appeal agreeing with the earlier decisions of the FTT and UT.

However, in a change from the original rulings, the three judges decided the Vauxhall Vivaro should now also be classed as a company car, not a van.

Judge Asplin explained that both the FTT and UT had been "swayed" by a difference in layout, between the Kombis and the Vivaro, with the latter having space for goods/tools in its mid-section.



“HOW ARE BUSINESSES AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS ABLE TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT (TAX) POSITION?”

GEOFF HERON, INSPIRED EMPLOYER SOLUTIONS

The difference, she explained, was insufficient upon which to differentiate the Vivaro from the Kombi and to decide that the Vivaro is primarily suited for the conveyance of goods.

LOWER TAX TAKE ON VANS

Double-cab (combi) vans and double-cab pick-up vehicles have become popular in recent years thanks, in part, to the low level of tax a company van attracts.

Employees are liable for the van benefit charge if there is 'significant' private usage – 'insignificant' private usage would be considered no more than a few days' private use.

The van benefit charge currently stands at £3,490 (2020/21) and is multiplied by the rate of income tax paid by the employee, typically either 20% or 40%, meaning a 20% taxpayer would be liable for £698 this tax year.

Company car tax, however, is

determined by a sliding scale according to CO₂ emissions, which would prove much more costly if it was applied to a vehicle instead of company van tax.

In 2017/18, the last year figures from HMRC are available, there were 80,000 employees paying the van benefit charge (company van tax) – a 33% increase on the 60,000 reported in 2012/13 – which was worth some £60 million to the Exchequer.

Company car tax, meanwhile, was worth £1.59 billion from just 10 times the number of employees, showing the difference in 'value' of how vehicles are classified to the Treasury.

Tax officials have previously tried to clarify the situation for double-cab pick-ups, with specific guidance that relies on the payload being one tonne or more to dictate whether it should be classed as a car or a van.

LACK OF CLARITY

Geoff Heron, a specialist tax consultant and director at Inspired Employer Solutions, says that he has identified weaknesses and flaws in HMRC's case.

He has put together technical arguments which challenge HMRC's interpretation and application of the tax legislation at Section 115 ITEPA 2003 and has also gathered additional evidence, which he believes support that the multi-purpose vehicles in dispute are of a construction that is primarily suited

for the conveyance of goods and burden.

Working with several fleets, the multi-purpose vehicles in question are from Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz, covering the Transporter, Citan and Dualiner type vehicles.

Heron, who previously worked at KPMG and prior to that was part of HMRC's large business employer compliance teams before founding Inspired Employer Solutions, told *Commercial Fleet*: "My arguments specifically challenge the interpretation and application of the tax legislation and if there may have been an error in law."

HMRC has indicated it expects to respond to the arguments he has made towards the end of May, but Heron says the current lack of clarity is proving a headache for fleets.

He explained: "What is evident from CCEP is this is clearly a complex and contentious issue, given vehicles of almost similar characteristics were viewed differently by the original First and Upper Tier Tribunals. It therefore begs the question 'how are businesses and their professional advisers able to determine the correct position?'"

33%

increase in employees paying the van benefit charge between 2012/13 and 2017/18

£689

the van benefit charge for a 20% taxpayer this tax year



Vauxhall's Vivaro was one of the vehicles involved in the court cases

Vivaro-electrifying British business



Winner of International
Van of the Year 2021
New all-electric Vivaro-e



Carries British business



Fuel economy and CO₂ results for the New Vivaro-e Elite L1H1 3100 75kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO₂ emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 206 miles (WLTP).*

*Provisional data. 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 methodology. The figures shown are intended for comparability purposes only and should only be compared other cars tested to the same technical 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 and post registration); charging frequency; personal driving style; vehicle payload and route characteristics; variations in weather; heating/air conditioning; pre-conditioning and battery condition. For more information, contact your local Vauxhall Retailer.

Lowering roof will result in big savings, says trailer giant Schmitz

Ability to adjust height of trailer to suit lower loads will greatly improve aerodynamics

By John Lewis

Fuel savings of up to 5% could be enjoyed by transport fleets that opt for Schmitz Cargobull's new line-up of aerodynamic curtainsider tri-axle semi-trailers, claims the manufacturer. The EcoGeneration trio includes models with roofs that can be lowered to reduce aerodynamic drag if the cargo does not reach the ceiling or if the trailer is running empty.

Cover 150,000km (93,206 miles) a year for four years with the roof lowered 30% of the time and the drop in fuel consumption could save €3,190 (£2,838), the company contends. CO₂ output should shrink by 6.7 tonnes.

Lower the roof for 50% of the time over the same mileage and time scale and you should save €5,320 (£4,733), with an 11-tonne CO₂ cut. Increase to 70% and the savings could be €7,450 (£6,629) and 15.6 tonnes, although you might consider whether you actually need a small vehicle to improve utilisation.

The rearmost section of the

EcoFlex trailer's roof can be lowered by 500mm from a maximum internal height of 2,700mm. The trailers have an overall height of four metres.

With the EcoVarios model, both the front and rear sections of the body can be flexibly adjusted. The maximum interior height of 3,000mm can be reduced 400mm.

Both trailers are fitted with a hydro-pneumatic pump used to raise the roof. Altering the height takes around 10 minutes including adjusting the curtains.

EcoFlex is designed for general cargo and beverage transport while EcoVarios can be used for bulky loads. It can handle pallet cages stacked three high.

The third option is EcoFix. With a fixed aerodynamic roof, it can be used to haul heavy cargo such as steel which sit low on the trailer, well below its ceiling.

In this case, the maximum internal height is 2,650mm declining to 2,200mm at the back.

The 5% fuel saving figure quoted could be an underestimate in

certain cases, suggests Schmitz chief technical officer Roland Klement. "In field tests we've had some customers report reductions of 8% or more," he said.

The company believes the same concept could be applied to curtainsider bodies designed for rigid chassis longer term.

One of Europe's biggest trailer builders, Schmitz declined to disclose how much more the newcomers will cost than the standard S.CS models on which they are based. Volume production will start during the second quarter.

EcoGeneration has its origins in the Transformers programme.

A €7.9m (£7m) research initiative aimed at cutting CO₂ output, it was backed by Schmitz Cargobull, Volvo, Daf and a number of other companies as well as research institutes. Completed around three years ago, it was endorsed by the European Commission.

The Transformers trailer that emerged featured side skirts and so-called boat tails - fins projecting 500mm from the rear - along with

a roof whose height could be altered. It all added up to a potential 9.2% cut in fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions.

The difficulty with skirts and fins is that they are at far greater risk of being dented and cracked accidentally than the roof. The cost of repairing such damage has to be weighed against any savings they may deliver.

"Our EcoGeneration trailers don't have any costly attachments that break easily," remarked chief executive officer, Andreas Schmitz.


Equipping semi-trailers with aerodynamic roofs is not a new idea. British trailer builders have been doing so for several years, as Klement readily concedes.

Trailers designed solely for use in the UK are not subject to an overall height limit, however, which gives aerodynamic specialists considerable scope when it comes to devising dramatically-effective designs. Most other European countries impose a four-metre height limit and the same restriction is imposed on trailers used on cross-border work.



CHANGING URBAN DEMANDS

Van and truck fleets are having to rethink last-mile delivery strategies as cities shift their priorities, reports [John Lewis](#)



UPS is introducing e-cargo bikes across the world similar to this one in America

Tighter controls on vehicle emissions imposed by city authorities plus pressure from environmentally-conscious customers mean that van and truck fleets are having to rethink their approach to operating in urban areas.

In some cases this means abandoning conventional vehicles altogether – a choice being made by a growing number of businesses.

This could involve using battery electric vehicles (BEVs) or adopting new delivery methods altogether, such as e-cargo bikes, scooters or autonomous wheeled robots.

The changing urban environment will also mean large commercial vehicles will no longer drive long distances to make deliveries.

Instead, they will head to out-of-town hubs where goods will be taken before being delivered by smaller, low-emission vehicles for the final, short leg of the journey.

One of the biggest challenges for last-mile delivery fleets in urban areas will be locating places where goods can be stored temporarily prior to being taken to the customer's door.

"Finding local warehouse space for sorting and consolidating consignments is difficult, and can be even harder than sourcing larger fulfilment facilities," says Louisa Hosegood, digital and strategy director at supply chain and logistics consultants Bis Henderson Consulting.

Big or small, there is no guarantee your chosen site will receive planning consent.

Customers may want the items they order online to be delivered quickly, "yet these same consumers, as residents, oppose plans for industrial development in conurbations, as seen by the recent rejection of Ocado's fulfilment centre expansion in the London Borough of Islington", she adds.

Residents' opposition to the expansion under the 'Nocado' banner was highly-organised and professionally-executed.

Consent, however, is more likely to be granted if the development can boast some environmental credentials.

DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP

Two big warehouses – one in the East Midlands, another in East London – are to be built as part of a Mars/DHL distribution partnership.

Representing an investment of £350 million, they have been designed with sustainability in mind, says Mars.

They will be partially solar-powered and will rate in the top 1% of non-domestic buildings in the UK environmentally, the company adds. Both are scheduled to be operational by spring 2023.

Mars says the warehouses will play a key role in a reorganised logistics operation that will remove one million miles a year from Britain's roads – the equivalent of 40 times around the world, or 8,547 times around the M25.

The changes that will be rolled out will cut Mars' annual outbound logistics carbon footprint in the UK by 7.7%, equivalent to the annual emissions generated by heating 543 average homes.

One company which has recently overcome the potential planning obstacle is online retail giant Amazon, which last month set up a last-mile logistics hub in the heart of London.

The City of London Corporation granted plan-



FINDING LOCAL WAREHOUSE SPACE FOR SORTING AND CONSOLIDATING CONSIGNMENTS IS DIFFICULT

LOUISA HOSEGOOD,
BIS HENDERSON CONSULTING

ning permission to convert an underused public car park near London Wall to become a distribution hub for Amazon Logistics.

This will be the base for couriers to make deliveries within a 1.2-mile radius on either e-cargo bikes or on foot.

City of London Corporation plans to create two more last-mile logistics hubs by 2022 and to have a total of five by 2025.

"The Amazon Last Mile Logistics Hub alone will take up to 95 vehicles off the road each day, meaning up to 23,000 fewer vehicle journeys in central London every year," says Alistair Moss, chair of the corporation's planning committee.

Many other organisations are also already using e-cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries, such as CitySprint and Co-op, but their use is not confined to London.

Zmove, for example, has been using them to provide a delivery service for Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

They can use routes, including river crossings, that may be unavailable to mainstream vehicles, and get close to customers' doors. Goods can often be delivered more rapidly as a result.

Sainsbury's Chop Chop service enables consumers to order up to 20 products from a range of around 3,000 grocery and household items using an app.

The items are delivered by cycle couriers within the hour from 50 of the supermarket chain's stores spread across 20 UK cities.

UPS has started deploying e-cargo bikes globally as part of 30 urban logistics projects, including Dublin, where it has set up a delivery hub at Trinity College.

However, it took a different approach in the UK with a trial of electric power-assisted trailers pulled by bicycles. Part-funded by Innovate UK and run in conjunction with the University of Huddersfield, the Low Impact City Logistics Project gave UPS a better understanding of e-assist products, including a version of the trailer which can be guided by a pedestrian.

The trial ended two years ago and is not expected to be repeated.

A spokesman says: "There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to sustainable last-mile deliveries in busy city centres. Every city has different challenges and requirements and London, as a major metropolis, is particularly

complex. But we will continue looking for opportunities to establish our City Logistics project there in the future.”

Meanwhile, Silence UK says electric scooters could have a growing role to play in urban delivery networks.

The company is targeting the Spanish-made S02 and S02 LS Long Range models at business users.

Both can be equipped with large top boxes which can be used to accommodate packages and offer a claimed range of 80 miles and 91 miles respectively.

Running costs add up to a meagre £1 per 100 miles travelled, claims Silence.

Top box capacity can be as much as 350 litres and the scooter can typically handle a payload of around 100kg, says Silence UK founding partner, Tony Lewis, a motor industry veteran who has worked for LDV and Nissan.

“Much depends on the weight of the rider though,” he says.

Electric scooters require riders, but some businesses are taking human beings out of the delivery equation.

The Co-op is using battery-powered autonomous wheeled robots developed by Starship Technologies to deliver goods to householders in Northampton and Milton Keynes.

Sensors, machine-learning and artificial intelligence help them avoid obstacles and reach their destinations.

Amazon has deployed electric, autonomous package delivery robots in the USA while the autonomous Kar-go Delivery Bott from UK start-up Academy of Robotics is now on trial with a chemist in the London Borough of Hounslow, delivering medicines to local customers.

The customers have an app on their smartphone which tells them when their package has arrived.

They then go outside and use the app to unlock the vehicle to get the item they are expecting.

It is, of course, debatable how far autonomous vehicles will prove popular or practical in home delivery work.

A delivery driver can carry groceries up to a third floor flat, or into an elderly lady's kitchen. A delivery robot cannot.

While undoubtedly environmentally-friendly, transport like e-cargo bike or scooters does not have the capacity to cope with palletised loads – half-a-dozen pallets of cat food, for instance – or with bulky, heavy items sometimes referred to as ugly freight. Bigger zero-emission vehicles are required to handle such tasks and more are becoming available.

Rising interest has created an opening for a



The sound of Silence! These Spanish-made electric scooters will become part of last-mile delivery scene

variety of start-ups that are competing for business with more familiar names.

Among the former is Volta Trucks. It has developed the electric Volta Zero 16-tonner scheduled to be on trial with DPD in London's ultra-low emission zone, with a claimed range of up to 125 miles.

BENEFITS OF BATTERY POWER

Battery power looks set to be the favoured emission-free option in urban areas given that most journeys are comparatively short; shorter than, say, driving from London to Manchester.

Volta addresses another issue which businesses operating in urban areas will increasingly need to weave into the equation: the need to interact safely with vulnerable road users such as cyclists, scooter riders and pedestrians crossing the street.

In the capital, this requirement is enshrined in the Transport for London (TfL) Direct Vision Standard, due to be enforced from March 1.

As a consequence, Volta Zero has a low-slung glasshouse-style cab not dissimilar to the one fitted to Mercedes-Benz's Econic.

With an eye-line set at around 1.8m, drivers can communicate with pedestrians and other vulnerable highway users visually through 220 degrees.

A 360-degree birds-eye view camera shows drivers their complete surroundings, a blind-spot warning system has been fitted and the exterior rear view mirrors have been replaced by cameras.

Refrigerated truck rental company Petit Forestier has inked a deal to acquire 1,000 Volta Zeros.

DHL, too, has been trialling a battery-powered 16-tonner in London, the Volvo FL Electric.

Putting the infrastructure in place to recharge electric van and truck batteries in an urban area as diesels become marginalised will become increasingly necessary, but can be expensive.

City of London Corporation runs a fleet of electric vehicles (EVs). They include road sweepers and seven Dennis Eagle Elite 26-tonne bin wagons converted to run on batteries by Electra and operated in conjunction with Veolia.

As a consequence, a £250,000 electricity substation has had to be installed to help deliver the power needed to the corporation's transport depot in Walbrook Wharf, Upper Thames Street.

UPS has chosen to support its London operation with a smart grid developed in conjunction with the capital's Cross River Partnership and UK Power Networks Services.

It times and spreads the recharging of vehicles throughout the night; in effect, trebling charging capacity.

UPS has ordered 10,000 Generation 2 electric vans from British-based manufacturer Arrival, all of which should be delivering parcels in the UK, Europe and North America by 2024.

DPD plans to install 3,600 charge points and deploy 7,000 alternative fuel vehicles across 225 urban areas in 20 European countries.

As part of this, it aims to have zero- and low-emission models in service in 25 of Britain's biggest towns and cities by 2025.

More than 10% of its UK fleet is already electric. The 700-plus battery-driven vans and trucks include Nissan e-NV200s, MAN eTGEs and Fuso eCanter 7.5-tonners.

The transition to BEVs is inevitable given the Government's decision to ban sales of petrol and diesel cars and light commercial vehicles from 2030, while the demand for home deliveries is being driven by the meteoric rise in online shopping; a trend given rocket boosters by Covid-19.

GROWTH IN INTERNET SALES

Latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show internet sales accounted for 36% of all UK retail sales in November 2020. In November 2006, this was a mere 2.8%. It seems likely to continue in that direction.

“E-commerce has grown massively, and probably permanently, during the pandemic to 30% or more of retail trade,” says Hosegood.

“Customers increasingly value the convenience, assurance, immediacy, pricing and safety of ordering online.”

While there is no suggestion city centre office blocks will disappear entirely, these deliveries could increasingly be to people working from suburban homes rather than city centre offices, with many businesses planning to continue with their home working policies post-Covid.

That will require a further shift in already-fast-changing distribution strategies; away from high streets and towards suburban housing estates.



Petit Forestier is planning to buy 1,000 Volta Zeros



The Kar-go Delivery Bott is on trial with a chemist



Nissan e-NV200s form part of DPD's van fleet

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q Can you drive a 4,500kg EV on a category B car licence?

A In July 2018, the Government brought in legislation allowing a holder of a category B driving licence to drive an alternatively fuelled vehicle having a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 4,250kg, provided it is not driven outside Great Britain and that any driver wishing to take advantage of the concession has undertaken a minimum of five hours' training.



ISTOCKWELLPHOTO

Q We are wanting to start moving mobile pumps and generators that hold around 250 litres of red diesel. Additionally, we would like to be able to transport fuel cells up to 2,000 litres to support the generator/pump. What is the advice for this?

A If you are carrying mobile pumps and generators that hold around 250 litres of red diesel on a vehicle, this would be outside the scope of ADR dangerous goods regulations. However, if these were

towed behind a vehicle, and the fuel tank exceeds 500 litres capacity, then the combination would fall into scope of ADR regs.

In respect of the fuel cells, if the capacity of the fuel cell exceeds 1,000 litres of diesel, they would be in full scope of ADR regulations. This means that the drivers would have to hold an ADR certificate, the vehicles/tank/cells would have to be marked/labelled accordingly, and have fire extinguishers appropriate to the size of the vehicle.



ISTOCKOLEKSANDOR FILON

Solo working: employers must manage health and safety risks

As an employer, you must manage any health and safety risks before your staff can work alone. This applies to anyone contracted to work for you, including those who are self-employed. Lone workers are classed as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, for example, delivery drivers, health workers or engineers.

There will always be greater

risks for lone workers without direct supervision, or anyone to help them if things go wrong, with many exposed to work-related road risks. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, you must manage the risk to lone workers. As well as identifying who would class as a lone worker, it is also vital to consider which hazards could harm them.

You must train, supervise and

monitor lone workers as well as keep in touch with them regularly and respond to any incidents.

When a lone worker will be at someone else's workplace you must ask that employer about any risks and control measures to ensure they are protected.

Risks that particularly affect lone workers include stress and mental wellbeing as well as the workplace itself, for example if it's in a rural or isolated area.

Additionally, certain high-risk work requires at least one other person present, such as work in a confined space or near exposed live electricity conductors.

As an employer, you have the same health and safety responsibilities for homeworkers, and the same liability for accident or injury, as for any other worker.

You must provide supervision, education and training, as well as implementing enough control measures to protect the homeworker. When someone is working from home – permanently or temporarily – you should consider:

- How will you keep in touch with them?
- What work activity will they be doing (and for how long)?
- Can it be done safely?
- Do you need to put measures in place to protect them?

There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision. Additionally, if contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect stress levels and mental health.

It is essential you keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and ensure regular contact to make sure they are healthy and safe.



Delivery drivers rarely have direct supervision, but out-of-sight must not equate to out-of-mind

ISTOCK/LIVR077

CITROËN E-DISPATCH

Smaller battery meets the needs of most, but the larger one is expected to be the top seller

By Matt de Prez

Citroën is rapidly expanding its range of electric models, both cars and vans. The first commercial model to be offered as part of its electrification drive is the e-Dispatch.

Based on a regular Dispatch, the new model is powered by the same electric motor as PSA's small electric cars. It develops 136PS and 260Nm. Top speed is restricted to 80mph.

Buyers can choose a 50kWh battery with a 143-mile range or a 75kWh version that promises 205 miles between charges.

Most buyers (around 70%) are expected to opt for the larger battery pack due to concerns about range anxiety – the fear of running out of charge. This is despite PSA research suggesting that the smaller battery pack will cover the routine daily driving needs of 83% of its van customers.

We've opted to test the 75kWh version. In range-topping 'Driver' trim it costs £34,380 with the Government's £8,000 grant taken into account.

Load volume is unaffected by the electrified



powertrain, with the battery pack integrated into the van's chassis. Citroën says the e-Dispatch offers the same practicality as its internal combustion engine (ICE)-powered counterpart.

The XS version (4.6m length) provides a 4.6 cubic metre load space and is available with a 50kWh battery. The M version is 4.95m long and can be specified with the 50kWh or the larger 75kWh unit. XL versions are 5.3m long and provide up to 6.1 cubic metres of load space. These are fitted with the larger battery only.

All have a 1,000kg payload and can tow up to 1,000kg, while 75kWh M models can be specified with a 1,200kg payload.

The van looks identical to its diesel counterpart and both have the same interior, with the exception of the electric model's stubby drive selector switch in place of a gear stick.

Performance is similar to that of the diesel. It doesn't set off with lightening pace or throw you back in the seat when you accelerate, but there's ample power to keep pace on motorways or hills.

Driving the e-Dispatch is rather relaxing. Thanks

to a lack of engine noise and no need to change gear, the in-cab experience is positive.

With the battery buried in the chassis, stability is excellent. The e-Dispatch offers confident handling with limited lean and high-levels of grip. You could almost call it exciting.

Our test vehicle was delivering a real-world range of about 190 miles and was able to gain an 80% charge in 45 minutes using a 100kW DC rapid charger – so range anxiety shouldn't be an issue for too many operators, especially in urban settings.

One consideration for those that require drivers to charge at home is models with the bigger-battery will take more than 11 hours to fully charge using a 7kW wallbox, compared with around seven hours for a 50kWh model.

When Groupe PSA launched the e-Dispatch it promised it would have no compromises for fleet operators. While upfront costs are higher and the complexity of installing the necessary charging infrastructure can be a challenge – other than outright range, the e-Dispatch could be viable for fleets in place of a diesel model over a longer term.

FLEET PICK CITROËN E-DISPATCH M 75KWH ENTERPRISE

SPECIFICATIONS	
CV OTR price	£39,796
Power/torque	136PS/260Nm
Payload (kg)	1,000
Gross vehicle weight (kg)	3,025
Load volume (cu m)	5.3
Fuel	TBC
SMR (pence per mile)	2.2
Running cost	TBC
Range	205 miles

LEVC VN5

Longer 'taxi-based' electric van will travel far to assuage any range or charging anxieties

By Matt de Prez

Making a long-range electric van costs a lot of money and requires several heavy batteries, which makes them uneconomical to produce currently.

LEVC thinks that, with the new VN5, it has the answer for fleets that require zero-emission capability, but need to be able to cover large distances in short time frames.

Based on the famous London taxi, and sporting the same eCity range-extender technology and 10.1m turning circle, the VN5 is able to drive into a city and operate with zero-emissions for around 60 miles then drive back out without requiring multiple charging stops.

How does it work? Well, there's a 1.5-litre three-cylinder petrol engine under the bonnet that can fire up and recharge the van while it's driving. Unlike a plug-in hybrid, the engine doesn't drive the wheels – that's always done by the electric motor.

The 31kWh battery is bigger than the one you'll find in some electric cars and provides enough range to suit the needs of most urban operators. With a full tank of petrol added to the mix, LEVC



The infotainment screen is sourced from Volvo

FLEET PICK LEVC VN5 BUSINESS

SPECIFICATIONS	
CV OTR price	£47,030
Power/torque	150PS/240Nm
Payload (kg)	830
Gross vehicle weight (kg)	2,900
Load volume (cu m)	5.5
Fuel	TBC
SMR (ppm)	3.2
Running cost	TBC
Mpg	314

claims that the van will be able to cover 300 miles.

Drivers will still have to plug the VN5 in to maximise efficiency. It'll take about 14 hours off a three-pin plug and five hours if connected to a 7kW wallbox. But, stop off at a rapid charger and the battery can be topped up in just 30 minutes.

The concept behind the VN5 enables operators to put aside any range anxiety or charging concerns and focus on keeping the vehicle moving.

It provides a payload of 830kg and has a 5.5cu m loadspace, with a side door and steel bulkhead.

First impressions of the VN5 are that it's bigger than you might expect. Despite being based on a taxi, the van is 400mm longer to maximise its carrying capacity.

As LEVC is owned by Geely, there's an array of Volvo-sourced items throughout. That three-cylinder petrol engine, for example, is from the XC40, and the steering wheel, infotainment and switchgear will be immediately familiar to any aficionados of the Swedish brand.

Pricing starts at £38,000 (ex VAT) after the Government's £8,000 plug-in van grant is taken

into account, which places it among similarly sized electric vans from the PSA stable.

Specification levels are impressive across the three trim levels. With air con, LED headlights and keyless start on all versions.

The drive is impressive. With power always coming from the electric motor, it accelerates cleanly with just a faint whine from the 150PS motor.

The driver can select whether the VN5 depletes its battery or retains charge for later use. The vehicle can also do this using geofencing, if fleet operators prefer.

When the petrol engine is operational, it's barely audible. Once moving, you'd be hard pressed to tell – performance and drivability is indifferent.

During our time with the van we were seeing fuel consumption at a rate of about 70mpg, not the 314mpg claimed figure, but still significantly better than you'd get from a diesel van. If you stick to EV mode all the time, then the van has a realistic range of about 58-60 miles.

Plenty of fleet operators, including Royal Mail and DPD are trialling the new VN5 already.



IVECO DAILY 70C18

Ratio of gvw-to-payload makes this giant van a great option for 7.5 tonner truck operators

By Tim Campbell

Looking at the Iveco Daily seven-tonne van, you are struck by the sheer size of it. A typical 3.5-tonne, 17cu m van is a big van. But, when you put one up against the seven-tonne Daily, you go to another level. The gross vehicle weight (gvw) is literally double the gvw of a 'standard van', but, interestingly, only half again of the unladen weight. So measured by gvw-to-payload ratio, the seven-tonne Daily wins hands down.

Perhaps the most valid comparison would be a 7.5-tonne truck, and, here, the Daily remains a worthy competitor with a load length in excess of 5m and a payload of almost four tonnes.

Iveco has a reputation for world class drivelines, specifically in the diesel engine domain with the aid of its in-house supplier, Fiat Power Train.

The four-cylinder Euro VI-d compliant diesel engine uses both exhaust gas recirculation (EGR)



Controls for the infotainment are on the flat-bottomed steering wheel

and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) and develops a maximum 182PS (132kW) @ 3,500 rpm and 430Nm of torque @ 1,500 rpm.

Behind this proven engine is an aluminium-cased Hi-Matic eight-speed automated gearbox with a direct drive on sixth gear and overdrive on both seventh and eighth. The rear axle has three ratios, with a 4.3 as standard, which is matched to 225/75R16 on both axles.

Daily has one 4,100mm wheelbase, but has two body lengths of 4,680mm and 5,125mm and there are also two roof heights allowing for 1,900mm and 2,100mm internally.

The front axle rated at 2,500kg has independent suspension and the rear rated at 5,350kg sits on parabolic springs. All have anti-roll bars and shock absorbers. The maximum payload weights range from 3,973kg-3,920kg dependent on the body size.

There are disc brakes all round supported electronically by ESP9 which incorporates, among other things, EBD, ABS, hill holder, brake assist and, importantly, trailer sway mitigation as well as roll movement intervention and roll over mitigation.

Sitting on the three-way adjustable driver's seat you face the comfortable and oddly-shaped steering wheel with controls for the infotainment system and cruise control. The instrumental panel has two dials, on the left for the speed and the right has the rev counter. In the middle is a smart five-inch TFT (thin film transistor) display controlled via the steering wheel.

The centre console houses the infotainment system, heating and ventilation with air conditioning, and tucked at the bottom is the tachograph.

The cab is trimmed in a pleasant blue and black combinations and has an overall feel of high quality.

Driving is an absolute pleasure, mainly helped by the very smooth and responsive eight-speed automated gearbox matched to a low level of cabin noise.

The Iveco Daily seven-tonner has great potential, first in terms of offering a very competitive solution for traditional 7.5-tonne truck operators and, second, for its high level of comfort and modern van style driving experience.

MODEL TESTED 70C18HA DAILY VAN

SPECIFICATIONS	
Cab	Day
Engine	Iveco F1CFL4117
Power	182PS (132kW) @ 3,500rpm
Torque	430Nm @ 1,500rpm
Gearbox	8-speed Hi Matic Automated
Front axle	2,500kgs
Rear axles	5,350kgs
GVW	7,000kgs
Chassis Weight	3,027kgs with van body
Wheelbase	4.1m
Brakes	Discs all round
Tank	100 litres/20 litres AdBlue

THE LAST WORD

PETER MANSFIELD

GROUP SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR AT TRAKM8

Mansfield is in a role that 'seemed a perfect combination' of his interests and professional history. Those interests include racing Lotus cars and, if not in fleet, he would like to be a racing driver

My hobbies and interests: I'm passionate about Lotus cars and have been lucky enough to have raced an Elise at most of the major circuits in the UK and in Belgium (even occasionally making it to the podium!)

My first memory associated with a car: I remember being fascinated with the noise of the blown exhaust on my dad's car when I was four or five.

My favourite movie quote is from *The Godfather* Don Vito Corleone: "A friend should always underestimate your virtues and an enemy overestimate your faults."

If money was no object I would like to set up a job rehabilitation and retraining scheme for servicemen leaving the armed forces.

A book that I would recommend others read is *Stalingrad* by Anthony Beaver

The song I would have on my driving playlist is the Black Eyed Peas' *I Gotta Feeling*

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is to take your time – life isn't a sprint, it's an endurance event.

My pet hate is people being rude to others – there is no need for it.

If I were made transport minister for the day I'd stop people driving with their fog lights on when it's raining.

Why fleet?

An effective fleet management programme has the power to make a significant positive difference for businesses, enabling them to make better use of resources running their vehicles more efficiently. It's an exciting time for the fleet industry at the moment, particularly as we move towards a switch to electric vehicles (EVs) – data and telematics will play a critical role in that process.

How I got here

I've been fascinated with cars and vehicles for as long as I can remember and a lot of my career has been centred on technology and data management. The role at Trakm8 seemed a perfect combination of my interests and my professional history – it was too good an opportunity to miss out on!

Latest products, developments and achievements

In spite of the unprecedented times we found ourselves in last year, 2020 was a busy and productive 12 months for Trakm8 and 2021 looks set to continue that. One of our most exciting developments has been the partnership with one of the UK's largest retailers, who are utilising our Insight Optimisation platform to shore-up driver safety, increase productivity and reduce fuel costs.

My company in three words

British, forward-thinking, integrity

Career influence

I would say my company sergeant major at Sandhurst.

What makes a good MD?

Assembling a great team of people around you who can be trusted to do the very best job.

Advice to fleet newcomers

My advice would be to listen to those around you and keep a close eye on what's to come, as the market is changing significantly.

If I wasn't in fleet

I'd like to be a racing driver!



Next issue: Andrew Evans, fleet sales manager at Garland Škoda & Winchester Motor Group

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

5th -6th October 2021 at the NEC

The UK's leading event for the
fleet and mobility community

REGISTER
— YOUR —
INTEREST
NOW

fleetandmobilitylive.com

For exhibitor and sponsor enquires please
contact events@fleetandmobilitylive.com

COVID-19 Notice: Bauer Consumer Media/Fleet & Mobility Live are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and will follow government advice. At this moment in time, we feel that the timing of Fleet & Mobility Live will offer the perfect opportunity to bring the industry back together after such exceptional times. We will ensure additional safety measures are in place to ensure strict hygiene standards are maintained throughout the event. Should you have any concerns about attending or exhibiting, please contact the events team - events@fleetandmobilitylive.com

